

WEEK 1

# Personal Racial Identity



**“Not seeing race does little to deconstruct racist structures or materially improve the conditions which people of color are subject to daily. In order to dismantle unjust, racist structures, we must see race. We must see who benefits from their race, who is disproportionately impacted by negative stereotypes about their race, and to who power and privilege is bestowed upon—earned or not—because of their race, their class, and their gender. Seeing race is essential to changing the system.”**

**RENI EDDO-LODGE**

We cannot cease in confronting our country's history and relationship to identity. It is time for us to take a closer look at the inequities that are deeply rooted in our systems and institutions and work together to create an America where every individual has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, and identity. Over the next 21 weeks, we will explore difficult topics, like structural racism, segregation, and privilege, to open up dialogue on how we can be champions of equity in our personal and professional lives.

Before you get started, if you haven't done so already, please fill out this [pre-event survey](#) to set your intentions and share your goals for the challenge with us. We also encourage you to download your [Challenge Activity Log](#)—a tool to ensure you are taking full advantage of what the challenge has to offer. We want to thank United Way of Washtenaw County and Food Solutions New England for inspiring this challenge. Food Solutions New England was the first to adapt an exercise from Dr. Eddie Moore and Debby Irving's book into the interactive 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, which they launched in 2014.

Throughout this challenge information from the [2020 ALICE Report](#) for Illinois will be presented to provided data associated with the topics. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. It represents individuals and families who earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to cover the basic cost of living, called the ALICE threshold, in their counties. The data provided in the reports can help inform strategies for positive community change.

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# Week 1 Challenge

How do you think about your racial identity and its relevance to your work/volunteerism/studies? Identity matters. Who we think we are and who others think we are can have an influence on all aspects of our lives. Think about the first time you became aware of your racial identity. What comes up for you?



## ACTIVITY 1

**Watch** an [interview of author/educator, Tim Wise](#), conducted by Dr. J. Q. Adams at Western Illinois University. In this interview, Wise discusses colorblindness, white flight and its impact on student populations, the role of school principals in strengthening the learning of all students, Affirmative Action and white preferences, and the opportunities college offers students who are open to deepening their understanding of their own identities while learning about the cultural identities of others.



## ACTIVITY 2

**Reference** this document to view how people of color [develop their racial identity](#).



## ACTIVITY 3

**Read/listen** to this interview with Shardé Smith, assistant professor of human development and family studies at the University of Illinois, on [how to speak to children about race and racism](#).



## ACTIVITY 4

**Watch** one or more of the [short videos and reflections from the New York Times](#) on racial identity in America.



## ACTIVITY 5

**Journal** about your own racial identity. You might consider:

- ✓ When did you first become aware of your racial identity?
- ✓ What messages did you learn about race from your school and family? Did they align with what you've seen in your life?
- ✓ Think of a time when the way others perceived your racial identity affected how they treated you?

Share your reflections and any resources that helps further the discussion on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#UWIEquityChallenge](#).

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