

A Discussion Guide

1. If you are in a majority white space, talk with people of color in advance—in a private, safe setting—to hear their concerns about the upcoming discussion. Ask what subjects they are eager to discuss, and if there are subjects they do not want to discuss. Ask what would make them feel safe and comfortable. Then, incorporate these needs and boundaries into the agreed-upon parameters of the discussion. Be prepared to enforce them instead of waiting on the few people of color in the group to risk ostracization by speaking out.
2. Be aware of who in the group is given the most space to talk and try to center the conversation around voices of color—and, in particular, nonmale voices of color.
3. Ask all attendees what they hope to get out of the book, and out of the group discussion. Encourage group members to verbalize their intentions so that everyone has a better chance of reaching aligned goals.
4. Make space for the fear, anger, and hurt of people of color. Abuse is never okay, but what is often called “abuse” in heated discussions on race is often simply people of color expressing very justified emotions about living in a white supremacist society. It’s fine to maintain firm boundaries about what sort of language and behavior is and is not tolerated, but consider re-reading the chapter on tone policing (chapter 15: “But What If I Hate Al Sharpton?”) before you decide what language is acceptable.

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5. *Don't let racism be a safe space.* When people of color finally feel safe enough to honestly talk about their experiences, nothing hurts more than to be answered with a racist reply. It is an act of violence against people of color and a betrayal of the group. Be very clear about this from the start, and be prepared to remove offenders if they are making people of color feel unsafe.
6. Try to tie the discussion to issues that are happening in your group's community.
7. Don't be afraid to pause conversations that are becoming overly heated, or if you feel that people of color in the group are not feeling safe.
8. Do not allow white group members to treat their discomfort as harm done to them. Remember, the primary focus of this book—and therefore, hopefully, your discussion group—is how we can talk about the systemic harm done to people of color by a white supremacist society. It is the instinct of our culture to center white emotions and experiences; don't let that happen in these discussions. The comfort of white attendees should be very, very far down on the priority list. If white attendees feel strongly that they need to center their feelings and experiences in the discussion, set up a space away from the group where they can talk with other white people. Do not let it take over the group discussion or become a burden that people of color in the group have to bear.
9. Don't allow people of color to be turned into priests, therapists, or dictionaries for white group members.

If you are white, you shouldn't be looking to the people of color in the group to absolve you of your past sins, process your feelings of guilt, or help you understand every phrase in the book that gives you pause.

10. Acknowledge that your discussion is a very, very small step in your efforts to tackle issues on race. Even if you are reading this book to help you process a specific issue affecting your community, workplace, school, or organization, chances are that it will not be solved in a few gatherings. This book is meant to help you have better conversations in the hope that you will have many of them. Centuries-old constructs of race and generations of systems of oppression are not torn down in a few hours. Appreciate the small moments of progress as you make them—because every bit of progress matters—and also know that you will still have more to do. Do not allow yourself to become overly discouraged by the task ahead of you.
11. For people of color in the gr

4. Throughout the book, the author makes it clear that this book is written for both white people and people of color. But does the author expect white people and people of color to read and experience this book in the same way? What are some of the ways in which the author indicates how she expects white people and people of color to react to and interact with portions of the book? What are some of the ways in which the author discusses the different roles that white people and people of color will play in fighting