



BBF Early Childhood Anti-Racism Discussion Guide For Regional Councils

Introduction

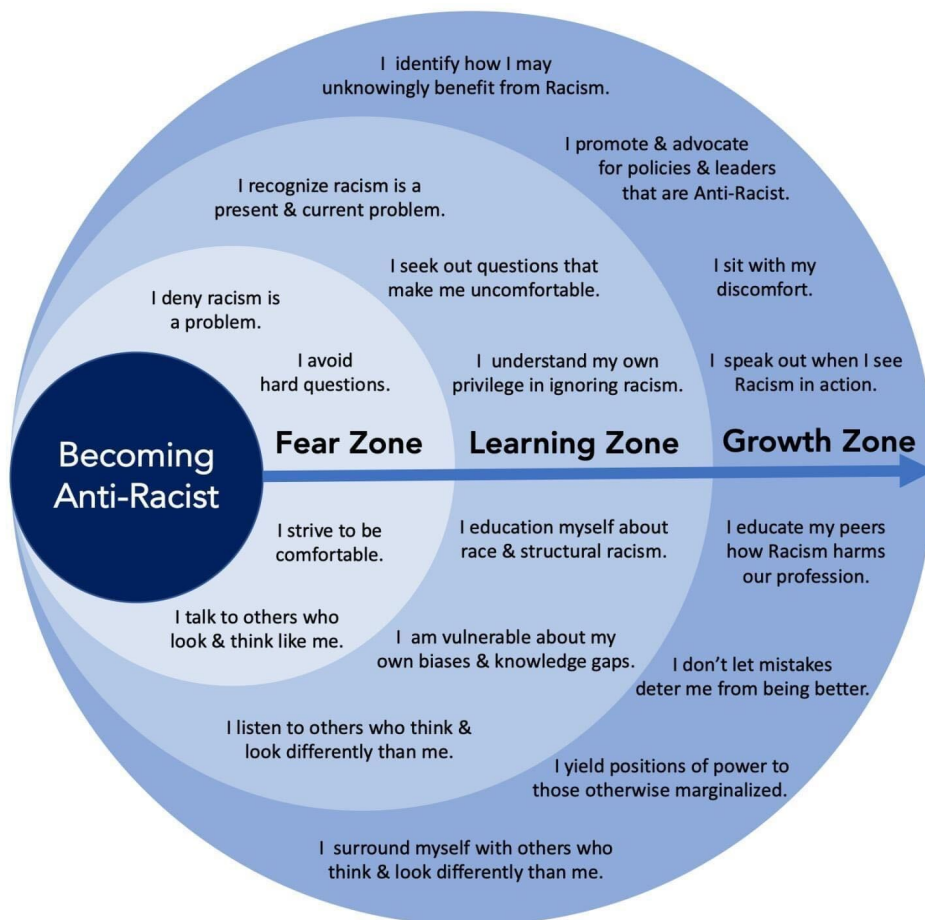
Becoming an anti-racist takes time and commitment. To promote learning, understanding, healing, and collaboration, we have developed this discussion guide that provides resources and a framework to create a meaningful dialogue between early childhood regional partners, BBF regional councils, and the SAC.

Framing (for discussion and follow-up)

An equitable early childhood education system supports all children's health and development, including socio-emotional development related to a child's cultural, racial, and linguistic identity. When we look at issues impacting all of our councils, creating a system that ensures each and every child has access to high quality opportunities is of critical importance. We know this is, unfortunately, not the case.

Achieving the goal of a more equitable system requires attention to racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, given the demographics of young children and the early childhood workforce and the large racial inequities in opportunities and outcomes for these populations.

***The image below helps illustrate the zones of growth and contextualizes the "work" and shifts of perspectives that occur in each zone: (source: Andrew M. Ibrahim MD)*



Meeting development

- Agenda development-set aside 15-45 minutes each council to
- Sample Desired Outcomes
 - Bring intention and awareness to racism discrimination and systemic barriers embedded in our systems.
 - Build familiarity to lean into discomfort that comes with talking about racism and discrimination
 - Understand what those barriers are and how it impacts children and families with whom we work
 - Understand how our identity, life experience, power and privilege influence our personal bias and role perpetuating racism and discrimination
 - Apply an equity and social justice lens to inform strategy and decision making

Set An Intention

To support and advance the conversation, setting an intention helps create a safe place for open dialogue. Mindfulness is a helpful tool for grounding and preparing folks for a meeting/discussion that focuses on anti-racism work.

**Here's a sample guided meditation script that was used at the Oct 2020 SAC Meeting: [Tonglen Practice](#)*

Create/Propose Ground Rules Together

Examples of ground rules (adapted from [YWCA Anti-Racism Discussion Guide](#))

- ❖ CREATE SPACE for grace.
- ❖ This is not an easy discussion for anyone.
- ❖ Emotions like anger, fear, defensiveness, shame, and grief may appear.
- ❖ RECOGNIZE that racism—both direct and vicarious—has a profound personal impact on African Americans. George Floyd could have been our father, husband, brother, son.
- ❖ GIVE CREDIT for being brave enough to come to the table. People may say things that are hurtful or ignorant. It may even feel intentional. Often it is not. We are all struggling.
- ❖ LISTEN, REFLECT, RESPOND—in that order.
- ❖ Lean into discomfort.
- ❖ WALK AWAY if it gets to be too much, and never challenge anyone for needing a break.
- ❖ Ask: are there any others you would like to add?

Agree Upon Shared Language and Definitions

Diversity asks, "Who's in the room?"

Equity responds: "Who is trying to get in the room but can't? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?"

Inclusion asks, "Has everyone's ideas been heard?"

Justice responds, “Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”

Diversity asks, “How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?”

Equity responds, “What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?”

Inclusion asks, “Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?”

Justice challenges, “Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”

- Dafina-Lazarus Stewart

Discussion questions on shared language and definitions

- *How have you used one or more of these terms in your work?*
- *Why is using these terms properly and having shared language important?*
- *Divide into small groups and share examples of how you may have mis-used one of these terms and what you would say now.*
- *At the Council, how do you promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice? (be specific to be sure people are using and understanding terms clearly and not clumping them together).*

Use Conversation Starters to Lead Meaningful Discussions

- ❖ President Obama talking about race and the link to early childhood

Short Clip:

FSFrameMovie (1).MOV

36 MB QuickTime Movie36 MB — [Click to download](#)

The entire podcast can be found here:

http://www.wtfpod.com/podcast/episodes/episode_613_-_president_barack_obama

- ❖ Read Anitracist Baby & use 1-2 Discussion Guide starters from the back of the book

[Anitracist Baby by Ibram X. Kendi](#)

Sample Discussion starters from the book:

- ❖ Share your own experiences with racism
- ❖ Challenge the idea that all people are treated the same

Brene Brown also interviews Ibram Kendi here:

[Brené with Ibram X. Kendi on How to Be an Antiracist](#)

- ❖ Watch Brandon Leake perform his poem [“Pookie,”](#) which addresses the Black Lives Matter movement
- ❖ Invite partners to share a meaningful real story that illustrates systemic racism
- ❖ Watch Empowering Educators (First Book) Series of 8-10 min videos:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-zZwYNUQMh0ycRc2uTg33UMbleOPiW3s>
- ❖ Create a Council Book Club and read Jacqueline Woodson’s book [Brown Girl Dreaming](#)
- ❖ [VT Action and Allyship Guide](#) has a great list of additional books, videos, etc.

- ❖ First set of [Recommendations of Vermont's Racial Equity Task Force](#)

Provide Reflective Questions as Follow-up

- ❖ Have you ever felt impacted by systemic racism, either for your detriment or benefit?
- ❖ How well do you believe your program/community/council demonstrates a commitment to diversity for the workforce and for the families you serve?
- ❖ What strategies has your program/community/council taken to address implicit bias?
- ❖ Reflect on an example where you observed a change in your *"zones of growth"*? *How about* a change in your organization?
- ❖ How do we capture the power of this moment to build real and sustainable change?

Regional Council Actions

The [Equity Bookmark](#) can serve as a guide to drafting new strategies to ensure we are considering the impact of our work.

Share out any lessons learned from council dialog. Also share any strategies, promotion, or steps your council takes as you move forward with these discussions.