

# DAY 4: Difficult Conversations . . . and How to Have Them

**Have you heard of the term “White Fragility?”** For white people, “White Fragility” refers to their discomfort and avoidance of racially charged stress, which perpetuates racial inequity and prevents meaningful discussions about race and racism. Many people of color, multiracial, and Indigenous people are familiar with this concept, but may not be familiar with the term.

[Dr. Robin DiAngelo](#) describes white fragility as a state of being for white people in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves can include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors shut down conversations, and inhibit actions which, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

We know that talking about topics like race can feel challenging, especially with those closest to us-- Thanksgiving dinner, anyone? Our partners at [Kekere Freedom School](#) have curated resources to help parents and caregivers talk to children about race and racism.

Below are tools to empower you to spark a conversation.

## Today’s Challenge:

**OPTION 1:** [Take a quick quiz](#) from the publisher of “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism,” Robin DiAngelo, PhD, to see if you exhibit “White Fragility” traits. Want to dive in further? Read a [short article by Dr. DiAngelo](#) that unpacks how we continue to reproduce racist outcomes and live segregated lives.

**OPTION 2:** Listen to Scene On Radio’s podcast series [Seeing White](#) which aims to discuss racism by looking into the history of how the concept of ‘whiteness’ came to be.

**OPTION 3:** Listen to this 10 min article from Tonya Mosley, [Lean Into Discomfort When Talking About Race](#) and then explore [Talking About Race](#) a new web portal 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.

**OPTION 4:** Read the AARP’s [How to Have a Respectful Conversation about Racial Justice](#), which describes seven expert tips on approaching difficult or uncomfortable conversations.

**OPTION 5:** Review this list of [28 common racist attitudes](#) and behaviors that indicate a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.

**FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN:**

- Watch songs and short documentaries of Sesame Workshop's Coming Together, [developmentally appropriate resources to help you guide your child to be an upstander to racism.](#)
- [Watch Common read "Let's Talk About Race."](#) a book by Julius Lester which offers us the opportunity to discuss race and how racial identity affects the way we view ourselves and one another.
- [Watch PBS KIDS Talk About: Race, Racism, and Identity, where 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.

*Stay tuned for more content for families and caregivers-- our first Family Friday is tomorrow.*

**Share your reflections** on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#unitedforequity** and tag **@uwwashtenaw**.