

## Annisquam Village Church 7 Week Equity Challenge

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***Acknowledgment:*** This content was compiled from the [Greenville 21-Day Equity Habit Building Challenge](#), the [Food Solutions New England 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge](#) and the [United Way of Washtenaw County 21 Day Challenge](#), and the [Boston TPC 21-Day Challenge](#). It has been adapted to Gloucester and the AVC context by Sandy Lawrence and Perry McIntosh.

## WEEK 1: Welcome to the Challenge!

**About the Challenge:** The 7-week Challenge offers participants a self-guided learning journey to examine the history and impacts of inequity in our society, particularly inequities directed against people of color and those who identify as LGBTQ+. The goal of the Equity Challenge is to deepen our collective learning about, and commitment to, racial equity.

**To Begin** Before starting, we recommend you set some intentions for yourself. We invite you to familiarize yourself with the [Feelings Wheel](#), which is a tool to track your “internal weather” throughout the Challenge. Feelings are data and tell us a story and information about what is happening in our brain. They can tell us important things about ourselves, which pulls us forward into conversations and work for racial equity and what pushes us away. Developing a facility with naming feelings can be the work of liberation and stepping out of white dominant professional/cultural norms that minimize feelings.

One question to ask now is: *Where do you want to be by the end of the challenge in your understanding of and commitment/capacity to address racism and other forms of discrimination?* To help you answer this question you may want to take a few moments to get quiet, perhaps close your eyes, take a few breaths and ask yourself what would you most want to come from your participation in this Challenge.

1. *What do you want for yourself?*
2. *What do you want for others to whom you are connected and with whom you may be interacting over the course of and after Challenge?*
3. *And what are you willing and able to give to this year’s Challenge in terms of time and commitment so that you get the most out of it?*

### Engagement Tips:

- Enter the process to learn and bridge knowledge gaps.
- Enter the process to practice mindful social habits.
- Stay engaged even when your mind and body start sending you signals to shrink or walk away.
- Acknowledge what you don’t know.
- Validate others by listening closely and believing the truth and importance of what they are sharing
- Notice your biases and judgments as they arise. These are good for you to excavate your subconscious!
- Notice when you are uncomfortable. Reflect on why you’re uncomfortable and think about what you can do to build more emotional stamina in this area.

Thank you for joining this Challenge. Consider all of us – Sandy Lawrence, Perry McIntosh and Rev. Sue as co-facilitators of this Challenge – as resources, and please do reach out with any questions.

To get into the mindset of the Challenge, consider watching one or more of the [short videos and reflections from the New York Times](#) on racial identity in America.

**PRAYER** Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

When our eyes do not see the gravity of racial injustice,  
Shake us from our slumber and open our eyes, O Lord.  
When out of fear we are frozen into inaction,  
Give us a spirit of bravery, O Lord.  
When we try our best but say the wrong things,  
Give us a spirit of humility, O Lord...  
When it becomes easier to point fingers outward,  
Help us to examine our own hearts, O Lord.

God of truth, in your wisdom, Enlighten Us.  
God of love, in your mercy, Forgive Us.  
God of hope in your kindness, Heal Us.  
Creator of All People, in your generosity, Guide Us.  
Racism breaks your heart, break our hearts for what breaks yours, O Lord.

Ever present God, you called us to be in relationship with one another  
And promised to dwell wherever two or three are gathered.  
In our community, we are many different people;  
We come from many different places, have many different cultures.  
Open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion  
And the treasures of diversity among us. Amen

## **WEEK 2: Understanding and Reflecting on Our Bias**

*“Worse than being less than you, is if you are perceived as a threat” - [John a. Powell](#)*

[We all have biases](#) - it is a function of the brain. Our brain sorts information into categories both to keep us safe and to help sort through the level of external stimuli we receive each day. For many of us, though, those biases are completely unconscious and are activated involuntarily.

Research shows that years of structural and cultural constructs have deeply embedded stereotypes into our culture, and consequently into our own subconscious. For example, [according to a recent study](#), companies are more than twice as likely to call minority applicants for interviews if they submit “whitened” resumes than candidates who reveal their race.

But, [research also shows](#) that we can actively rewire these neural associations by being more intentional about acknowledging our biases. This week’s focus is on personal reflection - taking the time to uncover some of our own biases and reflecting on how we take control of these unconscious constructs.

What is Privilege?

*“Positive affirmations of whiteness are so widespread that the average white person doesn’t even notice them” - [Renni Eddo-Lodge](#)*

Privilege is the unearned social, political, economic, and psychological benefits of membership in a group that has institutional and structural power ([source](#)). There are many types of privilege that different groups have in the US. We commonly hear about privilege because of race or gender, but privilege also exists for different groups based on religion, sexuality, ability, class, education level. Read more about [5 common types of privilege](#). Having privilege can give you advantages in life, but having privilege is not a guarantee of success..

Racism Exists on Different Levels

Are you seeing and addressing how racism operates at different levels? [Dr. Camara Jones](#), Senior Fellow at the Morehouse School of Medicine, says that in order to address racism effectively, we have to understand how it operates at multiple levels. Often what people think of first and foremost is interpersonal racism. Only seeing this level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place. The graphic below illustrates all [the domains in which racism operates](#).

***This Week’s Challenge:***

\*Take [Project Implicit's Hidden Bias tests](#), created by psychologists at top universities, to uncover some of your own unconscious biases. Remember, having biases doesn’t make you a bad person—it only makes you human. *TIP: Proceed as a guest to access their library of tests and find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, skin tone, and other topics.*

- Take this eye-opening [privilege self-assessment](#) by Buzzfeed to discover where you are on the spectrum.

- Watch this short, powerful BuzzFeed [video featuring a privilege walk](#). See how privilege shows up differently for this group of co-workers. *Note: this video may be triggering for some people of color.*
- Watch [Verna Myers' TED talk](#) about unconscious bias entitled "How to overcome your biases? Walk boldly towards them."
- Watch this short [video from Robin DiAngelo and Ibram X. Kendi](#), both bestselling authors about issues of race, as they discuss privilege, why it persists and how it impacts Black people.
- Watch Dr. Jones' TED talk on the ["Allegories on Race and Racism"](#) where she shares four short stories to help us understand privilege and racism.

**Reflection:**

Journal about your own privilege and biases.. You might consider:

- What are your thoughts about unconscious bias? About privilege?
- How do you think bias has impacted your decision making in the past? What do you think you can do moving forward to help decrease making biased-based decisions?
- What did you think while you were completing the self-assessment? Did it change how you viewed the concept of privilege?
- How do you think privilege impacts your life? What about the lives of those you serve? Think about the area(s) you work in - how does racism impact the systems you work with?
- 
- How do different aspects of racism manifest in systems that Annisquam Village Church (or your community) operates in? How does that make you feel?

*This...is not about perfection. It's about connection...  
 You know, it's the empathy and the compassion that comes out of  
 Having relationships with people who are different from you.  
 Something really powerful and beautiful happens:  
 You start to realize that they are you, that they are part of you,  
 That they are you in your family, and then we cease to be bystanders  
 And we become actors, we become advocates, and we become allies.  
 So go away from your comfort into a bigger, brighter thing,  
 Because that is how we will stop another Ferguson from happening.  
 That's how we create a community where everybody,  
 Especially young black men, can thrive.*

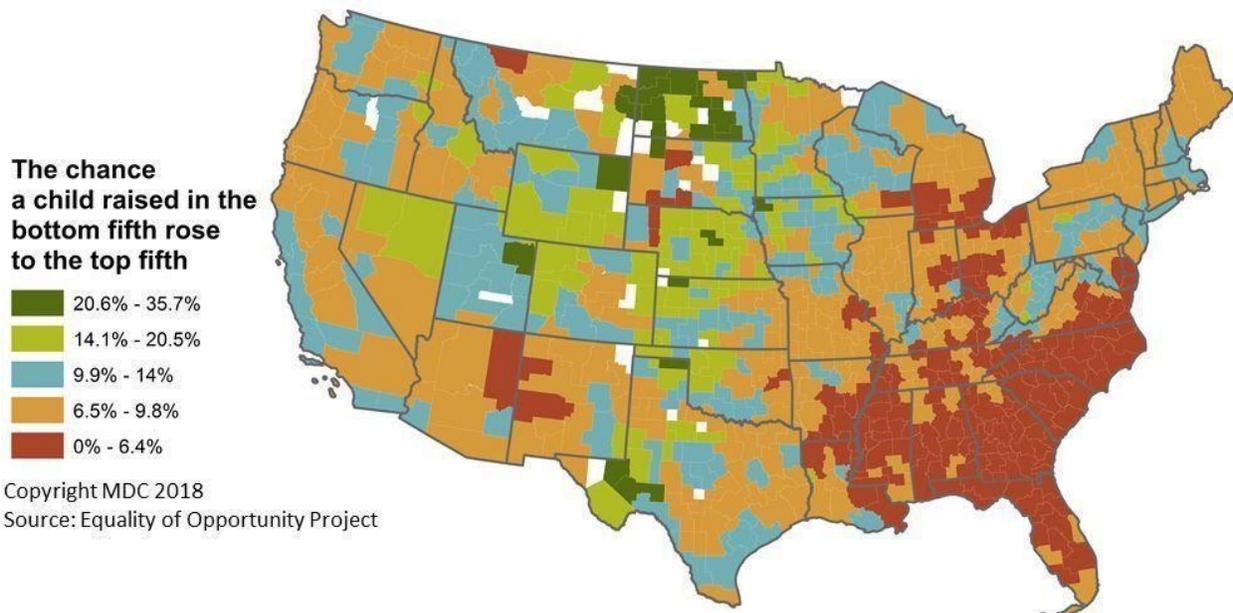
## Week 3: Segregation by Design

### Opportunity in Boston

From world-renowned academic institutions to financial giants to bio-technology leaders, Boston is home to many prosperous institutions and individuals. Yet, prosperity and opportunity are not evenly distributed. One quarter of Boston currently lives in poverty. It matters a great deal where you live in the Greater Boston area. Within this huge area are some of the nation's richest communities and some with large concentrations of poverty. ([Boston Foundation](#))

Facing some of the highest housing costs in the country, poor residents of Metro Boston encounter enormous hurdles. Black and [Latinx](#) [see [video](#) and [article](#) for more] communities are over 2x as likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than are poor whites. Even Black and Latinx households with incomes over \$50,000 per year are 2x as likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than are white households with incomes less than \$20,000.

The socio-economic composition of one's neighborhood has well-documented impacts on economic, educational, and social opportunities. Residents of Metro Boston's poverty neighborhoods are 3x more likely to be unemployed and to have dropped out of school than are those in non-poverty neighborhoods. ([Civil Rights Project](#))



Copyright MDC 2018  
Source: Equality of Opportunity Project

Economic mobility is the ability of an individual, family or some other group to improve (or lower) their economic status—usually measured in income and/or wealth. It is the concept of the American Dream. The above map shows how hard it is to move up the income ladder in various parts of the country.

Below are findings from a Boston Fed report that found that while white households have a median wealth of \$247,500, Dominicans and U.S. blacks have a median wealth of close to zero.

Metro Boston	Median Family Income	Median Family Wealth
White	\$90,000	\$247,500
US Black	\$41,200	\$8
Dominican	\$37,000	\$0
Puerto Rican	\$25,000	\$3,020

We know that where you live and where children are raised can have a strong influence on opportunity. also know that when these factors are combined with race, people of color are disproportionately impacted. Over the next few days, we will be exploring how race and other factors impact a person’s housing, health, education, financial stability, and more.

**Challenge:**

- [More about economic mobility and Boston](#). This article provides additional information about economic mobility in Boston and the factors that make it challenging to move up the income ladder.
- Explore the interactive [Opportunity Atlas](#) to examine how opportunity manifests across geography. Explore how your neighborhood compares to others.
- Read this [NY Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on black boys.

Segregation in Boston

*Institutional Racism is defined as “the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.” -- [Solid Ground](#)*

Present-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and others. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions that keep it in place. Policies shaped by institutional racism that enforce segregation include redlining, predatory lending, the

exclusion of black veterans from the G.I. bill, and the forced segregation of neighborhoods by the Federal Housing Authority. As a result of institutional racism, racial stratification and inequities persist in employment, housing, education, healthcare, government, and other sectors. ([Source](#))

In response to decades of racial segregation, in 1974, Boston Public Schools were required to integrate the city's schools through busing. Court-mandated busing, which continued until 1988, provoked enormous outrage among many white Bostonians, and helped to catalyze racist violence and class tensions across the city throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Anti-busing protests and iconography became national news in these years, and cemented Boston's reputation as a city plagued by racial and socioeconomic strife.

Though racial segregation was not codified by law in Boston, as it was in many Southern cities, it was an unofficial policy in the city, one reinforced by the Boston School Committee's districting decisions and stark residential segregation. Schools in African-American neighborhoods were badly underfunded, underequipped, and understaffed, eliciting protests from enrolled students and their parents. Schools that served black children received about two thirds of the amount of funding received by schools in white neighborhoods. ([Boston Research Center](#))

### **Challenge:**

- How did color-coded federal policy shape prosperity and opportunity in Boston neighborhoods? Watch a 3-minute video on [redlining in Boston](#).
- Why are cities still so segregated? Watch this [quick video where NPR's Code Switch](#) looks at the factors contributing to modern-day segregation.
- Read [an interview with Dr. Karilyn Crockett](#), recently appointed Boston's Chief Equity Officer.
- Browse the [Equal Justice Initiative's Segregation in America website](#).
- Explore one Florida city that seems to be bucking the segregation trend [here](#).

### **Housing Inequity in Boston**

The reality is that housing affordability and who experiences homelessness is largely influenced by our country's history of racism, and Greater Boston is no exception. Homeownership is one of the most powerful wealth-building tools available to working families, yet it is still a white dominant institution. According to the [Center for Global Policy Solutions](#), the homeownership rate for communities of color nationally is 25% lower than the homeownership rate for White families — a gap that has actually increased over the past 50 years.

Zoning laws in the U.S. originated in the early 20th century, and for many cities, these zoned areas were specifically segregated by race. When Black war veterans returned from World War II, the Federal Housing Administration did not allow them to obtain

mortgages. Despite fighting — and in many cases, dying — to support the U.S. mission, Black soldiers were explicitly discriminated against because they were viewed by banks and the federal government as “higher risk” loans. In order to obtain federal funding, local developers were required to include in their codes a refusal to sell to people of color. From zoning to redlining to discrimination against Black veterans, the U.S. housing system has contributed to significant inequities across racial lines.

#### *Affordable Housing in Massachusetts*

In order to afford a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the state without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a person needs to make \$33/hour, almost [triple the state’s current minimum wage](#). In Greater Boston, that number is even higher. In fact, Boston was recently ranked the [3rd most expensive place](#) to live in the US, due to the limited and increasingly expensive supply of housing.

#### *Homelessness in Massachusetts*

Because of the affordable housing crisis, [family homelessness in Massachusetts is on the rise](#). As of January 2019, Massachusetts had an estimated 18,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given day ([USICH](#)). Of that total:

- 3,766 were family households
- 917 were veterans
- 480 were unaccompanied young adults (aged 18-24).

Public school data during the 2017-2018 school year shows that an estimated 23,601 public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year (US Dept. of Education).

#### **Challenge:**

- Watch the short [Segregated by Design](#) video. ‘Segregated By Design’ examines the forgotten history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy.
- Explore the [State of Homelessness: 2020 report](#) created by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- Read this [article](#) by Reveal News about a specific barrier to black homeownership - banks.

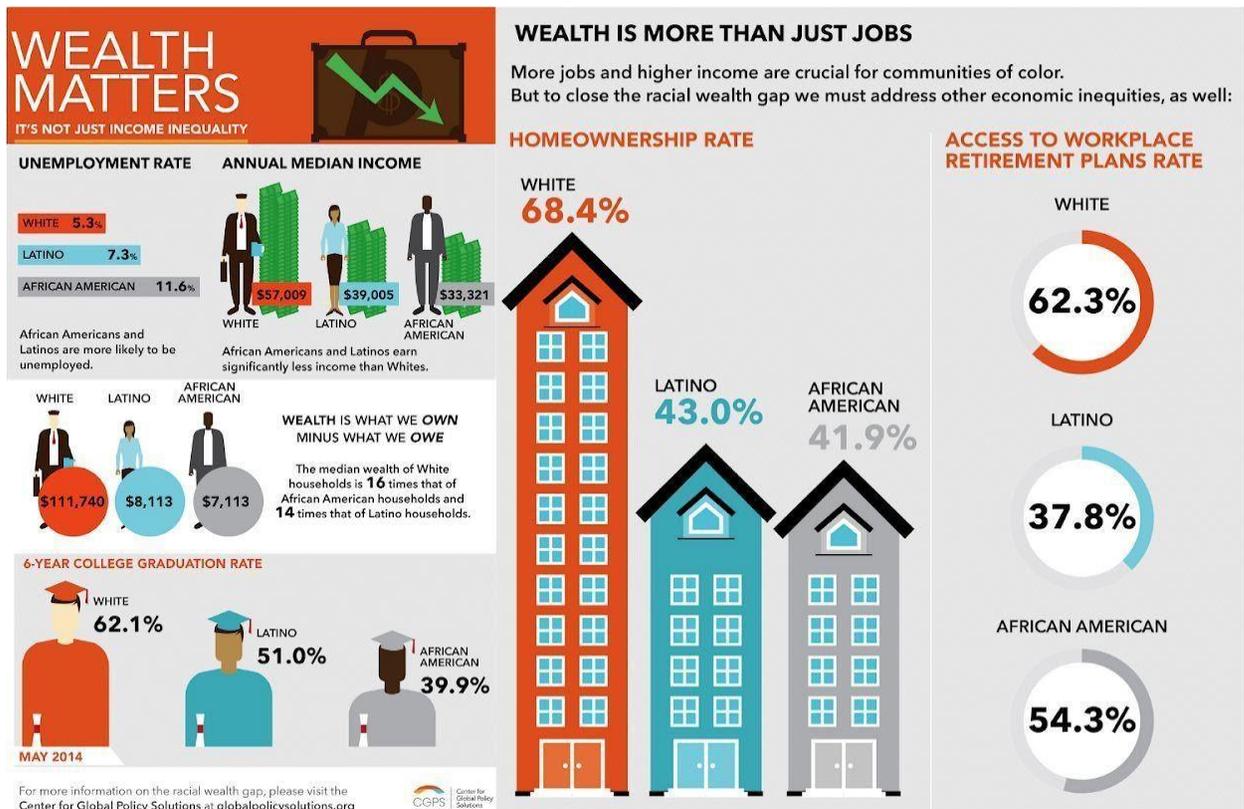
## **The Racial Wealth Gap**

*"Here in Boston, a city known as a liberal bastion, we have deluded ourselves into believing we've made more progress than we have. Racism certainly is not as loud and violent as it once was, and the city overall is a more tolerant place. But inequities of wealth and power persist, and racist attitudes remain powerful, even if in more subtle forms. They affect what we do—and what we don't do."*

- [Boston Globe Spotlight](#)

According to a 2017 [Boston Globe Spotlight](#) report, Black people have a median net worth of \$8, compared to Whites, who have an average net worth of \$247,500 -- a gap that has deepened over the past decade. What's more, reports suggest the pandemic is further [widening](#) existing social and economic divisions.

Earned income for top-tier earners has increased over the past 30 years, while earned income for lower- and middle-class workers has declined. As the [income gap](#) continues to grow in America, working households are struggling to meet their daily needs and find it difficult to build wealth through savings, investments, or homeownership. Today, about 44% of Black families own their [homes](#), compared with 74% of White families according to U.S. government data.



**Challenge:**

- Watch the first episode of [Netflix's Explained series](#) from Vox in Season 1, dives into the Racial Wealth Gap. In just 15 minutes, it is able to break down an incredibly complex topic.
- Review the [Racial Wealth Gap within the African American Community Report](#).
- Read the 2017 Boston Globe Spotlight series entitled "[Boston. Racism. Image. Reality.](#)"

### **Reflection:**

Journal about segregation. You might consider:

- How does it feel to know that Boston and the US is still segregated?
- What do you think you or AVC can do to help Massachusetts be less segregated? Do you think it is important? Why or why not?
- Do, or did, either of you work in a historically segregated industry? If so, how was that segregation maintained?
- How does that affect your family's earning power?
- Growing up, did your family own their home and are you a homeowner now? What role does housing play in building intergenerational wealth?

Journal about how the data and stories in today's challenge compare with the commonly told story that the United States is a land of opportunity. You might consider:

- When you think about the American Dream, what comes to mind? Prior to today, how easy did you think it was to achieve?
- Why do you think it is so challenging for our Black neighbors to move out of poverty in Boston?
  - What do you think AVC can do to help improve opportunity in Boston?

Journal about housing and homelessness. You might consider:

- What are some of the preconceived notions or biases you have towards people experiencing homelessness?
- Have you witnessed neighborhood opposition to new developments (aka the Not-In-My-Backyard sentiment - [NIMBYism](#)) in your community? In what ways has NIMBYism perpetuated racist practices? What can be done to counter it?
- Did you realize how systemic racism exists in housing policies? How do all of these things make you feel? What can be done to address or remedy these inequities?

## **Week 4: Health Disparities and Environmental Justice**

Health disparities in the COVID-19 crisis call attention to [long-standing inequities](#) that pervade the health care system and society at large. While COVID-19 is a novel disease, it has unmasked long-standing underlying health disparities. According to data from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the Black community make up 13% of the U.S. population, but represent a third of people hospitalized with COVID-19. In Illinois, members of the Latinx community have nearly seven times the rate of COVID-19 cases compared to white people. In New Mexico, Indigenous people comprise about 11% of the population yet account for more than half of COVID-19 cases. Health disparities during COVID-19 reflect two important patterns of inequity. First, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color have a high likelihood of contracting the virus by living in urban areas and disproportionately working in higher-risk environments.

According to the NY Times 1619 Project, “[racial health disparities are foundational as democracy itself](#).” Socioeconomic status and institutional racism lead to disparities across living conditions, limit access to quality health care, and contribute to chronic stress. The factors lead to shorter life spans and a higher likelihood of adverse health outcomes for people living in poverty and people of color. The infant mortality rate for Black babies is twice as high as the rate for white babies. A Black woman with an advanced degree is more likely to lose her baby within the first year than a white woman with less than an eighth-grade education.

Healthcare costs also make up a significant portion of a household’s annual budget, placing additional stress on families that may or may not have insurance and access to quality care.

- A recent study found that [millions of black people have been affected by racial bias in health-care algorithms used by many U.S. hospitals](#), resulting in Black people being less likely than white people who were equally sick being referred to programs.
- A study by the American Bar Association notes that “[the poverty in which black people disproportionately live cannot account for the fact that black people are sicker and have shorter life spans than their white complements....](#) racial and ethnic minorities receive lower-quality health care than white people - even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable.”

These issues are compounded by environmental racism. Despite wanting the best for their families, people with limited means are often less geographically mobile and have fewer affordable choices when deciding where to live. This has led to residents with low incomes, and often also people of color, to live in areas with high rates of air and water pollution, such as in industrial areas, near highways, or in close proximity to toxic waste sites. Additionally, because people of color in poverty tend to have less power, their neighborhoods often become places where unsafe or unclean businesses are located.

**Challenge:**

- Watch [David. R Williams, a public health sociologist, on the TED stage](#) as he discusses why race and deep-rooted systemic racism have such a profound impact on health.
- Read about how COVID-19 has laid bare how [racial discrimination drives health disparities.](#)
- Check out this [Fact Sheet from the American Psychological Association](#) exploring the compounding impact of socioeconomic status and race on health.
- Have you heard of environmental racism? [Watch this 3-minute video](#) on how numerous systemic issues contribute to differences in exposure to potentially harmful environmental conditions.

- Read [American Progress's article](#) about Communities of Color and Environmental Justice.

### **What is Environmental Racism?**

Despite wanting the best for their families, people with limited means are often less geographically mobile and have fewer affordable choices when deciding where to live. This has led to residents with low incomes, and often also people of color, to live in areas with high rates of air and water pollution, such as in industrial areas, near highways, or in close proximity to toxic waste sites. Additionally, because people of color in poverty tend to have less power, their neighborhoods often become places where unsafe or unclean businesses are located.

### **Challenge:**

- Have you heard of environmental racism? [Watch this 3-minute video](#) on how numerous systemic issues contribute to differences in exposure to potentially harmful environmental conditions.
- Read [American Progress's article](#) about Communities of Color and Environmental Justice.
- Check out the [Principles of Environmental Justice](#) developed at the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit with help from [Dr. Dorceta E. Taylor](#), University of Michigan professor and Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for The School for Environment and Sustainability.

### **Reflection:**

Journal about race, health and environmental racism. You might consider:

- Think about your last interaction with the healthcare system.
  - Did you feel seen, heard and valued by the clinical staff?
  - Did you receive care from a racially diverse staff? For BIPOC folks, were there members of your racial group reflected in your health care team and what was their position of influence?
  - What do you think it would feel like to have a different experience?
- How do you think this particular discrepancy impacts the communities of Cape Ann? Beyond physical health, what are other long-term consequences of these cumulative health inequities?
- When it comes to environmental racism, think about your house and neighborhood.
  - What images come to mind when you're out on a walk?
  - What modes of transportation can you easily access?
  - How does it feel to have neighbors whose living experiences are potentially jeopardized by environmental hazards?

- Do you have any program participants/clients who may be living in an area impacted by environmental racism? How do you think that impacts them and their day to day life?

## Week 5: Adverse Childhood Experiences (PTSD, education, LGBTQ)

### The Impact of Racial Trauma on Black, Indigenous and other People of Color

*“It took many years of vomiting up all the filth I’d been taught about myself, and half-believed, before I was able to walk on the earth as though I had a right to be here.” - [James Baldwin](#)*

On October 12, 2019, [Atatiana Jefferson](#), a Black woman, was murdered by a police officer in her home and in front of her nephew, while playing video games with him. A welfare check up, requested by her Black neighbor, was the impetus for the call to police. Weeks after her death, her father died of a massive heart attack.

Whether you agree or disagree with the actions of the responding police officer, news like this is traumatizing and re-traumatizing to people of color. It is like a wound that never heals. Research has linked racism to psychological distress, physical health problems, depression, anxiety, and trauma. The internalization of bias and oppression can cause great distress to minds, bodies, and spirits.

As Dr. Monnica Williams of the University of Connecticut has written: “What we really need is a large-scale shift in our social consciousness to understand the toll this takes on the psyche of victims so that even small acts of racism become unacceptable. We need those who witness racism to speak out and victims to be believed”.

#### **Challenge:**

- Read this [short article by Dr. Williams](#) to better understand the effects that racism can have on your mental health.
- Read this list of [8 ways to practice self-care](#) to support you and your loved ones when you are personally affected by racism.
- Listen to this podcast (or read the transcript) “[Looking Back On Police Brutality And Racism In Boston](#)”

### Behind the Starting Line - Racialized Outcomes in Early Childhood

*“We must acknowledge the broader diversity in and of the Black experience and celebrate that all Black children are born geniuses. Black students continue to pursue educational excellence despite the many unnecessary obstacles they face due to constructions and perceptions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientations in America.” - [David J. Johns](#)*

From infancy through high school, children's educational outcomes are dependent on the quality of their learning experience. Quality [early childhood education](#), in particular, has been shown to have a significant positive effect on future success, because brain circuits are developing actively then. In fact, 85% of the brain's development happens before a child enters kindergarten.

- From infancy through high school, children's educational outcomes are dependent on the quality of their learning experience. Quality early childhood education, in particular, has been shown to have a significant positive effect on future success, because brain circuits are developing actively then.<sup>1</sup> In fact, 85% of the brain's development happens before a child enters kindergarten.<sup>2</sup>
- When children receive quality early childhood education, they are more likely to read at grade level by 3rd grade.<sup>3</sup> The number of words a child knows at age 3 strongly correlates with reading and comprehension levels at ages 9 and 10.<sup>4</sup>
- For a family in poverty, licensed child care for one child in a two-parent household can cost more than 50% of a family's income. (Average cost per year is \$10,294 per child.

Social and emotional health are also key to children's development, and we know that poverty, trauma, and other [adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\)](#) can have sustained, negative impacts on children's ability to succeed. [Dr. Roy Wade](#) notes that "We see higher levels of childhood adversity among minority populations, but we need to acknowledge the role that historical inequities and disenfranchisement play in creating the environment in which such traumatic experiences are more likely to occur."

**Challenge:**

- Read [this article](#) on how 'Education Inequality Starts Early' for children in households with low incomes.
- Watch this [2-minute CBS News report](#) on how systemic racism persists in early childhood education, where black preschool students are disproportionately facing harsh punishments, like suspension.
- Read the [Institute for Child Success's article](#) on race & education entitled: The Failed Equalizer: Thoughts on Race and Education.

Education & School-Aged Children

Earlier in the class, we explored how segregation persists in American communities. Our economically and racially divided neighborhoods are leading to inequitable educational environments and adverse academic outcomes for our youth. [Studies show that children from families with low incomes](#) enter high school with literacy skills 5 years behind and are over 4 times more likely to drop out than those from high-income families.

Students of color, who are more likely to attend under-resourced schools than their white counterparts, suffer because of teachers working in under-resourced school environments and large class sizes, which when controlling for socioeconomic status, almost entirely explain [disparities in academic achievement](#) according to the Brookings Institute. Moreover, many children in the U.S. education system are not taught about

major historical events, such as the [Tulsa Race Massacre](#) or [Juneteenth](#), the June 19 commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States.

In Boston, a study found highly skilled Black, Latinx students face notable [admission barriers](#) to exam schools. The 2018 [report](#) notes, “Black and Hispanic students comprise nearly 75% of Boston’s student age population but represent only 40% of enrollment at the three [exam] schools and only 20% of enrollment at the most selective Boston Latin School”

**Challenge:**

- Watch [Boston teacher Kandice Sumner on the TED stage](#) discuss the disparities she sees in her classroom every day because of segregation in our school systems.
- *If you have more time*, listen to the [This American Life two-part podcast special](#) on how integration is needed to close the achievement gap.

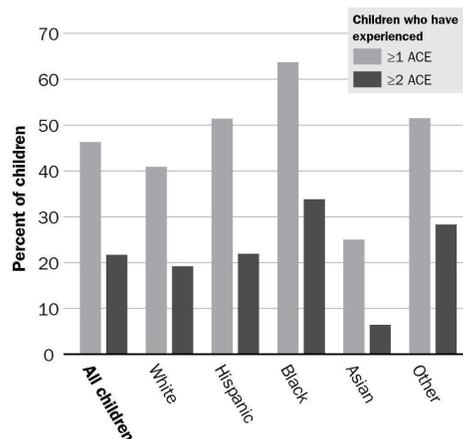
### Adverse Childhood Experiences

In order for children to meet developmental milestones, learn, grow and lead productive lives, it is critical that they be healthy. Good social-emotional and mental health is a key component of children’s healthy development. Poverty, trauma and inadequate treatment are three factors that have been shown to have a sustained, negative impact on children’s social, emotional and mental health. Recent studies have shown how exposure to racism, and other [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) (ACEs), affect our health largely through the body’s stress response system. This “toxic stress” destroys critical regulation systems in our bodies and brains and can ruin our health over time.

(continued on next page)

## Adverse Childhood Experiences show race/ethnicity disparity

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) happen most frequently among black children, according to The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative.



Source: THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE ZECHANG FU/Missourian

Source: *Missourian*; Original Data from *The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative*

### Challenge:

- [Assess your Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) score](#) to see how childhood trauma may be impacting your life. Then, assess your resilience score and explore resources on how to support yourself and others by [building resilience](#).
- View this [info-graphic and text that explains how trauma, ACEs and toxic stress affect our lives](#) and society.
- Go deeper and read more about the [trauma of racism](#).

### Equity & The LGBTQIA+ Community

Imagine not feeling accepted at home, in your community or at school because of your gender identity or sexual orientation. Like race and socioeconomic status, inequities for people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) can be seen across many dimensions, including healthcare, education, and in the workplace. To learn more about the term LGBTQIA+, [click here](#)! Research from the [American Progress Institute](#) shows that LGBTQIA+ individuals experience widespread discrimination, often manifesting itself as getting passed over for promotions, being bullied in schools, being refused healthcare, or being denied equal treatment at a store or hotel.

The intersection of race and sexual orientation and gender identity also has compounding effects on individuals' well-being: [Black transgender and gender non-conforming individuals experience some of the highest levels of discrimination](#) and threats on their personal safety.

According to the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), there is an “epidemic of violence against Black transwomen. NCTE’s U.S. Transgender Survey of about 28,000 respondents found:

- Nearly half (47%) of all Black respondents reported being denied equal treatment, verbally harassed, and/or physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender.
- Nearly one in ten (9%) were physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender.
- Black transgender women (14%) were more likely to be physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender, compared to Black non-binary people (8%) and transgender men (7%).

**Challenge:**

- Watch this quick video to [learn why using correct pronouns is so important](#). Add your pronouns to your [email signature](#), to show your advocacy for LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- Watch Ashlee Marie Preston on the [TEDx stage discuss effective allyship](#) and intersectionality from her perspective as a Black transgender woman. She discusses when and how to speak up, and what it truly means to be an ally.
- Read this [article exploring how schools are struggling to support LGBT students](#) and how we can work to create safe spaces for youth to thrive.

**Reflection:**

Journal about adverse childhood experiences and your childhood. You might consider:

- When thinking about your own ACE score, what thoughts and feelings come up for you?
- What stood out to you from the challenge today?

Journal about the impact of trauma on Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. You might consider:

- Regardless of your race, what does it feel like to think about issues regarding racial inequity for you?

Journal on your own early childhood. You might consider:

- Growing up, were you taught by educators who looked like you? Did the books you read have characters or stories that reflected your lived experience?
- What messages were you taught about race? How did those messages compare to what you saw around you?

- What kind of supports did you or your children have access to (or not) during your or their education? (e.g. tutoring, after-school enrichment, summer programs, etc.)
- Were you taught about [Tulsa Race Massacre](#) or [Juneteenth](#) in school?

Journal about early childhood education. You might consider:

- How might COVID-19-related inequities and disruptions be affecting childhood development? Who bears the brunt of these inequities and disruptions?
- How do you think decreasing the racial differences in early childhood education and experiences can help Black children? How can it help white children and other students of color?

Journal on your own experience of feeling safe or unsafe based on your sexual orientation and gender identity. You might consider:

- What were you taught about gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality - either directly or indirectly? Have your views changed over time?
- Have you ever felt unaccepted by family members or colleagues because of an aspect of your identity?
- What can equity regarding the LGBTQIA+ community look like in AVC?

## **Week 6: Race & the Criminal Justice System**

For people who live at the margins of class, gender identity and expression, sexuality, disability, race and so forth, they face increased risks with the criminal justice system. Incarceration. As a result, Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) are disproportionately targeted and incarcerated at higher rates than their white peers. Like their male counterparts, [BIPOC women are overrepresented](#) in jails and prisons across the country, and the same holds true for children of color.

[The Post and Courier reported about racial disparities in the South Carolina criminal justicesystem.](#) Black South Carolinians are over four times more likely to be imprisoned than white residents, researchers said in a recent analysis. South Carolina is one of 12 states in which more than half of the prison population is Black, the report found. The state's population in 2014 was percent Black, but the prison population was 64.7 percent Black. The study suggests several factors in the criminal justice system that might explain why Black people are disproportionately represented in the prisons:

- Police are more likely to stop and frisk Black people and to arrest them for drug offenses, especially for minor offenses.
- Prosecutors are more likely to charge Black offenders under state habitual offender laws.
- Judges are more likely to give Black people longer sentences because they are perceived as threats to society who need to be locked away.

### **Challenge:**

- Watch [Bryan Stevenson's TED Talk](#): We need to talk about an injustice. *If you have more time, watch the movie based on his book, Just Mercy, which is currently streaming for free on Amazon Video.*
- Read more about [racial bias in the criminal justice system](#) via the Washington Post.
- To learn more about how LGBTQ+ identifying folks experience incarceration, read the executive summary from a recent report from Black and Pink - [Coming out of the Concrete Closet](#).

### **Reflection:**

Journal about the criminal justice system. You might consider:

- When Bryan Stevenson said that our system treats you better if you are rich and guilty than poor and innocent, what came up for you? What did you think? How did it make you feel?
- How do you think the criminal justice system impacts your work and the lives of your program participants?

## **Week 7: Asset Framing, How to Be an Ally, Being an Ally**

*"The Circle of Human Concern should include everyone, including those with whom we disagree," he said. "We are all a part of each other. We don't like it, but we're connected." - [john a. powell](#)*

Name a time when it feels like the world is becoming increasingly polarized, john a. powell asks, *"How can we build bridges?"* In his keynote at the [Othering & Belonging Conference](#), he says *"We must hear other people's suffering and stories. Compassion means to suffer with others."*

What does it mean to be an ally? An ally seeks to understand what it feels like for another person or group to be oppressed, and despite knowing you will never fully understand how it feels, is committed to valuing and supporting people who are marginalized.

We have opportunities to [practice allyship](#) every day:

- How much space are we taking up in conversations? in rooms? in organizing?
- How do we actively improve access to our meetings? our actions?
- How are our identities taking up space? physically? verbally?
- How much do we know about the people we seek to work with? what are our assumptions and from where did they originate?
- Who are we leaving behind?

Remember, being an ally is not an identity, it is a continual *process* – something you have to work at, be intentional about, and commit to day in and day out. For White readers, explore what active support looks like as an ally in Race Equity Tools’ [Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally](#).

**Challenge:**

- Read the [Do’s and Don’ts](#) of Allyship that are important to know as you practice and evolve your role in supporting equity and inclusion.
- Watch this [short video](#) on empathy narrated by Brene Brown. Empathy can be a critical step in truly understanding the experience of those in marginalized communities.
- Check out a quick video on [5 Tips for Being An Ally](#).
- *If you have more time, listen to NPR’s Code Switch explore the complexities of allyship on this [30-minute podcast](#).*

**Tools for the Racial Equity Change Process**



THE LONGER YOU SWIM  
IN A CULTURE, THE MORE  
INVISIBLE IT BECOMES

Over the past 6 weeks, we have learned how racial inequities permeate our community on individual, institutional, and systemic levels. We are all impacted by the system of racism in Boston and therefore all responsible for dismantling the structures that allow it to persist. Change is possible and there are many tools we can employ as individuals and organizations to drive individual and community transformation. We will highlight a few of these tools below, but encourage you to explore [Racial Equity Tools](#), a comprehensive site of resources designed to support learning, planning, acting, and evaluating efforts to achieve racial equity.

Creating equitable outcomes also requires that we change the way we talk about members of our community, focusing on their aspirations rather than their challenges. In practice, this is called asset-framing and uses narratives to change the unconscious associations ingrained in our society. The opposite practice of deficit-framing, or defining people by their challenges, encourages continued stigmatization of groups of individuals.

**Challenge:**

- Read this [Beginner's Guide to Asset Framing](#), to learn more about how we communicate impacts our ability to achieve racial equity.
- One of the best ways to continue to build empathy and learn about race is to start a conversation. Read Race Forward's [10 Ways to Start a Conversation About Race](#) to learn more about how to start a conversation with friends, at school, at work, and more

**Reflection:**

Journal about allyship. You might consider:

- Do you currently consider yourself an ally within AVC and within the great world? Why or why not?
- What are two to three steps you can take to be more of an ally?
- If you identify as BIPOC, what support(s) do you need from white allies?
- What are the barriers holding AVC back from being an ally or being a more effective ally? Are any of these barriers able to be overcome?