

WEEK 4

Talking About Race is Challenging for Some. Here's Why.



**“In this country,
American means
white. Everybody else
has to hyphenate.”**

TONI MORRISON

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 prevents open and honest conversations about how structures are in place that provide everyday advantages to white people.

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Week 4 Challenge

Please **choose one or two** of the below activities to engage with for 15 minutes this week, and if you have time, we encourage you to complete more.



ACTIVITY A

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.



ACTIVITY B

Listen to **The 21st show interview** with Joseph E. Flynn Jr., author of *White Fatigue: Rethinking Resistance for Social Justice*, explains how white people can understand and confront racism.



ACTIVITY C

Review this list of **28 common racist attitudes and behaviors** that indicate a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.



ACTIVITY D

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 and any resources that helps further the discussion on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#UWIEquityChallenge**.

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