

TEAM DISCUSSION GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEMIC RACISM

This Team Discussion Guide will walk you through a conversation with your team on Systemic Racism. After having this discussion, your team will be able to:

- Understand what systemic racism is
- See and understand how systemic racism impacts various systems, including healthcare.
- Know what actions they can start taking to address systemic racism.

Prior to Leading This Discussion

The topic of systemic racism is vast and complex, involving a lot of historical context. We want to make sure you and your teams are prepared to have this discussion. Please complete the following pre-work before you begin leading this discussion with your team(s).

1. Review the **Facilitating Compassionate Conversations** resource on our [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion web page](#) under **How to Talk to Your Teams**.

How to Talk to Your Teams

Talking about these topics can be tough. The last thing we want to do is create animosity or more confusion. So we must lead these conversations with dignity, compassion, integrity, and empathy. *How* you lead the conversation is just as important as *what* you say. Below, you will find a guide that can help prepare you to lead these conversations with your team.

Facilitating Compassionate Conversations Guide

We've created Team Discussion Guides on five topic areas that are important to our organization: Black Lives Matter, Grounding in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Implicit Bias, The Responsibility of Privilege, and Understanding Systemic Racism. Click on any of the tabs below to read about the available Team Discussion Guides and download them to use with your team.

2. Review the **Racism** tab on the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page](#) under **Discrimination**.
3. Send the following message to your team(s) at least 2 days prior to the discussion:

*We will be discussing systemic racism as a team. To help orient us all on the topic, please review the content on the **Racism** tab under **Discrimination** on the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources](#) page. This will be part of our discussion; please come prepared to reflect on what you learned.*

Thank you for taking the time to lead this important discussion with your team(s). If you need additional assistance or have questions, please reach out to odl@fairview.org.

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Orient Your Team

Use these points to quickly set the context for the conversation. Provide the handout.

- Welcome! Today we are going to discuss systemic racism and how it impacts BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color).
- We'll learn together what systemic racism is, discuss some examples, and the various efforts to change systems to be more equitable.



Make the Connection

Use these points to help identify and connect the importance of this topic to your team and reinforce the goal of the session.

- **This topic is important to our team because** systemic racism impacts health outcomes, as well as the patient and employee experience.



Ignite the Conversation

Use the questions and key points to start an authentic dialogue with your team.

Questions to Start the Conversation:

Key Points to Reinforce:

1.	Please read this Acknowledgement before you begin the discussion (see back).	»»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do: Read the Acknowledgement. • Ask: Does everyone agree to be respectful, whether we agree or disagree?
2.	Think back to the pre-work or other times you've learned about systemic racism. What reflections do you have about what you learned?	»»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask: Can everyone share one thing they learned from the pre-work? (allow responses) • Reinforce: The definition of systemic racism (see back). • Say: Systemic racism is rooted in historical context. Understanding that context is helpful for this discussion.
3.	What are some examples of systemic racism impacts?	»»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask: Can anyone give us an example of an impact of systemic racism? • Reinforce: Let's go through some examples of the impacts of systemic racism (see back). • Do: Go through each example. Engage your team in discussion around the examples using the bullet points. • Ask: (After going through the examples): Are there other examples of the impacts of systemic racism that you can think of?
4.	How can we address systemic racism in our work or in other ways?	»»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask: Does anyone have any thoughts on how systemic racism can be addressed? (allow for responses) • Say: There are three ways we'll discuss for addressing systemic racism (see back).



Take Action! If you want to address racist policies and practices that oppress BIPOC and hold systems accountable to being more equitable, put the three actions to address systemic racism into action! See your handout for more resources.

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1. **Please read this Acknowledgement before you begin the discussion.** Before we begin, it's important to acknowledge that everyone has their own understanding and beliefs. I ask each of you to be open to new or different ideas and be willing to learn. I also ask you to be respectful to your colleagues, no matter what your position or beliefs are. *Does everyone agree to be respectful during this discussion, whether we agree or disagree?*
2. **Definition: Systemic racism** (also known as institutional or structural racism) is a form of **racism that is embedded as normal practice** within society or an organization. The result is inequity and discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues.
3. **Examples of the Impact of Systemic Racism:** We know that systemic racism results in inequity and discrimination in various systems. Let's talk through some examples. There are many other examples; today, we'll focus on these three systems.
 - **Healthcare:** Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Further, it was found that most of these deaths could have been prevented.¹ **Why?**
 - Less access to resources
 - Black women are undervalued in healthcare and often dismissed when presenting with symptoms
 - Bias and stereotyping can affect the level of care
 - **Criminal Justice:** Black adults are 5.9 times as likely to be incarcerated than whites and Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely.² **Why?**
 - Lack of access to resources and/or the ability to pay for competent representation
 - Disproportionate levels of police contact in areas where a high proportion of residents are poor
 - Less access to employment and housing post-prison
 - **Employment:** Compared to White individuals, Black and Native American individuals are twice as likely to be unemployed³ ⁴. **Why?**
 - Resumes with White-sounding names received 50% more requests for interviews than identical resumes with Black-sounding names
 - Black managers are promoted at a much slower rate than White managers and have less support in the workplace
 - Lack of resources and investments in tribal areas
4. **Three Ways to Address Systemic Racism: Participating in this discussion is an excellent first step!** Here are some additional actions you can take:
 - **Acknowledge that racism exists.** Acknowledging that racism exists, impacts people, and results in inequitable and harmful situations is important. We cannot address something we don't acknowledge.
 - **Get involved.** Reach out to and support organizations who are actively working to end systemic racism and promote equity.
 - **Vote.** If you vote, help elect leaders who don't support racist policies and practices and are interested in changing them.

¹ [Why are black women at such high risk of dying from pregnancy complications?](#) American Health Association News, February 20, 2019

² [Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System.](#) The Sentencing Project, April 19, 2018.

³ [Discrimination in the Job Market in the United States.](#) Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab

⁴ [Native Americans Are Less Likely to Be Employed Than Whites in Nearly Every State.](#) Economic Policy Institute, November 20, 2013