



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

CultureRead 2020

A Community Book Read on Antiracism

**Read
Reflect
Respond**

Contact the City of Springfield
Community Development Department at:
76 E. High St., Springfield Ohio 45502, or call (937) 328-7380
www.springfieldohio.gov

Message from Nancy Flinchbaugh



“To lead is to be vulnerable every minute of every day; there is no courage without vulnerability.”
- Brene Brown

Dear Friends,

We offer CultureRead 2020 with the hope that you will dare to be both vulnerable and courageous when it comes to leading Springfield into an antiracist future.

May you be vulnerable enough to read one or all of the CultureRead books and reflect on your own participation in the systemic racism that plagues people of color in Springfield and in the USA. It's hard and important work to look at ourselves, our institutions and our government to ask in what ways are people of color experiencing systemic racism. It's okay to be upset, confused, embarrassed, defensive, and angry. Our feelings are part of who we are. And along with that, most of us must admit we don't have all the answers to this problem.

But also, may this project spur you to take leadership with courage to move into action to change these systems and build an antiracist Springfield. Never doubt that you can make a difference.

This booklet will help introduce you to the three books the CultureRead Committee has selected to read and will provide links to explore these books in more detail. If there are other books you prefer, please choose them.

In January 2021, we will invite you to discuss with us possible antiracist actions we can undertake as individuals and as a community. Sign up at springfieldohio.gov/culturefest to make sure you are contacted about this meeting.

Together we can address racism and build a better future together.

Sincerely,

Nancy Flinchbaugh
CultureRead 2020/City of Springfield

CultureRead 2020



Booklet

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About this Workbook

The CultureRead 2020 Workbook is provided as a resource for your small group, or for you as an individual, as you explore the on-ramp you have chosen to get started on your journey toward a better understanding of racial justice and antiracism in Springfield.

Discover some of the on-ramp stories of individuals who are a part of CultureRead 2020. Discover the background and why these individuals chose the on-ramp book they are reading.

Review questions and prompts for the three 2020 selected books. Decide if these questions are ones you will reflect upon or if you would like to design a different set of reflections for yourself or your group. Reflection questions within this workbook are those most recommended by book club and book groups examining the 2020 books. Some of the resources included in this workbook come directly from the authors themselves. All of the information included in this booklet is part of the public domain.

This workbook is designed with embedded hyperlinks. You may choose to print the workbook and write in it; however, you may not want to print each and every page of resources. As such, you will find hyperlinks to book discussions and prompts as well as links to more in-depth resources. As you click on these links, you may choose to print these pages as additional material to your workbook – or you can enjoy the guided workbook electronically throughout your journey.

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Finding Your On-Ramp

Preparation and Assessment

Adapted from "[Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students](#)"

Many of us avoid talking about race and racism. It's uncomfortable, may lead to conflict, and calls for skills few of us possess. Often, this avoidance comes down to a fear of misspeaking, sounding racist or unintendedly doing harm.

Part of getting ready to talk about race and racism is to first deal with our own fears. Before initiating a discussion, or a reflection, do a simple self-assessment.

Consider the following statements and select the one that best describes how you feel.

- *I would rather not talk about race/racism.*
- *I am very uncomfortable talking about race/racism.*
- *I am usually uncomfortable talking about race/racism*
- *I am usually comfortable talking about race/racism.*

Once you have an idea of where you are, or what your on-ramp might be, convene or join a CultureRead group that matches your “on-ramp” and get started on this journey. You may also wish to read the book by yourself. Then Read and Reflect, then consider your Response.

CultureRead Groups

- "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo
- "Me and White Supremacy" by Layla Saad
- "How to be an Antiracist" by Ibram X Kendi

Or choose a different book that speaks specifically to your religious tradition or culture about addressing racism.

A limited number of copies of the above three books will be available from the Clark County Public Library. These copies are available through the generous support of program sponsors.



Think About yourself and respond

The hard part of talking about race/racism is:

The beneficial part of talking about race/racism is:

What is my on-ramp?

1. I want to learn more. I'm just starting to think about this.
2. I understand there are problems with racism, but I don't see myself as racist.
3. I'm very concerned about systemic racism and want to take action to dismantle it.
4. I'm tired of being mistreated as a person of color and I want this to end now.

Avoiding conversations about race and racism can arise from our own fears of being vulnerable. As you prepare for CultureRead 2020, consider these questions

What will a discussion about race and racism potentially expose about me?

List three vulnerabilities that you worry could limit your effectiveness

Identify three strengths that you believe will help you lead open and honest dialogues

List specific needs that, if met, would improve your ability to facilitate difficult conversations.

Join a Book Group Host a Group or Explore on Your Own

Read and Listen to authors speaking through about systemic racism in America.

Reflect on your place in this process.

Respond with positive antiracist actions to improve our community.

CultureRead 2020 was developed by the City of Springfield Community Development Department and CultureFest Steering Committee. After COVID-19 interrupted the community's annual CultureFest celebration of diversity, heritage and culture, CultureRead was brought forth to support our community's ongoing commitment to understanding and celebrating diversity. CultureRead 2020 is proud and grateful to be supported by many partners and organizations.



White Fragility

By Robin
DeAngelo

A Reflection from Joan Elder on Choosing "White Fragility"

When I saw the email from Wittenberg University with the opportunity to join a reading group, I couldn't pass it up.

I know I'm not the only one who wants to reflect on the nature of my place in society and how my race plays a part in it. But I want to go beyond personal reflection and talk with others about their experiences.

As a student at Wittenberg (many years ago) I valued hearing differing points of view. I learned that I don't always have to agree with others but it helps to understand them so we can work and live together in a climate of respect.

In my work at Community Health Foundation, I'm seeking a better understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion.

In many seminars and workshops on the issue, the book "White Fragility" is suggested as a primer on the topic of racial equity.

Since I haven't found the time to read it on my own, I know that a book group will give me the nudge I need to pick it up.

I trust the Wittenberg staff to lead good, thoughtful discussions and look forward to meeting with others who share a desire for personal growth.

[Read the discussion guide](#)

Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor

By Layla
F. Saad

A Reflection from United Way of Clark, Champaign, and Madison Counties Staff on choosing "Me and White Supremacy"

United Way of Clark, Champaign & Madison Counties staff, chose to read “Me and White Supremacy” by Layla F. Saad for CultureRead 2020.

“Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor” is a powerful statement that drew us to this book. As United Way, we fund and collaborate with agencies in our community that service every type of person. Our organization has made it our mission to hold these agencies and ourselves accountable for making an impact in our communities by asking the hard questions. What is a harder question than “how”?

How do we combat racism? How do we change the world? How do we create a better system and more united community to pass along to the next generation? After reading descriptions and reviews of each of the three selected books, we chose this book due to Saad’s outlook on systemic racism and approach on how to challenge it.

Saad mentions in the beginning of her book that she often gets individuals after her talks who ask her “How can we end this?” or “What can I do”? She also mentions that more often than not, these are people who want quick answers, but in fact the work that must be put in is long, uncomfortable and extremely challenging. By doing the work that she sets forth, through questions and lesson plans, we hope to broaden our outlooks for ourselves and our organization – so that we can further the United Way mission, the agencies we fund and the community members we serve.

We look forward to learning how to challenge ourselves, our systems and our communities in a way that will make us stronger and more UNITED.

[Complete the Workbook](#)

How to be an Antiracist

By Ibram X. Kendi

A Reflection from Ed Hasecke on choosing "How to Be An Antiracist"

I am participating in CultureRead because the events of this summer compel me to learn and reflect on how race plays a role in our society and how I can be a better ally in the struggle for racial justice.

As people took to the streets in protest after the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer, I found myself feeling angry and frustrated at the inhumanity of that moment. I was also angry with myself for not listening to the voices who have been speaking for years about the unequal treatment of black and brown people and asking people to stand with them in pursuit of a better life.

I have chosen to read "How to be an Anti-Racist" because I want to be a better partner in seeking a just society.

I was inspired by the courage of local residents like Dorian Hunter who organized marches in Springfield for justice. I was inspired by the diversity of turnout at these rallies and the demand for us to all reflect on the roles we play in perpetuating inequality.

I want to engage in conversations that help us as a community acknowledge and wrestle with the role that racism plays in our collective decisions and policies.

I am excited that the City is encouraging this conversation and hope it leads to a more inclusive and just community.

[Go to the Book Club Tool Kit](#)



Preparing for Discussions

Adapted from [Toolkit for Teaching About Racism](#)

Set understood and accepted ground rules

1. What you share within the context of the conversation is confidential, honored, and respected.
2. Use “I” statements – avoid speaking for another or for an entire group.
3. Avoid critiquing others’ experiences; focus on your own experiences.
4. Be honest and willing to share and be vulnerable.
5. Step Up and Step Back – if you tend to be quieter in groups, challenge yourself to share. If you tend to share, make sure there is space for others to share.
6. Listen with curiosity and the willingness to learn and change, resist the desire to interrupt.
7. Suspend judgment. Be open to the wisdom in each person’s story.
8. Be brave and lean into discomfort.
9. Address differences intentionally.
10. Accept non-closure.

Reflect upon the emotions that you are feeling and what might be causing them

General Dos and Don’ts of Facilitation

- Do** listen attentively.
- Do** be prepared.
- Do** practice empathy.
- Do** guide conversation back to focus.
- Do** refer to stories that people have shared in the group.
- Do** be prepared that not everyone will agree with your points.
- Do** explore emotions in addition to content.

- Don’t** take anything personally.
- Don’t** teach/preach.
- Don’t** cut people off.
- Don’t** single anyone out.
- Don’t** make anyone a spokesperson.
- Don’t** monopolize the conversation.
- Don’t allow intolerant speech.
- Don’t rescue white people.
- Don’t turn People of Color into experts.
- Don’t ignore conflict/tension.

Definitions

Developing a Common Language/ Sharing Understanding

Race: A social construct. There is no biological basis for race, in fact there is more genetic variation (about 85%) within any given ethnic group than between ethnic groups, be they Swedes, Kikuyu or Hmong. It has been woven into the very fabric of our society. While it is not a biological reality, it has a very real and profound social reality and impact on the lives of people of color.

Racism: A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (“race”).

Three levels of Racism:

1. **Personally-mediated/ Individual/Interpersonal:** Individual acts of discrimination and prejudice, stereotypes, hate.

Individual/Implicit Bias: Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.

Individual/Explicit Bias: Example: Police officer calling someone an ethnic slur while arresting them, a white woman locking her door when an African American man walks by, or clutching her purse in an elevator. A person of color perceiving they are being targeted based on race, or having to always wonder if they are being targeted based on their race, because of this larger system that sees them as criminal; the way the media portrays people of color as criminal and the fear that that breeds in people.

2. **Institutional/Structural:** The unfair policies, practices and procedures of particular institutions and systems that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Institutional racism occurs when these prejudices are backed up with power. By power, we mean access to social, political, cultural, financial systemic power.

Institutional/Implicit: Policies that negatively impact a group unintentionally.

Institutional/Explicit: Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.

3. **Internalized:** The process by which people of color adopt racially prejudiced attitudes and behaviors that lead to discrimination and stereotyping of their own racial group.

Cultural Pluralism: Recognition of the contribution of each group to society. It encourages the maintenance and development of different lifestyles, languages and convictions. It is a commitment to deal cooperatively with common concerns. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society.

Cultural Racism: Aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to one's' own race and devalue, stereotype, and label a different race as “other” different,

less than, or render them invisible.

People of Color: Peoples from the Americas, Africa, Asia, the Arab world and Asia Pacific Island Americans. People of color have chosen this term as an identity that unites different racial and ethnic groups that all share the experience of racial oppression. The term “people of color” is used in preference to minority because the term can be dehumanizing and because people of color are in fact the majority of the world’s population. Also, nonwhite implies that white is the norm.

Prejudice: A preconceived belief, usually based on limited information.

Tone Policing: When the content of someone’s statement is dismissed due to the emotion that comes with it. This enforces dominant culture expectations as well as undermines valid emotions (anger, pain, fear) that accompany experiencing racism.

White Privilege: “White privilege refers to any advantage, opportunity, benefit, head start, or general protection from negative societal mistreatment, which persons deemed white will typically enjoy, but which others will generally not enjoy. These benefits can be material, social, or psychological”-- Tim Wise

White Supremacy: A historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

- Challenging White Supremacy Workshops, San Francisco, CA

Additional Resources

Links to the following Discussion Guides for Teaching about Anti-Racism are including in this document. Also available by clicking here:

1. [White Fragility Reading Guide](#) by Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo
2. [Me and White Supremacy Workbook](#) by Layla Saad
3. [A Book Club Kit for How to be an Antiracist](#) by Ibram X Kendi
4. [Toolkit for Teaching about Racism in the context of Persistent Health and Healthcare Disparities](#)
5. [Let's Talk. Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students by Teaching Tolerance](#)

Resources available on the City of Springfield CultureFest Webpage at: springfieldohio/culturefest:

- Video Presentation and script on Leading CultureRead Groups by Lori Askeland, Ph.D and Winkie Mitchell.
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- Video Presentation including three CultureRead Book Selection Committee members discussing the book they chose. Rick Incorvati, Ph.D on White Fragility, Sterling Coleman PhD on Me and White Supremacy and Lori Askeland, Ph.D on How to be an Antiracist.

CultureRead Podcasts with Jack Legg. In these short podcasts, Jack interviews participants in CultureRead 2020 as they discuss the book they are reading and insights gained. These can be found on the City's YouTube channel at youtube.com/GATVSpringfield5.

- October 2020 – Beginning Thoughts
 - Suzie Carey, Springfield Foundation on White Fragility
 - Natalie Fritz, Heritage Center of Clark County on Me and White Supremacy
 - Pastor Adam Banks, First Baptist Church on How to be an Antiracist
- November 2020 – Midway Thoughts
 - Suzie Carey, Springfield Foundation on White Fragility
 - Kara Van Zant, United Way of Clark, Champaign and Madison Counties, County on Me and White Supremacy
 - Pastor Adam Banks, First Baptist Church on How to be an Antiracist
- December 2020 –Concluding Thoughts (To be recorded December 15)
 - Suzie Carey, Springfield Foundation on White Fragility
 - Rob Rue, Springfield City Commission on Me and White Supremacy
 - Pastor Adam Banks, First Baptist Church on How to be an Antiracist