

Look! As easy as that, we are already into **Week 2 of our 14-Week Equity Challenge**.

If you had the opportunity in Week 1 to listen to the opening podcast episode of our friend John Biewen's *Seeing White* series, you heard a couple of very troubling, vile, disturbing examples of hate speech. This is what most of us think of when we think of racism – interpersonal racism. But there are multiple levels of racism, and only seeing this one level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place. To learn more about the multiple levels of racism, watch the brief (about 4-minutes) video below called [Moving the Race Conversation Forward](#).

Over the course of these next 13 weeks, we will look at all of this. We first, though, must start at the beginning and look at the origins of the concept of race. There are lots of good resources in this week's challenge, but the second episode of the *Seeing White* series, called [How Race was Made](#), packs a punch as Biewen examines the origins of race and concludes that race is not a biological fact. While race may be politically and socially real, it is “anthropological nonsense.”

We will also explore how our social identities affect how we experience the world. In order for us to develop a keen sense of diversity, equity and inclusion, we seek to understand our own personal racial and social identities. Understanding the process of racial identity development is important for self-awareness, relationship building, and equity work. We are, all of us, a wonderful mixture and fusion of identities and experiences; and we invite you to reflect specifically on where you are in the different stages of racial identity development.

We again turn to the [United Way's Equity Framework](#) to give us a grounding and a better shared understanding of foundational equity language and concepts.

Race: A socially constructed way of grouping people based on skin color and other apparent physical differences, which has no genetic or scientific basis. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.

Ethnicity: Identifies groups that share a common identity-based ancestry, language, or culture. It is often based on religion, beliefs, customs, memories of migration or colonization, and current shared experiences.

Racial identity: A sense of collective identity that is based on a perceived common heritage with a racial group. The concept of racial identity takes into account the complexity of lived experiences and systems of power and privilege perpetuated by the ideology of race.

Intersectionality: An analysis of the connections between systems of oppression (e.g., racism and classism, racism and sexism) and how individuals experience those intersecting or compounding systems of oppression or privilege.

As you prepare to look at the content for this week, take time during your day to observe the levels of racism that are alive in the spaces you move through. Some of those levels will be quite visible and some quite hidden and “embedded” in other systems around you.

In addition, take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

- When and how did you become aware of your racial or ethnic identity?
- Think about a moment when your racial or ethnic identity took on a particular meaning for you.
- Think about a moment when your racial or ethnic identity took on a particular meaning for others.
- What are some of the identities you hold that you think about most/least often?
- What other aspects of your identity, heritage or cultural background impact you?
- Consider which identities affect your opportunities, choices, experiences, setbacks, advantages, etc., in comparison to others.
- Can you think of any ways in which your identities may intersect and create a unique experience or set of experiences?

A helpful tool both for reflection and group discussion is the identity wheel. It serves as a visual aid to highlight the many different ways people define themselves. Check it out the social identity wheel activity, under the helpful links section of the [challenge home page](#), offered by our colleagues at the United Way for Southern Michigan.

Some housekeeping ...

If you are new to the Challenge this week, please help us by completing the brief [pre-challenge survey](#). Also, be sure to go back to our home page at www.uwgn.org/equity to review the materials and content from **Week 1: DEI – Preparing for the Challenge**.

Also on the home page, we provide a tracking tool for those who are interested, as well as a sample discussion guide for those completing the Challenge with friends and families or co-workers.

READ

[Race and Racial Identity](#)

Start off with this article from the National Museum of African American History & Culture to learn the difference between race and racial identity. (About a 6-minute read)

[What's the Different Between Racism and Prejudice?](#)

Nearly 40% of white Americans said they believe that the United States has made the changes necessary to give white and Black people equal rights, according to a Pew Research Center study. However, just 8% of Black Americans said they believe this to be the case. It is important to discuss the difference between prejudice and racism since some do not recognize that the two are distinct and that racism still very much exists. (About a 5-Minute-Read)

WATCH

[Moving the Race Conversation Forward](#)

Founded in 1981, Race Forward brings systemic analysis and an innovative approach to complex race issues to help people take effective action toward racial equity. This brief video discusses one of the traps that we make when talking about race: focusing too much on individuals and not enough on systems. The video also presents the different levels of racism that we present in the opening description of the Week 2 content. (About 4 Minutes)

[The Myth of Race, Debunked in 3 Minutes](#)

While we prefer the *Seeing White* segment (below in "Listen"), this brief 3-minute video can get you started. You may know exactly what race you are, but how would you prove it if somebody disagreed with you? Jenée Desmond Harris explains. (About 3 Minutes)

NOTE: To read the article (11 Ways that Race isn't Real) that accompanies this short video above, click [here](#).

[Race, Ethnicity, Nationality and Jellybeans](#)

Definitions of the terms "race," "ethnicity," and "nationality" ... as explained by Jellybeans. (About 2 minutes)

[Unpacking My Baggage: Re-Framing Racial Identity](#)

In this three-minute TEDx Talk, Abbi Van Hook, then a college student at North Central College (IL), spoke about how heritage and culture play roles in shaping racial identity. Today, Van Hook is an Associate attorney and in 2021 was selected for inclusion into the National Black Lawyers' "Top 40 under 40 Black Lawyers in Illinois," an honor granted to only a select group of lawyers for their superior skills and qualifications in the field. (About 3 minutes)

[What is Intersectionality?](#)

This short video introduces intersectionality and how it can impact individuals in the workplace. (About 3 minutes)

[The Urgency of Intersectionality](#)

More than 30 years ago, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality. Crenshaw began to use the term "intersectionality" to deal with the fact that many of our social problems like racism and sexism are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice. As she says, if you're standing in the path of multiple forms of exclusion, you're likely to get hit by both. In this incredibly moving talk, she calls on us to bear witness to this reality and speak up for victims of prejudice. Please be aware that this video is very powerful and could trigger strong emotions. (About 19 minutes)

[Exploring Racial Identity](#)

In this thoughtful and provocative conversation from May of this year, three biracial women explore racial identity on a segment of KTTV Fox-11 Good Day LA. Sara Blanchard and Misasha Suzuki-Graham both are biracial - White and Asian. The two met more than 25 years ago at a racial identity discussion while going to Harvard University. They talked to each other about their own experiences and haven't stopped since. They've remained friends over the years and together launched a podcast to involve others in their conversations and wrote a book called 'Dear White Women: Let's get (un)Comfortable talking about racism'. (About 8 minutes)

LISTEN

[How Race was Made](#)

In the second episode of the series Seeing White, John Biewen explores the origins of race and concludes that race is not a biological fact. While race may be politically and socially real, it is “anthropological nonsense,” says Suzanne Plihcik from [the Racial Equity Institute](#). This well researched and insightful podcast takes a deeper dive looking at the past and present of whiteness, where the idea of being white came from, and what it’s for. (About 29 minutes)

To explore more about racial identity, check out the New York Times series “A Conversation on Race: A Series of Short Films about Identity in America” [here](#).

To learn more and do an even deeper dive into racial and ethnic identity development, consider the work of Dr. Beverly Tatum, psychologist and educator whose research focuses on race in education, racial identity development in teenagers, and assimilation of black families and youth in white neighborhoods. She is the author of the book [“Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?”](#)

GET INVOLVED

[Upcoming Programs at the Castellani Art Muesum](#)

As part of this year’s Challenge, we will be looking to partner with the Castellani Art Museum to share some of their programming that would be of interest to Challenge participants.

The Highwaymen: Black Artists of the Florida Coast

A new exhibit, “The Highwaymen: Black Artists of the Florida Coast,” is on view now through March 31, 2024, and it features 25 paintings by the Highwaymen, a group of African American artists who created stylized, impressionistic landscapes of Florida’s lush wildernesses, beachscapes, and magnificent sunsets. Disenfranchised socio-economically and, at the time, not welcomed into Florida’s mainstream art establishment, the Highwaymen grappled with a constant struggle against systemic racism.

The official opening reception for this exhibit to the general public is **on Thursday, October 5th from 5:30pm-7:30pm**. To read the full story and to register for the reception, click [here](#).

Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On Thursday, September 21, Niagara University will be recognizing “Orange Shirt Day,” with events and programming at the Castellani Art Museum. More information will be forthcoming as the date gets closer. Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day in Canada intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of “Every Child Matters.”

The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations. Wearing orange on both of these days honors the thousands of Survivors of residential schools. On September 30, the government of Canada official recognizes the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation along with Orange Shirt Day. However, again, we will be recognizing this here locally on September 21.