

“Because we often think of bias as a function of overt acts of bigotry, we can sometimes remain blind to the invisible structures, systems, and behaviors that bestow and reinforce that power and privilege on a daily basis.”

– HOWARD J. ROSS  
LIFELONG SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE

**Bias** is a preference in favor of or against a person, group of people, idea or thing that affects our understanding, actions and decisions. Everyone has bias, and often those biases are activated involuntarily and without our awareness or control. In fact, our brains are biologically designed to make sense of the world using these quick judgments. Although bias is automatic, with intentional effort, we can learn to change the way we think and challenge the negative or harmful biases we hold.

**Read**

- [Read this resource](#) to understand the difference between explicit and implicit bias. (4 minutes)
- [Learn about these nine tactics](#) you can practice to confront your implicit bias. (10 minutes)

**Watch**

- [Watch this short video](#) and learn how implicit bias shapes our thinking. (2 minutes)
- [Watch this interview](#) to understand how bias can be triggered when we face stressful situations and how to slow it down in this interview between Trevor Noah and Stanford Professor Jennifer L. Eberhardt. (13 minutes)

**Engage**

- Learn about your own unconscious bias by taking a [Hidden Bias Test](#) developed by psychologists at Harvard, the University of Virginia and the University of Washington. Consider the IATs on race, skin tone, or Arab Muslims.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How have you experienced bias in your own life? What biases do you hold that you are aware of?
2. How might our biases toward others affect how we shape our own lives?
3. Did you notice anything about yourself after taking today’s challenge? Consider sharing this new awareness with a colleague, friend, family member, etc. to deepen your understanding.

**RESOURCES**

If you or someone you know is experiencing a need, United Way and our partners are here to help. Call United Way's 2-1-1 helpline at any time, or visit [UnitedWaySEM.org/Resources](http://UnitedWaySEM.org/Resources) to browse our programs and initiatives to help find child care, utility and tax assistance, food assistance and more.

**TALK TO YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE.**

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Start the conversation. Send the tweet. Share to your story. Make the Facebook post. Sharing what you learn and experience with your family, friends and co-workers is the first step toward allyship.

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We learn to be racist, therefore we can learn not to be racist. Racism is not genetical. It has everything to do with power.”

– JANE ELLIOTT  
AMERICAN SCHOOLTEACHER AND DIVERSITY EDUCATOR

This week, we have examined concepts like bias, privilege, and racism. Where do these ideas come from? How are they perpetuated? From a young age, children can become keenly aware of the differences between the people around them. How they make sense of these differences is shaped by family, friends, community, schools and media, among other influences and experiences. This process, called socialization, develops our values, beliefs, behaviors and even norms that play out in society. Socialization is a lifelong process but is critical during childhood.

**Racial and ethnic socialization** is the process through which children learn different attitudes and behaviors about racial groups. According to [RESilience Initiative](#), this process has influence on “children’s racial identity and self-concept, beliefs about the way the world works, and repertoire of strategies and skills for coping with and navigating racism and inter- and intra-racial relationships and interactions.”

For adults, the media often plays an outsized role in our ongoing process of socialization. The news, television, movies, books, and music we consume shape our understanding of race and ethnicity through representations of different people and cultures. Throughout history, media in all forms has played a vital role in raising public awareness on instances of racism, discrimination and bias.

Racial and ethnic socialization is important for us to understand because it informs our beliefs, conversations and actions about race and racism.

**Read**

- We all play a role in children’s racial and ethnic socialization. [Look through these resources](#) on engaging children in conversations about race. (5 minutes)
- [Read this resource](#) to understand how people with children in their life of different races intentionally or unintentionally socialize children.
- Review a [Pew Research Study](#) that uncovered how Black, Hispanic and white adults feel the news media misunderstands them. (5 minutes)

**Watch**

- [Watch this video](#) to learn more about socialization and how it shows up in many areas of our life and identity (gender, class, race, religion, politics, etc.). (10 minutes)
- [Watch a panelist](#) discuss how structural racism and bias show up in newsrooms and the content consumed by the public. (10-minute read + 60-minute video)

**Listen**

- [Listen to these stories](#) that speak to how racial socialization shapes our individual and collective lives. (3 minutes each)

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What messages (direct and indirect) did you learn about race growing up?
2. What do you need to unlearn about race and ethnicity?
3. What messages have you received about race from the media you consume?
4. What are ways you can broaden your understanding of diversity-related issues by seeking perspectives beyond media outlets? For example, building relationships, consulting local organizations or looking at local history and experts in your community.

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I feel a little bitter that most non-disabled people do not have this dilemma of whether they will exchange their privacy to be seen as human. I am also aware that I am not alone in this experience, and that many marginalized people are put in the position of having to prove their humanity every day.”

– ALICE WONG  
DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVIST, FOUNDER AND  
DIRECTOR OF DISABILITY VISIBILITY PROJECT

**Disability** is having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having one. The World Health Organization reports that almost everyone is likely to experience some form of temporary or permanent disability within their lifetime.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law in 1990, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all areas of public life. Though this was a major step toward equity for all, there remain numerous inequities that still negatively impact people with disabilities. A few examples of these inequities include unequal access to adequate health care, limited appropriate services in rural and remote areas, exclusion from formal education, and physically inaccessible public spaces.

This inequity is perpetuated by the ideology of **ableism**: discrimination that favors able-bodied people. It is the intentional or unintentional discrimination or oppression of individuals with disabilities.

**Read**

- Learn about and consider the potential effects of spatial injustice in society by [reading “Ableism and the Struggle for Spatial Justice.”](#) (8 minutes)
- [Read “Ableism 101”](#) by Ashley Eisenmenger. (3 minutes)
- [Learn how COVID-19 has exacerbated inequities](#) for people with disabilities. (3 minutes)

**Watch**

- [Watch Brendan Campbell’s TED Talk](#) on “Confronting Ableism.” (19 minutes)

**Act**

- Take steps toward ending ableism by connecting or attending an event with Southeastern Michigan organizations like [Disability Network Oakland and Macomb](#) and [The Arc Detroit](#).

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How did today’s material make you feel? What did you learn from today’s material?
2. After reviewing today’s resources, reflect on your social identities in the context of the country you live in. In which areas related to disability are you privileged? Are there areas related to disability which you experience inequity or discrimination?
3. Day One has a Social Identity Wheel Activity. This is a great resource to reflect on your social identities like disability and how your identities intersect.
4. What are ways you can create a more inclusive space that does not center on ableism? Think of your school, workplace, home, religious group, etc.
5. What material from today do you still have questions about or want to learn more about? What are ways you can further explore those questions?

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