



**HOW TO RAISE  
AN ANTI-RACISM ALLY**

SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL WAYS FAMILIES  
CAN CHALLENGE RACISM TOGETHER

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA**





## THANK YOU

for being the force for change  
we need in the world.

**Like you, we care deeply about justice and equality, and imparting the same values in our children.**

Despite our best efforts, kids start absorbing racist messages from a young age — from television, at the playground, or even from other adults around them.

That's why it's so important to have open and honest conversations about racism. What kids see you do is as important as what they hear you say. And knowing that you are seeking to learn with them is a powerful message. They are so lucky to have someone as caring as you guiding them!

As a Palawa Elder, I know what it's like to worry about young children experiencing racism.

If your child is at risk, encourage pride in them, **'We are proud. We are strong. We belong.'**

And remind your child of their strength, and the strength of their ancestors and the community they're from, **'We are strong in our family. We are strong with our ancestors to this land.'**

### Rodney Dillon

Proud Palawa Elder and  
Amnesty International Australia  
Indigenous Rights Advisor

Photo (above): Rodney Dillon. © AI

Cover photo: Schoolgirl with her mother, Sydney. © 2019 Claire Bonnor, used under license from Austockphoto

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and pay our respects to their Elders — past and present. We acknowledge that this land was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

WARNING: This booklet may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

This guide has exercises and scenarios to get the conversation started, but you know your kid best – feel free to adapt. 😊



Learning about race is a marathon, not a sprint.

\* Try to build your kids' and your own anti-racism journeys into your daily routines.



Our aim is to help you show kids that racism is NEVER okay, and to empower and support them if they experience it. ❤️



Keep it simple, brief and be honest.

No one has all the answers, but you can seek the information together.



▶▶ Don't feel you have to go through the whole guide at once. We all need time to digest and discuss complex topics.

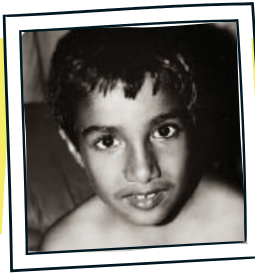
## HOW TO RAISE AN ANTI-RACISM ALLY

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Let's look at

- Why we need to talk about racism
- What you already know about racism

# Starting the conversation



I remember it like it was yesterday.

Photo: Shankar Kasynathan. © AI/Pablo Barnes

## Shankar's story

**When I think back to my first experiences of racism, either at school or out in the community, I remember the hardest part about it was not having the words to explain how I felt.**

As a five-year-old, I remember when some of the kids in the older year levels hurt me. I still can't recall whether they hit me

or said something. What I do remember was my inability to tell my teacher what had happened when she found me crying.

I remember it like it was yesterday. Standing in a classroom with tears rolling down my face, without stopping, knowing that something terrible had happened, **but not having the voice to speak.**

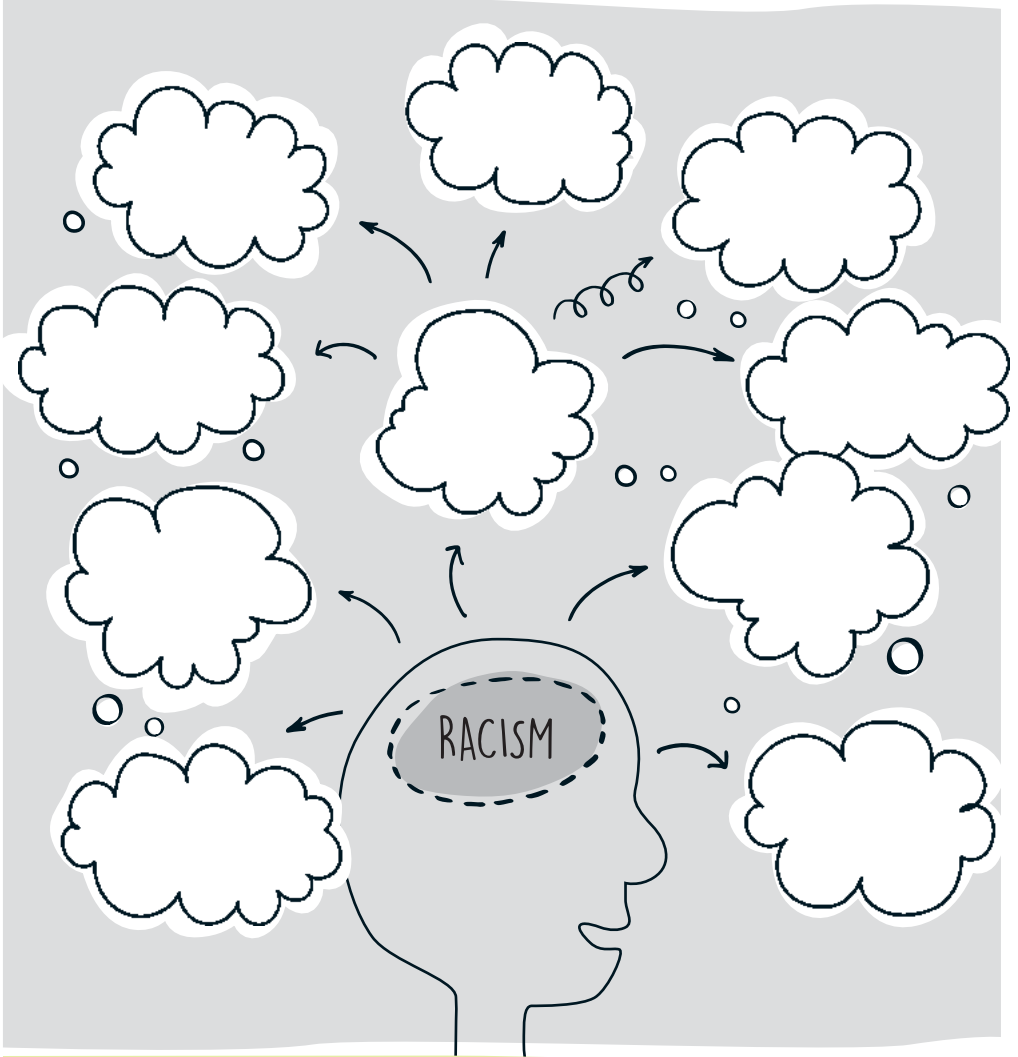
Let's talk!



- Have you been picked on? How did it make you feel?
- Do you think what happened to Shankar is okay? Why or why not?
- Do you know of anyone in your school who may have felt like Shankar?
- What do you already know about racism?

Creating the space to talk about racism requires us first to be able to trust the people we are talking to.

## Create a mind map together



**What are some words that come to mind when you think about racism?**

**Write them together in the mind map above.**

(You can use the discussion questions on the left page to help.)

# Words and meanings

Here are some words that are often used when people talk about racism.

Read the definitions aloud together — **are these words you've heard of before?**



## Race

Race is a word we sometimes use to describe people because of the way they look or where they are from.

For example, people from Africa are usually called Black or People of Colour. People from Europe are usually called white. People from Asia or the Middle East are usually called People of Colour.

Mixed Race, Biracial or Multiracial are terms that we use to describe people whose parents are from different or multiple racial, cultural, ethnic or national backgrounds.

**What culture do you come from?**

**How would you describe your family?**

*Our differences make the world even more beautiful.*

## Racism

Racism is the belief that one group of people are better or worse than another because of their race.

Excluding people or treating them badly because of their skin colour, their culture or language is racist.

Racism includes our beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Racism can take many forms, such as jokes or comments that cause offence or hurt, name-calling, verbal abuse and physical violence.

*I want ALL people to feel safe.*

**Have you seen any examples of this sort of racism before?**



## Systemic

## racism

Systemic racism is when the government, health services, education and the law treat certain groups of people unfairly because of their race.

This means the system is racist, rather than simply one individual person to another. Sometimes this is on purpose, sometimes not.

*Is this something you've heard about before?*

## Stereotypes

Racial stereotypes come from a belief that people from the same country or culture, or with the same skin colour, have the same personalities and behaviours.

☹️ This is not good because it can lead us to treat people differently and unfairly because they are from a certain country or region.

We should instead get to know people as individuals with their own personalities and interests.

*Look through a magazine or newspaper together.*

*Can you find some examples of racist stereotypes?*

## Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated badly, differently or unfairly because of their race, skin colour, ethnicity, culture or where they are from. For example, excluding someone from a sports team or refusing to play with them.

*NOT  
OK!*

While we may not realise we are discriminating, we can try our best to notice it and stop it.

*Can you think of an example of discrimination?*

## Privilege

Privilege is when we are treated more fairly, equally and kindly over another person solely because of the colour of our skin.

This includes getting more benefits based only on our race.

*EVERYONE  
is special.*

*Does that sound fair to you?  
Why or why not?*



# Can you find these words together?

First, look up the meanings of these words. Then, as you find each one in the word search, try describing to each other what the word means.

- RACISM ● SYSTEMIC ● PRIVILEGE ● STEREOTYPES
- DISCRIMINATION ● ETHNICITY ● CULTURE ● DIVERSITY ● EQUAL
- INDIGENOUS ● EXCLUDED ● FAIRNESS ● ALLY



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FIND THE ANSWERS > [AMNESTY.ORG.AU/YOUNGALLY](https://www.amnesty.org.au/youngally)

How are you feeling?



Do you have any questions? What have we learnt in this section?



- Let's look at
- What racism looks like in real life
  - How racism causes harm to people

# Recognising racism

We now know that racism is treating someone badly or unfairly because of the colour of their skin, their cultural background or the place they are from.

Recognising racism is the first step we can take to make the community a safer place for all.



I felt excluded,  
like I didn't  
fit in.

Photo: Pablo Barnes. © AI/Pablo Barnes

## Pablo's story

**I was born in Argentina. At school, some kids would tell me to go back to where I came from because I wasn't 'Australian' enough.**

I felt excluded, like I didn't fit in. Luckily, I found friends who accepted me and treated me with respect.

Growing up, I didn't feel like I had a place in the world and I couldn't imagine my future. There wasn't

anyone who looked like me that I could look up to. Almost all the important people around me were white — my teachers, people on TV and politicians.

I realised this is because we still have a lot of racism in Australia.

**That's why I want to do something to challenge racism.**

*People who work in the government and make decisions for the country.*

### Let's talk!

- Can you relate to Pablo's story at all?
- How would you feel if you experienced this at school?
- What feelings do you have when you read this?



# Spot the examples of racism

Which option is an example of racism? **Circle A or B.**

1

*Option A*

*Option B*

**Sam meets Zainab** and makes jokes about their name because he thinks it's weird and hard to say.



**Sam meets Zainab** and asks them the correct way to pronounce their name.

2

*Option A*

*Option B*

**Mohamed starts at a new school.** Some kids from his class invite him to play with them at lunch. They become friends.



**Mohamed starts at a new school.** No one else in his class looks like him and the other kids tell him he doesn't belong here.

3

*Option A*

*Option B*

**Tina and James go to buy snacks.** The security guard stops them both at the exit and checks their school bags.



**Tina and James go to buy snacks.** The security guard lets Tina leave the store, but stops James to check his school bag. This happens all the time.

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*Let's talk!*



- Why is each an example of racism?
- How do you think the person experiencing racism felt in each situation?
- How do you feel about what happened here?

# Fill in the blanks

These words describe how racism can make someone feel. Can you use them to complete the two stories below?

**UNSAFE**

**afraid**

**lonely**

**UNFAIR**

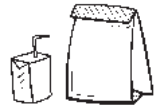
**sad**

John and Ali go to the canteen for lunch every day.

John always receives an extra tomato sauce for free, but Ali doesn't.

This makes Ali feel \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

John feels it is \_\_\_\_\_ that Ali does not get an extra sauce too and always shares it with him.



Sarah is walking home from school by herself for the first time. Someone drives by and yells, 'You people are stealing our jobs!' Sarah feels \_\_\_\_\_.

At home, Sarah tells her mum that she's \_\_\_\_\_ of going outside alone.

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**Let's talk!**

Racism can take many forms:

- Jokes
- Hurtful comments
- Name-calling
- Physical violence
- Discrimination

What type of racism did you see in the stories above?



How are you feeling?



Do you have any questions? What have we learnt in this section?

# Racism in the digital world

Social media and technology are part of our daily lives and help us communicate and respond to the world around us. We can watch funny videos, send memes and find information.

Unfortunately, racism can occur online and when this happens, it's called cyber racism.



## How is cyber racism different?

Cyber racism can happen anonymously (that means we don't know who did it).



Racist content can be instantly shared around the world and seen by many people.



Cyber racism could affect someone at any time or place — even in their own home!



Just because cyber racism happens online doesn't mean it can't hurt someone in real life. It's also dangerous because it can make people think racism is okay.

## We all have the right to feel safe online.

There are different ways to take action against cyber racism and it depends on where it happens, who shared it, and if you feel safe to say something.



### Actions you could take include:

- Report someone
- Block someone
- Hide or delete a comment
- Disable comments
- Respond, saying that racism is unacceptable
- Even if you're scared, take a screenshot of the incident and tell an adult you trust



## How would you respond?

My name is Ha. Growing up in Australia with Vietnamese heritage, I remember kids at school using social media to share racist cartoons about Asian people like me.

The posts were popular and people would add comments like 'go back to where you came from'.

No one spoke up about the racist posts and the jokes made me feel powerless, angry and alone.



Photo: Ha Pham. © Al/Ha Pham

Let's talk!



- *Is it still racist if it is a joke?*
- *What do you think it teaches us, when no one stands up against racism?*
- *What would you do if you saw a racist cartoon online?*
- *Have you ever experienced cyber racism?*

Joking around with our friends is fun, but some jokes can really hurt someone.

**Jokes shouldn't make fun of other people, put them down or call them names.**

**Racism is never ok.** <<<

If there are times you're not sure about a joke, you can ask.



How are you feeling?



Do you have any questions? What have we learnt in this section?



# Racism in Australia and the wider world

We've talked about some examples of racism we might see in our everyday lives. But what about racism that has happened throughout history? How does the past impact what's going on today?

The country that we call Australia started with racism. A group of people from Britain came to Australia and decided to claim it as their own, even though there were already people living here. The British people at that time

thought First Nations People were the same as plants and animals — that they weren't human. There were wars between the groups, and many, many First Nations People were killed, locked up, beaten and enslaved.

*This terrible history has shaped Australia today. First Nations People have so much to be proud of, but they also have to live with the consequences of historic racism.*



Racism isn't just how one person treats another. Historical injustices can live on in society through things like laws, which then treat certain groups of people unfairly because of their race.

This is called systemic racism and it continues to affect people's lives around the world.

Let's talk!



- What do you already know about First Nations history?
- Do you think racism makes it hard for First Nations People and People of Colour to be given opportunities in our society? What is an example? Is that fair?

## Complete the sentence

Draw a connecting line to complete these examples of racism and discuss what makes each one racism.

Racism exists in ...	... violence towards Asian Australians
Locking up huge numbers of First Nations People is ...	... suffer violence at the hands of police
Black People in the US and Australia are more likely to ...	... because of their religious beliefs
During the pandemic, there has been increased ...	... an example of racism in Australia
You are more likely to be searched by police if you are ...	... every country around the world
Many Muslim Australians are discriminated against ...	... a Person of Colour

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Learning about bad things that happened in the past, and that keep happening, can be hard and upsetting. But understanding the past means we can heal together, and create a better world in the future — one without racism.

**That's why we're so grateful you're on an anti-racism learning journey.**

How are you feeling?

Do you have any questions? What have we learnt in this section?

# Challenging racism in Australia

The good news is that the world is full of determined people just like you who are challenging the injustice of racism!



Photo: Family portrait. © AI/Richard Burton



## Australia and New Zealand's deal to settle refugees

Everyone has the right to seek protection in another country. Many people come to Australia by boat to escape war and violence. But instead of offering them safety, the Australian Government **is locking them up and robbing them of their freedom.** This is an example of systemic racism because it is mostly People of Colour who are affected by this.

For nine years, people in Australia have asked the Government to give all people seeking safe refuge a place to call home. In 2022, the Australian Government finally agreed to a deal that will allow 150 people each year who come to Australia seeking refuge, to safely rebuild their lives in New Zealand.

## Raise the Age

**In Australia, children as young as 10 can be put in prison.** *What?!!*

This especially affects Indigenous kids who are locked up for offences for which non-Indigenous kids typically aren't. This is an example of systemic racism and it tears Indigenous kids away from their families, denies them proper education and puts them at even more of a disadvantage compared to non-Indigenous kids.

In 2020, the ACT Government agreed to raise the age at which a child can be sent to prison to 14. It's now time for the rest of Australia to follow the ACT's lead!





## Racial Discrimination Act 1975



In 1975, the Australian Government passed a law called the Racial Discrimination Act. Under this law, people aren't allowed to treat someone unfairly because of their race, the colour of their skin or the country they

come from. For example, not letting someone join a club because they are Chinese.

This law makes sure all of us are **treated equally and given the same opportunities**, regardless of our background. 😊

Let's stand alongside our friends and neighbours and celebrate stories of resilience and survival.



## Zulaikha

Zulaikha is a South African anti-racism activist.

People who work to make positive change for the world!

When she was 13, Zulaikha and other students marched against their school's racist hair rule which told them to 'fix' or chemically straighten their hair.

In many parts of the world, Black People face discrimination for their natural hair texture because of people who think straight hair is more attractive and neat. 😞

All hair types are beautiful ♥



Photo: Zulaikha Patel. © AI/Reabetswe Mabilo

The girls used social media to communicate their cause and **got the hair rule changed!**



It's okay if talking about racism makes you feel uncomfortable about the world around us. It's a sign that you are a kind and compassionate ally learning how to make the world a better place.



# Picture yourself

Think about a time when you stood up for fairness, and draw yourself in that moment.



Me as an activist!

Share a story about a time when you had to stand up for yourself or others because of unfair treatment.

How did that make you feel?

Create a placard or a poster together, and choose what message to write on it.

You can stick it on the fridge or use it to attend a protest together.



## Let's talk!



- When we see something unfair, what are some ways we can stand up for others?
- Can you name some people you know who are kind and brave and treat people equally?

**Great job!** You've started your anti-racism journey and there's so much that we can **read, watch, listen** and **do** together as allies.

Here are some recommendations to begin with:

## Read



### Picture books

#### **Day Break**

By Amy McQuire

The story of a family making their way back to Country on January 26.

#### **Our Home, Our Heartbeat**

By Adam Briggs

Celebrating First Nations heroes. Adapted from Briggs' song 'The Children Came Back'.

### Older primary

#### **Young Dark Emu — A Truer History**

By Bruce Pascoe

Asks young readers to consider a different version of Australia's history pre-European colonisation.

#### **Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia**

Edited by Anita Heiss

A compilation of childhood stories of family, Country and belonging.

### Teen/young adult

#### **The Hate U Give**

By Angie Thomas

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement.

#### **Does My Head Look Big in This?**

By Randa Abdel-Fattah

About being true to yourself, standing up for your beliefs and finding your own way.

#### **Growing Up Asian in Australia**

Edited by Alice Pung

A compilation of stories about what it's like to grow up Asian and Australian.

## Watch



### YouTube videos

#### **Systemic Racism Explained**

By act.tv

[youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO\\_bdQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO_bdQ)

#### **Ask us anything: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

By The University of Sydney

[youtube.com/watch?v=SHVbVBLIhCM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=SHVbVBLIhCM)

### Documentaries

#### **In My Blood It Runs**

Documentary film following 10-year-old Arrernte First Nations boy Djuwan Hoosan.

## Listen



Listen to and learn about Australia's iconic protest songs, like 'From Little Things Big Things Grow'.

Visit [mixdownmag.com.au](https://mixdownmag.com.au) and search 'A brief history of Australian protest songs'.

## Do

### Get involved

Start an Amnesty Action Group at your school — join our Schools Program.

[amnesty.org.au/youth-resources](https://amnesty.org.au/youth-resources)

### Get out and about

Go to cultural festivals and events like NAIDOC week.

[naidoc.org.au](https://naidoc.org.au)

[harmony.gov.au/events](https://harmony.gov.au/events)



Let's look at

- What to do if you experience racism
- How to help someone else experiencing racism

# What to do if you encounter racism

Everyone wants to feel like they belong. What we say — to our friends, to strangers, to people all around us — can lift people up or hurt them.

Saying hello, sitting with someone, inviting them to play; there are so many simple ways we can help others feel welcome and accepted.

But what can you do if racism happens in front of you?

## Speaking up

Speaking up can be scary, but it can mean **so much** to a person experiencing racism.



If you hear someone make a mean comment, and you feel safe to speak up, let them know it can hurt people's feelings.

## Offering support

If you don't feel safe to speak up, you can still **support the person experiencing racism**.



Let them know that you saw what happened. Offer to go with them to tell a trusted adult, like a teacher, referee or parent.

*I'm not sure that's right.*

*Making fun of someone for their differences can hurt their feelings. It's cool that we are all different!*

*That's unfair and it's not okay.*

*Actually, I think it's better to say '\_\_\_\_\_'.  
\_\_\_\_\_*

*I'm sorry that happened. Can I help you?*



If you see someone being treated unfairly, ask yourself how you would feel in their situation. **What would you hope others would do for you?**



You deserve to be accepted for who you are.

Photo: Aleysha Shafique. © Al/Jen Wells-Scherrer

## Aleysha's story

**My name is Aleysha Shafique. I'm British Asian and I know how it feels to be called racist names at school. I know how it feels to be made fun of, to be left out and hurt by other kids.**

We all have different hair, eye and skin colours and unique family names. Our world is made up of these amazing differences and should be celebrated.

When I experienced racism at school my parents told me I was worthy and loved. They encouraged

me to be proud of my heritage. They told me unkind comments about my race didn't define me. These are the words that stayed with me and helped me stand up against racism as an adult.

No matter what is said about your skin colour, where you come from or your family name, know that you're perfect the way you are. Your feelings are valid. You deserve love and kindness. You deserve to be accepted for who you are.

## What can adults do to support kids?

### Engage



Talk to teachers about racism in the classroom. Ask which anti-racism books will be included in the reading curriculum.



### Equip



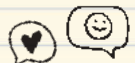
►►► Share anti-racism resources with the school and with other families.

### Encourage



Encourage diverse friendship groups among children.

### Empower



Tell your kids they have the right to speak up about racism — it's not something they have to tolerate!

Mistakes are okay  
as long as we keep  
learning from them.

Be KIND



Don't be afraid of  
tough conversations.

Be honest and open  
with the people  
around you

Remember ...

Being brave means supporting your friends.

Being brave means asking for help when you need it.

Being brave means sharing how you feel.

NO RACISM



WE ARE ALL BORN EQUAL



We are stronger TOGETHER

Try your best to listen and learn when people who have experienced racism share their stories.





## ACTIVITY 08

### What would you do?

A student wearing a hijab sits next to you in class. Your classmate looks at their hijab and asks, 'Why are you wearing that silly bandana?' They start tugging the headscarf. Most of the kids around you laugh and the student wearing the hijab looks down. **Would you ...**

- A** Watch silently.
- B** Shove the person tugging on the hijab.
- C** Speak up and say, 'Hey leave them alone.'
- D** Ask your classmate if they're okay and if you can help them.

### How do you think each option would make people feel?

Remember, it's important to keep yourself and the people around you safe when responding to racism. That's why the best choices would be C and/or D. You could also let your teacher know what happened.

What's a hijab, also known as a headscarf? It's a type of religious head covering worn by some Muslim women, as a way for them to honour their beliefs and can be a **very special part of someone's identity**. Different religions have different beliefs, practices and symbols.

How are you feeling?

Do you have any questions? What have we learnt in this section?

# Let's celebrate diversity!

Have you noticed everyone you see and meet is unique? They may look different from you, use equipment to move around or speak a different language.

Diversity is about all these differences between people. Where we come from and what we look like is one of the ways people are diverse.

Diversity makes our world exciting. There's always something new to learn about different cultures and how they understand and celebrate life.

Diversity is something to celebrate, not fear. How boring would the world be if everyone ate the same food, dressed the same, and listened to the same band?

Diversity means we feel included and comfortable being ourselves. We should celebrate our differences, because that's what makes us unique!

## ACTIVITY 09

### Finding out more!

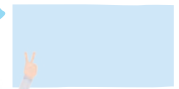
How many languages are spoken in Australia?



Look up the meaning of:

- Respect
- Multicultural

How many people living in Australia have parents who were born in a different country?



Look up the meaning of:

- Diversity
- Empathy



Find an upcoming cultural event your family hasn't celebrated before. What are its activities and traditions?



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*Create a mind map together*



**Write in some of your favourite things that come from diversity!**  
 (Think types of food, music or dance styles, festivals or movies, etc.)

How are you feeling? 

Do you have any questions? What have we learnt in this section?

# Let's keep the conversation going!



**Kids of all ages notice and think about race. Sometimes we worry that talking about race might actually encourage racial bias. In reality, the opposite is true.**

Remaining silent about racism can reinforce racism because without guidance, children tend to draw their own conclusions according to what they see in the world around them.

Talking to kids about anti-racism might inspire you to reflect on your own allyship journey — which is a good thing! By picking up this

guide, you've already shown your commitment to this process of evolving, learning and growing.

It can be overwhelming, but over time you will discover what you can do best to be an ally to people experiencing racism. Perhaps part of that will be sharing your values with the next generation of young allies.



➔ ***There are many ways we can take meaningful action to support people that face racism everyday.***

Action could be attending a protest or stepping in when you see racism with your kids. But it can also mean actively listening

to people with lived experience, whether that be in your own life or through podcasts and books. Every bit counts.

**Thank you again for your willingness to challenge racism.**

***It's people like you who can be a guiding light in the community for others to follow.***

# What makes you YOU?

Draw or list some physical and/or personal qualities that make you unique.

Who did you get these qualities from?

Draw or list the things from your culture or country that you are proud of.



**From our family to yours, thank you. We are so grateful for your compassion and your commitment to sharing your values of justice and equality with future generations.**

Just like you, we are always learning and reflecting on our allyship. You are part of a community sharing inspiring stories of resilience and courage and making the world a better place.

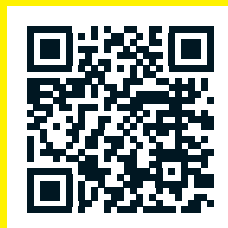
That's why we've created a space to share with you all the latest information and opportunities for action, as well as books, movies, podcasts, events and more. We're always adding to it, so we'll be sure to let you know when updates are available.

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Or scan me! →



**Now that you've gotten to know us, we'd like to hear from you as well.** Do you have more questions about discussing racism with your child? Or would you like to share any feedback on this guide, or tips and stories of your own?

Please get in touch with us at [supporter@amnesty.org.au](mailto:supporter@amnesty.org.au)

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