

Welcome to **Week 12 of our Challenge!** For many Americans, be they at work or in school, this is a short week; a week to express gratitude as we spend time with family and friends. By the time we in the United States celebrate Thanksgiving on November 23, many nations who also celebrate the holiday will have finished the leftovers from their family meals. Thanksgiving has origins that trace back well before the U.S. holiday and is celebrated during October in several countries—including Canada, Germany, Grenada, and St. Lucia.

In this country, the dominant narrative around Thanksgiving is tied to the Indigenous community, with a story that says Indigenous people helped European colonialists survive the harsh Eastern Seaboard autumn, and when harvest season came, the two sides gathered for a harmonious feast. We know now that narrative, which was taught to us as early as grade school, is incomplete, and because we are more informed about America's history, we are better able to reconcile around that narrative—given the harm that befell Indigenous communities across the Americas. Recognizing and honoring the truth behind that false narrative is important, even amid the powerful theme of the Thanksgiving story.

Since 1970, Indigenous people & their allies have gathered in Plymouth, Massachusetts, to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. Many Native people do not celebrate the arrival of the Pilgrims & other European settlers. Thanksgiving Day is a reminder of the genocide of millions of Native people, the theft of Native lands and the erasure of Native cultures. Participants in National Day of Mourning honor Indigenous ancestors and Native resilience. It is a day of remembrance and spiritual connection, as well as a protest against the racism and oppression that Indigenous people continue to experience worldwide.

Despite having some level of understanding and acceptance about the real origins of Thanksgiving, most Americans will still be expected to join their families and friends to share a meal over the national holiday. And, given the recent events happening around the world along with the looming start to the next presidential election season, it's also likely that many of our Challenge participants will find themselves, willing or not, in the middle of conversations that they may find uncomfortable or stressful. These conversations may not specifically be about race, but they may be about other divisive and uncomfortable topics. Maybe some of the conversations *will* be about race, or, proxies for race.

Everyone has a different comfort level with difficult conversations. We are all at different places on this journey. Showing up and listening is important too. Some things are painful and upsetting; other times we might become frustrated and angry – either way, we should try our best to accept people's experiences as they are shared with us.

We first introduced you to Dr. Robin DiAngelo way back in **Week 3 - Understanding Privilege**. Last year, Dr. DiAngelo was here in WNY teaming with East Buffalo resident and workshop facilitator Nanette D. Massey to present REAL Talk About Race. DiAngelo coined the phrase "White fragility" (and wrote a book by the same name) to describe the discomfort and

desire for white people to avoid racially charged stress. This avoidance perpetuates racial inequity and prevents meaningful discussion about race and racism; in fact, it can shut down conversations and inhibit constructive actions. Many people of color, multiracial and indigenous people are familiar with this concept but might not know the term.

Talking about topics like race can be difficult, especially when it involves someone we are close to. But it is important. Such conversations can bring up powerful emotions, but your commitment to increasing our awareness is what will help move our community forward. In difficult conversations, knowledge can lead to real change. We offer a number of resources in this week's challenge to get you started.

One tool that may be helpful as a conversation starter was created by two sisters from right here in Buffalo. They created "Pulling the Race Card," a game designed to encourage conversations around race. We have included two resources below on this effort, a brief article in the "Read" section and also a "Listen" from the *Buffalo What's Next?* series. You can also check out the product [here](#).

READ

[How to Have a Respectful Conversation About Racial Justice](#)

Talking about race is hard. But in recent months, concerns about racism and its impact have intensified, continuing to bubble to the surface of our national conversation. So how do we have those discussions in a constructive way? In this AARP article, journalist and editor Carlett Spike offers 7 expert tips on approaching difficult or uncomfortable discussions. (About a 5-minute read)

[Speaking Out Without Tearing Down](#)

It's a moment most educators will recognize: A student has said something biased or promoted a stereotype. There's a ripple through the classroom, but the speaker hasn't noticed. Students look to you expectantly, and you know the statement can't go unaddressed. Most teachers look for opportunities to build a human rights culture and to counter hatred, bigotry, fear-mongering and intolerance. One way to do this, when students make a mistake, is to call them *in* rather than calling them *out*. Doing so prepares them for civic engagement by encouraging a sense of hope and possibility. (About a 6-minute read)

[Beyond the Training: How to Host Meaningful DE&I Conversations at Your Company](#)

It has recently become clear that one-time workplace anti-bias training sessions aren't nearly enough to improve workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I); neither the airing out of equity issues in a single "town hall" nor the mere hiring of a lone diversity professional magically create lasting change. If companies want to be great places to work and attract exceptional talent, they need to systematically address their own biases, open up a transparent dialogue and commit to rigorous anti-racism institutionalization. (About a 6-minute read)

[Should You Teach Your Children About Racism? Of Course – Here's How](#)

Ibram Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist*, offers advice on how to raise a new generation to think differently about race. (About a 7-minute read)

[Pulling the Race Card": Buffalo Sisters Create Game to Encourage Conversation Around Race](#)

How do you talk about issues of race? Where do we start? A pair of sisters from Buffalo hopes to answer those questions and get this conversation started with a game they created. This article is accompanied by a WKBW Buffalo news report. (About a 4-minute read)

WATCH

[How to Have a Good Conversation](#)

When your job hinges on how well you talk to people, you learn a lot about how to have great conversations – and most of us don't converse very well. A great conversation requires a balance between talking and listening. This balance is important because bad communication leads to bad relationships, at home, at work, everywhere. In this Ted Talk, public radio host, reporter, correspondent and podcaster, Celeste Headlee, talks about how to have a good conversation. (About 12 minutes)

['Intergroup Anxiety': Can You Try Too Hard to be Fair?](#)

Why do some of us, despite our best intentions, feel self-conscious when we meet people who are transgender, disabled, or otherwise marginalized by our society? Psychologists call it "intergroup anxiety," and it's very common. But even though intergroup anxiety typically arises from a desire to appear fair to others, it can often end up perpetuating social inequalities. Watch this video to find out how intergroup anxiety affects our lives and learn ways to counter it. (About 6 minutes)

[Is My Skin Brown Because I Drank Chocolate Milk?](#)

When her 3-year-old son told her that a classmate told him that his skin was brown because he drank chocolate milk, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, former president of Spelman College and a visiting scholar at Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service, was surprised. As a clinical psychologist, she knew that preschool children often have questions about racial difference, but she had not anticipated such a question. But through conversations with her preschool son, followed by talking to teachers, colleagues and parents, she came to realize it is the things we don't say and the matters we don't discuss with our children that find their way into racist dialogue and thinking. (About 13 minutes)

[The Standing Rock Resistance and Our Fight for Indigenous Rights](#)

Still invisible and often an afterthought, indigenous peoples are uniting to protect the world's water, lands and history -- while trying to heal from genocide and ongoing inequality. Tribal attorney and Couchiching First Nation citizen Tara Houska chronicles the history of attempts by government and industry to eradicate the legitimacy of indigenous peoples' land and culture, including the months-long standoff at Standing Rock which rallied thousands around the world. "It's incredible what you can do when you stand together," Houska says. "Stand with us -- empathize, learn, grow, change the conversation." (About 11 minutes)

PBS KIDS Talk About Race, Racism & Identity

How do you have serious conversations with your kids? In “PBS KIDS Talk About: Race, Racism, and Identity,” real families sat down to have honest conversations about these important topics in an age-appropriate way and offer viewers ideas to build on as they continue these important conversations at home. (About 11 minutes)

Native American Girls Describe the REAL History Behind Thanksgiving

On the Teen Vogue channel, 6 Native American girls school us on the REAL history of Thanksgiving. (About 2 minutes)

How Teachers are Debunking Some of the Myths of Thanksgiving (PBS News Hour)

School children in the U.S. often celebrate Thanksgiving by dressing up as pilgrims and “Indians.” But these traditions tend to perpetuate myths that are offensive to Native American communities. Education correspondent Kavitha Cardoza takes a look at a new movement aiming to reinvent the ways schools teach Thanksgiving. (About 8 minutes)

LISTEN

['Lean Into Discomfort' When Talking About Race](#)

Listen to Tonya Mosley on this WBUR *Here and Now* segment, “Lean Into Discomfort When Talking About Race.” Then, explore the new web portal [Talking About Race](#) from The National Museum of African American History and Culture, that’s meant to spark discussion, community building, and self-care after the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police. (About 10 minutes)

[Morning Show on WJOP with Mary Jacobsen](#)

If you have a little extra time, listen to this conversation with Mary Jacobsen, Claudia Fox Tree, Penny Lazarus and Brian Greenberg who discuss Thanksgiving inaccuracies, history, and truths around this National Day of Mourning. (About 1 hour)

[The True History and Foods of Thanksgiving](#)

Many Americans no longer celebrate the myth of the Pilgrims and Indians around their dinner tables, but rather savor it as a time to give thanks for the small or large things in life they feel fortunate to have. Unfortunately, many still don't know the real truth about this holiday story which is so fundamental to the founding of our country. This Episode of *The Table Underground* welcomes three indigenous people: Wampanoag Chef Sherry Pocknett, Mohegan Anthropologist Rachel Sayet and Jay Levy who is of indigenous Columbian heritage and works for the Mohegan Tribe. They each speak to the true history of Thanksgiving and how they mark this last Thursday of November each year. (About 50 minutes)

[Buffalo What’s Next? “Pulling the Race Card”](#)

In this episode of the powerful and informative, *Buffalo What’s Next?* series, Buffalo sisters Sara Pearson-Collins and Kezia Pearson talk about their “Pulling the Race Card” exercise and put host Dave Debo through a quick demo of the discussion starter. Please note that this episode leads off with a conversation about lead; the “Pulling the Race Card” segment starts at about the 31-minute mark. (About 30 minutes)