

DAY 4: Talking About Race Is Challenging for Some. Here's Why.

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. 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.

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 [Stateside interview](#) with the Detroit Equity Action Lab about what white people can do about racism in America. The episode starts by asking the question ‘What can white people do about racism in America?’ to people walking around Ann Arbor and Northville.

OPTION 3: Review this list of [28 common racist attitudes](#) and behaviors that indicate a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.

OPTION 4: 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.

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#) and tag [@uwwashtenaw](#).