



Be Peace. Choose Peace. Create Peace.

LEARN MORE ABOUT RACISM

What is racism?

Racism is “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one’s own race is superior.” Racism also includes “the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.”

How widespread is racism in the United States?

Racism directed by White people against people who are American Indian, Black/African American, Latinx, Asian American, and other races and ethnicities has been a feature of United States society since White settlers from Europe first arrived in the Americas. Racism influenced how the governance, economy, and social structure of the U.S. were organized. Race-based decisions dating back centuries has led to discriminatory effects that persist to this day. Examples:

- Most members of racial and ethnic minority groups live in poorer neighborhoods compared to White people with similar income levels.²
- White Americans use more drugs than Black Americans, but Black people are three times more likely to be arrested for drug possession.³
- Job candidates who are Black are half as likely to receive callbacks than equally qualified White candidates.⁴
- On local news programs, Black people are more likely to be portrayed as criminals, and White people are more likely to be portrayed as victims.⁵

Both Black and White people believe that discrimination based on the prejudice of individual people is a bigger problem than discrimination built into the nation’s laws and institutions. However, White people attribute racial discrimination to individual factors at a far higher rate than Black people—70 percent among Whites compared to 48 percent among Blacks.⁶

Seventy-one percent of Black Americans and 52 percent of Latinx Americans say they have personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity.⁷

What culture changes and public policies are necessary for preventing racism?

Media reinforces negative stereotypes of members of racial and ethnic minority groups. One way we can reduce racism then is by insisting that media producers portray members of racial and

¹ Racism. (n.d.). In *English Oxford Living Dictionaries* Retrieved September 10, 2017, from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/racism>.

² Logan, J. R. (2011, July). *Separate and Unequal: The Neighborhood Gap for Blacks, Hispanics and Asians in Metropolitan America*. Retrieved September 10, 2017, from Brown University website: <https://s4.ad.brown.edu/Projects/Diversity/Data/Report/report0727.pdf>

³ Fellner, J. (2009). *RACE, DRUGS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES*. Retrieved September 10, 2017, from Human Rights Watch website: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/8%20Fellner_FINAL.pdf

⁴ Prager, D., Western, B., & Bonikowski, B. (2009). *American Sociological Review*. *Discrimination in a Low Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment*, 777-799. doi:10.1177/000312240907400505

⁵ Godsil, R., Tropp, L., Goff, P., & Powell, J. A. (2014, November). *THE SCIENCE OF EQUALITY, VOLUME 1: ADDRESSING IMPLICIT BIAS, RACIAL ANXIETY, AND STEREOTYPE THREAT IN EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE* (Rep.). Retrieved September 10, 2017, from Perception Institute website: <http://perception.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Science-of-Equality.pdf>

⁶ Pew Research Center, June 27, 2016. “On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites Are Worlds Apart.”

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ethnic minority groups neutrally or positively.⁸ As to public policy, the list of remedies is long and includes neighborhood investments, poverty-reduction measures, and justice reforms.

What practical solutions are effective for preventing racism?

Implementation of practical peaceful solutions such as dialogue groups, empathy cultivation training, restorative justice processes, and community change efforts are effective for preventing racism. See our [Peaceful Practices Inventory](#) for information about these solutions.

What can I do to prevent or stop racism?

- **Examine Your Behavior**—Take a free [implicit association test](#) to discover discriminatory or prejudicial beliefs or behaviors you may not even be aware you hold.
- **Speak Up**—when you hear a racist comment or joke, respond that you do not find the comment appropriate or funny. If you are a bystander witnessing another person being harassed, interrupt the situation if you feel comfortable so doing, by interacting with the victim of the situation and ignoring the harasser. Here's a [cartoon](#) demonstrating how to conduct a bystander intervention.
- **Report It**—If you experience or witness racism by an institution or person in authority, report the incident to a human resources leader or trusted adult. File a grievance. Demand corrective action.
- **In Case of Emergency**—If you are experiencing or witnessing an emergency, such as a crime motivated by hate, call 911 or try to get to a location where others can observe your distress and intervene.

Where can I find statistics about racism?

- For data and statistics about racism, go to the Pew Research Center website: <http://www.pewresearch.org/>.

Where else might I go to learn more about racism?

Nonprofit organizations, research centers, and/or think tank organizations with expertise in fighting racism include:

- [American Civil Liberties Union](#) defends and preserves individual rights.
- [Anti-Defamation League](#) stops discrimination against Jewish people and other groups.
- [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\)](#) eliminates racial discrimination and protect the rights of people.
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) monitors hate groups and encourages tolerance.

About Peace Through Action USA

Peace Through Action USA energizes volunteers and servant leaders to activate Americans to reject aggression and violence and equip them with practical solutions to establish peace between people and groups where we live, learn, work, play, and pray. We are a national-scope, charitable, social capital-building organization. Learn more at www.PeaceThroughAction.org.

*Have a suggested addition to this information sheet.
Send a note to inbox@peacethroughaction.org.*

⁸ Bhatnagar, C. (2013, March 21). A Roadmap for Fighting Racism. Retrieved September 10, 2017, from <https://www.aclu.org/blog/human-rights/roadmap-fighting-racism>