

Lesson 5: Racism Exercise Scenarios

Teacher Note: The content of these scenarios is for the purpose of categorizing these situations into the three columns labeled *institutionalized racism*, *personally-mediated racism*, or *internalized racism* on the corresponding worksheet labeled “Racism Exercise.” These scenarios have been created for educational purposes. Distribution or use of these scenarios outside of this exercise and its context may be inappropriate, misrepresentative, and irresponsible. These scenarios demonstrate the three levels of racism as outlined by Dr. Camara Jones, M.D., M.P.H., Ph. D., and are mostly based on actual events.

[Grades 6-8]

Scenario 1- An African American girl shares with her Euro-American classmate that she and her family are vegetarians. Her classmate responds, “Wait, you all don’t eat chicken?”

Scenario 2- An African American family goes to a local store in their neighborhood to buy healthy, affordable food. There aren’t any options available.

Scenario 3- An African American girl is playing with a Euro-American doll in Kindergarten class. The teacher, to provide a culturally relevant play experience, decides to give the little girl an African American doll to play with as well. The little girl pouts and frowns and screams “that doll is ugly!”

Scenario 4- When in line to board a plane, a Sikh man wearing a traditional turban is told, “Sir, you are not permitted to board the plane.” When he asks why, he isn’t given a reason.

Scenario 5- A group of 5th grade students are asked: “What are you going to be when you grow up?” by a special guest visiting the school. An African American student replies, “Nothing.” When the guest asks, “Why do you say that?,” the student replies “Because I’m Black.”

Scenario 6- School vouchers for scholarships are given to the parents of African American students to attend a private school. All the students attending with vouchers are placed in special classes together instead of being in classes with the rest of the students.

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Scenario 7- When a new student from India joins a 6th grade class, all the Euro-American students ask the student, “Do you eat curry?”

Scenario 8- While playing a computer game with friends from school, a Muslim student was asked in the group chat, “Is your family going to blow us up?”

Scenario 9- The school policy states that all hats or scarves worn on the head during school hours are not permitted regardless of circumstances. Any student wearing anything on their head for any reason will be suspended. After three or more suspensions, they will be expelled from school.

Scenario 10- While playing online on the Xbox, Joshua is offended by the mean comments made about Jewish people. When the online team finds out he is Jewish, they kick him out the group.

Scenario 11- An African American girl with hair extensions is not allowed to attend classes at a private school because administrators say her hairstyle is against school policy. The policy states: “Boys and Girls: Only the students’ natural hair is permitted.”

Scenario 12- When a new Vietnamese student joins a 7th grade class, a student asks, “Do you speak English?”

Scenario 13- Jared is the only African American student in his class. His classmates often call him names and when he tells the teacher, she never believes him or does anything about it.

Scenario 14- After turning in an essay assignment, a teacher accuses Jane of plagiarizing. The teacher wrote, “You’re not capable of this” on her essay.

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[Grades 9-12]

Scenario 1- A Euro-American server at a restaurant is given two tables in his/her section, one African American and one Euro-American. The server proceeds to get drinks for the Euro-American couple immediately, while the African American couple have to wait 15 minutes to be acknowledged. The server immediately gives the Euro-American couple complimentary bread, while the African American couple is given bread upon request. The server checks on the Euro-American couple every five minutes, while the African American couple have to call the waiter for attention. At the end of dinner, the Euro-American couple is promptly given their check, while the African American couple have to wait 30 minutes until their check comes.

Scenario 2- An African American family goes to a public museum to introduce the kids to African American figures in history. There are no exhibits on display showing African Americans in history.

Scenario 3- An African American female is shopping in a retail store and a Euro-American woman walks up to her and asks "Where are the blouses?"

Scenario 4- A home is on sale in a prestigious neighborhood and the Euro-American realtor has an open house. A Latinx couple visits the open house, loves the house and puts an offer in immediately. Upon receiving notice of the status of their offer, they are told the owners took the house off the market. A couple weeks later, they drive past the house and there is a "SOLD" sign in the front yard.

Scenario 5- A Euro-American French Professor at a college has a classroom full of Euro-American students except one African American student. During every class, whenever the African American student is participating by raising his/her hand, he/she is never called on by the French Professor. At the end of the semester, the student is given no credit for participation which is 50% of the class grade.

Scenario 6- A city places a green space near an Asian-American neighborhood without asking the residents' opinion first. Thereafter, they make the green space a landfill for the city's garbage. After 9 months of exposure, all of the residents in the area near the landfill are infected with a lung disease.

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Scenario 7- An African American male walks into a high-end merchandising business to purchase a belt for \$350.00. He is checked out by a Euro-American woman who bags the item and hands him his receipt. After he walks out of the door, she calls the area police to report a “faulty or fraudulent” purchase made by the man. He is arrested that same day.

Scenario 8- A Forbes 500 company’s corporate headquarters releases its new company policy that bans hair locking for their employees, deeming it unprofessional and not appropriately representative of the company. Current employees have five business days from the policy instatement to modify their hair grooming techniques or they will be improperly attired and thereby, unprofessional and subject to termination.

Scenario 9- For Amy’s 13th birthday party, her mom tells her to not invite any of her friends who speak Spanish because they are dirty.

Scenario 10- Three African Americans visit a home decorating store to purchase some coasters. After being greeted and directed to the area where the coasters were located, the manager on duty appears at the end of every aisle that the African American customers walked on while watching them intently. When they decide to split up in different directions, the group notices the manager motions for an associate to follow the other persons from the group around the store. Meanwhile, there were several Euro-Americans who walk in the store without being greeted or followed around the store by associates. Upon check out, one of the members of the group asked why they were being followed so closely. The manager responds that it is company policy.

Scenario 11- One day after school, John refuses to do his homework when his mom asked him to. When asked why, John responds, “Because I’m dumb!” When asked why he felt that way, John responds, “A boy at school told me that African Americans are dumb, stupid, and lazy!”

Scenario 12- College students in a fraternity are hosting a costume party for Halloween. When students arrive to the party, many Euro-American students are mimicking African Americans and Hip- Hop artists. Euro-American students are dressed as “rappers” having baggy pants and gold teeth, wearing gold chains around their necks, and drinking from red plastic cups. The refreshments served are red Kool-Aid and Malt Liquor beverages, fried chicken, and watermelon. There are students wearing wigs reflecting African American hairstyles such as an afro and hair locks. The students are also speaking in slang and mocking African American Vernacular English.

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Scenario 13- An African American female student walks into the library of a large university. While sitting at a table reading, an Asian American woman, who does not work for the library asks the student for her student ID. After the student produces her ID for the woman to see, she screams “You don’t belong here!”

Scenario 14- An African American girl is playing with a Euro-American doll in Kindergarten class. The teacher, to provide a culturally relevant play experience, decides to give the little girl an African American doll to play with, as well. The little girl pouts and frowns and screams “that doll is ugly!”