

The Lifelong Journey of Becoming an Ally

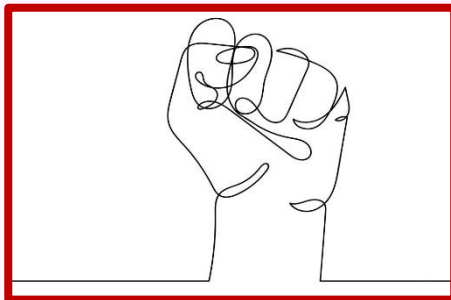
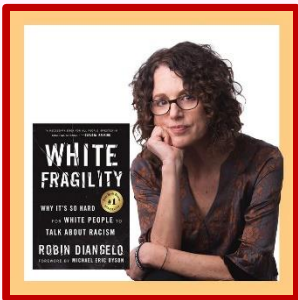
Honors College Visiting Scholars Series with Dr. Robin DiAngelo, March 2021

“Transformation of a broken system doesn’t happen quickly or easily. You may not see or feel the positive impact of your white allyship during the next month, the next year, the next decade or even your lifetime. But don’t ever stop. Being a white ally matters because you will be part of what turns the tide someday” -Ms. Janee Woods, author of *12 Ways to Be a White Ally to Black People* (Woods, 2014)

Seek & listen to diverse perspectives

Diversify media consumption by actively seeking a variety of sources including consuming different media like television, radio, the internet, online sources, and sources that are printed like books.

Actively **seek sources that include diverse perspectives and listen to people of color.** This is significant as it allows individuals to walk in others’ shoes, expand their understanding of what others are going through, and to ultimately **“shape your awareness, understanding, and thinking about political, economic, and social issues”** (Woods, 2014).



Education offers a pathway to change

Take responsibility for educating yourself, rather than asking minority groups to carry this weight and expecting them to have this responsibility. Support and engage with projects and businesses of black individuals.

The following resource highlights a list of **recommended anti-racist readings for adults:**
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/articles/anti-racist-books-and-resources>

The following contains **31 different resources for adults** and includes a **glossary of terms to engage in conversations about racial equity:**

<https://www.self.com/story/white-ally-resources>

What barriers exist to allyship?

Tip for allyship:

Remember to **consider the intersections between race and gender.** These factors are connected and impact the approach to social justice. A black, queer woman may experience additional levels of discrimination, or black men may experience different stereotypes. It is important to consider these factors as **“The more we consider the intersection of oppression, the better we can dismantle the magnitude to intricate socio-political forces** (*“How to be a white ally,”* 2015).

Dr. DiAngelo’s work encompasses the reactions that white individuals demonstrate when their perspectives may be challenged. **Dr. DiAngelo** addressed the concept of **white fragility**, describing the feelings of defensiveness that many white individuals experience when asked to consider perspectives surrounding racial tension. In an interview, Dr. DiAngelo explains that this reaction helps white individuals to **maintain control and power and benefit from the privilege** that is given (Shapiro, 2020).

What does this mean for individuals who are committed to allyship?

Individuals should be prepared for **defensive** reactions from white individuals and should be prepared for their ideas to be viewed as **unpopular in some situations.** They may be met with anger, guilt, or even people who prefer to not engage with the ideas, to feel more comfortable. Persistence in these situations is important, given that **“staying silent when you witness oppression is the same as supporting suppression”** (Woods, 2014).

Allyship for Families

Allyship is not limited by demographic boundaries, including age—**children** across the world have demonstrated their **ability to make a difference** in their communities. In fact, one of the most important dimensions of allyship is inspiring and **supporting future generations**, since dismantling systemic racism necessitates continual learning, growth, and a commitment to change (Wray, 2020).

Start conversations early

Adults in the United States maintain that conversations around race should begin around when children are 5. However, research indicates that **9-month-olds already demonstrate the ability to categorize faces** and 3-year-old children associate negative characteristics with some races (“Children Notice Race,” 2020).

Words matter

Avoid using phrases like “I don’t see color.” The idea of raising children to be “colorblind” is harmful: children will notice differences, and this provides an opportunity to celebrate our different cultures, backgrounds, and identities (“Children Notice Race,” 2020).



“To say ‘I’m colorblind’ is to say ‘I have the privilege of never having to worry about color.’ Those of us who wear skin of brown don’t have that luxury . . . the key is to teach our children that differences aren’t bad” Ms. Julie Lythcott Haims, author and Stanford Dean
(Parker Pope, 2020)



Resources for books & toys

This resource provides a recommended list of 14 different **books** for children and teenagers to read and engage with, supporting anti-racism:

<https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/antiracist-books-for-kids-and-teens/>

This resource provides ideas for developing a playroom with **toys that promote diversity**, as children often learn through play and role modeling with their toys:

<https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/how-to-build-a-diverse-playroom/>

Resources for parents

This resource includes a list of podcasts, and resources to watch and steps to take to raise kids who are anti-racist:

<https://themomtrotter.com/resources-for-raising-anti-racist-children/>

Inspiration

This resource provides an example of a child who is making a difference, with one girl’s mission to change crayons:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7143557/girl-7-fundraises-diverse-crayons-books/#:~:text=One%20young%20girl's%20dream%20is,schools%20in%20her%20home%20state.>

References

- Akpan, K. (2020, June 25). *How to Be Anti-Racist + Over 50 Tips & Resources for Raising Anti-Racist Children*. The Mom Trotter. Retrieved from <https://themomtrotter.com/resources-for-raising-anti-racist-children/>
- Anti-Racist Books and Resources for Our Readers*. (2020). Penguin Random House. Retrieved from <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/articles/anti-racist-books-and-resources>
- Borges, A. (2020, June 5). *31 Resources That Will Help You Become a Better White Ally*. Retrieved from <https://www.self.com/story/white-ally-resources>
- Children Notice Race Several Years Before Adults Want to Talk About It*. (2020, August 27). American Psychological Association. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/08/children-notice-race>
- How to be a white ally*. (2015, June 7). Blavity News. Retrieved from <https://blavity.com/how-to-be-a-white-ally/how-to-be-a-white-ally?category1=opinion>.
- Ivey-Colson, K., & Turner, L. (2020, September 8). *10 Keys to Everyday Anti-Racism*. Greater Good Science Center. Retrieved from https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten_keys_to_everyday_anti_racism
- Morrison, T. (2020, November 10). *The Best Anti-Racism Toys for Kids*. Happy Toddler Playtime. Retrieved March 12, 2021, from <https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/how-to-build-a-diverse-playroom/>
- Parker-Pope, T. (2020, June 24). *How to Raise an Anti-Racist Kid*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/well/family/how-to-raise-an-anti-racist-kid.html>
- Reeve, J. (2020, June 18). *14 Antiracist Books for Kids and Teens Recommended By BIPOC Teachers and Librarians*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/antiracist-books-for-kids-and-teens/>
- Rivera, S. (2018). *The Guide to Becoming a Black Community Ally*. Southern Utah University. Retrieved from <https://www.suu.edu/diversity/allyship-guides/black-ally.html>
- Shapiro, A. (2020, June 18). *'Interrupt the Systems': Robin DiAngelo On 'White Fragility' and Anti-racism*. NPR. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/17/879136931/interrupt-the-systems-robin-diangelo-on-white-fragility-and-anti-racism>

Woods, J. (2014, August 19). *12 Ways to Be a White Ally to Black People*. The Root. Retrieved from <https://www.theroot.com/12-ways-to-be-a-white-ally-to-black-people-1790876784>

Wray, M. (2020, July 06). *Girl, 7, raises thousands to put multicultural crayons, books in classrooms*. Global News. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/7143557/girl-7-fundraises-diverse-crayons-books/#:~:text=One%20young%20girl's%20dream%20is,schools%20in%20her%20home%20state.>

Images

[A Call to Action for White Educators Who Seek to Be Anti-Racist] *PBS Education*. (2020, June 4). Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/education/blog/a-call-to-action-for-white-educators-who-seek-to-be-anti-racist>

[Finally! Crayons for every skin tone] [Photography] *Pinterest*. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/345440233887834241/>

[Local girl raises funds to donate multicultural crayons to schools] [Photograph] *KSBY News*. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.ksby.com/news/local-news/local-girl-raises-funds-to-donate-multicultural-crayons-to-schools>

[What is White Fragility?] [Photograph] *Shondaland*. (2020, July 1). Retrieved from <https://www.shondaland.com/inspire/a32982443/what-is-white-fragility/>