BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Discussion Guide

A video-based discussion guide to facilitate relevant conversations.

Growing Up Black

Ages

10 - 18

PASSPORT 2 MANHOOD

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INTRODUCTION

America has witnessed countless murders of unarmed Black men, children, and teens. Some of these killings made national news and numerous others did not gain national attention. Despite this, youth in America have been and continue to be exposed to this very harsh reality. As a nation, we are at a tipping point where racial injustice has been brought to the living rooms of every American, including our Club youth. Youth are witnessing the unrest flooding our nation and need ways to process their emotions.

Now, more than ever, Clubs must continue to be a safe place for all youth. These safe spaces can be provided virtually, in-person, or a combination of the two, to give youth a place to process what they are witnessing with trusted adults.

This video-based discussion guide is designed to facilitate a listening session and provide a place for youth to process their feelings. It is not intended to be a place where staff and youth try to solve problems. This resource will highlight some of the experiences Black males are undergoing and provide an opportunity for youth to process their emotions and express how they feel about topics such as racism, being Black in America, and masculinity.

While it is important to have these conversations with all youth, this guide was developed to be implemented with Black boys. To ensure inclusion, we have provided two sets of questions to use with each video depending on the group of youth gathered for a session.

- **Question Set A** is specifically designed for Black boys.
- **Question Set B** is provided for groups of youth with varying racial, ethnic, and cultural identities.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This discussion guide is designed to facilitate conversation and not intended to solve problems. The sets of questions can be used throughout multiple sessions. The instructions are broken down into three sections; Before the session, During the session, and After the session.

Before the session:

- Prepare to establish an emotionally safe environment for youth during the discussion. Consider providing manipulatives for youth to play with during the discussion, providing youth opportunities to pass during the discussion, and acknowledging that this is a place where talking bout feelings is welcome, and following up with youth after the discussion as needed. Find a full list of tips in the Implementation Guidance section of the Emotional Wellness Planning Guide.
- Watch the videos and read through the questions before facilitating them with youth.
- After watching the videos, process your emotions and answer a few of the discussion questions for yourself.
- Determine which group of youth you will facilitate these sessions with to identify if you will use question set A or B.
- Consider what questions you may need to adapt or add to meet the needs of your group.
- Review the Resources section for additional tools to help you prepare to facilitate the sessions.

During the session:

- Watch one video at a time and facilitate the corresponding discussion questions before moving on to the next video.
- Encourage youth to speak freely when responding to the discussion questions. If youth are shy about speaking, model the way by offering your response to the question and then ask if anyone else would like to share.
    - If you choose to answer a question, model appropriate self-disclosure about your experiences by refraining from sharing personal stories or experiences. Instead share a possible perspective a youth might be

feeling, listen, ask questions, and support youth's processing. As a facilitator, your key role here is to make connections between youth and provide a space to process, not to share your specific experiences or perspectives.
    - If youth are still cautious to share their response, ask them what questions came to mind for them as they watched the video.
        - Offering up an opportunity for youth to ask questions, allows them to speak without the pressure of discussing their personal experience.
- Allow youth opportunities to "pass"or sit if they are feeling uncomfortable or unwilling to share during a component of the session.
- Once all youth, who want to share, have had the opportunity to share, move on to the next video and set of discussion questions.
- After discussing all videos, encourage youth to suggest additional topics they would like to discuss during future sessions. Collect these suggestions.

After the Session:

- Follow up with any youth after the session who may have been experiencing heightened emotions. Let them know you're available to talk. If needed, make referrals to mental health providers. Some national mental health providers:
    - Crisis Text Line: https://www.crisistextline.org/
    - National Suicide Prevention Hotline: https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
        - Information about African Americans and Suicide: https://www.sprc.org/populations/blacks-african-americans
    - The Trevor Project: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/
    - 211.org for local resources in your community: https://www.211.org/
- Read over the suggestions youth provided for future sessions.
- Find age-appropriate videos around the suggested topics to facilitate additional conversations. Here are some tips for selecting age-appropriate videos:
    - Ensure content in the video is age-appropriate.

        - Music, in the foreground and background, should be free of explicit language, misogyny, racial slurs, sexual references, drugs, and other adult content.
        - Language should be easy for youth to understand or provide definitions for words that may be new.
        - Visuals should be clear and easy to understand.
        - Content, should not contain references to alcohol, sex, violence, or drugs other inappropriate topics without explicit staff guidance.
    - If the video is hosted on social media or a social media handle is visible, please check the other videos created by this account. If other videos are deemed inappropriate by following the above guidelines, do not use any content created by this account.
        - For example, a STEM content creator has a great example of how to build a bottle rocket. However, you watch their other videos and find one on how to make a cardboard gun. This would not fall within the guidelines and an alternative video should be found.
    - Watch the entire video to verify it falls within the above guidelines.
- Create sets of questions for the new topic areas.

A CONVERSATION ABOUT GROWING UP BLACK

Facilitator Note: Start this session by asking the first 7 pre-reflection questions about racism before watching the video.

Video Link: https://youtu.be/rSAw51caEeg
Video Length: 5:21
Ages: 10+

Discussion Questions: Set A

Pre-reflection questions

What does racism mean to you?
How do you feel about racism?
How has racism played a role in your life?
How do you work through your feelings about racism?
How old were you when you first encountered racism and what happened?
How has the impact of racism changed you?
What do you wish you knew about racism at an earlier age?

Reflection questions

How did watching the video make you feel?
When have others made you feel uncomfortable about being Black?
What have you been taught about being Black in America? Who did you learn this from?
When you see images of Black men on TV, what do you see?
How do these images make you feel about your future?
What do you want people to know about you? How do you want to be seen?
What would you say to your younger self about being Black? What advice would you give?
If you could send a message to your parents or caregivers about how they've prepared you for being a Black man in America, what would you say?

A CONVERSATION ABOUT GROWING UP BLACK

Facilitator Note: Start this session by asking the first 7 pre-reflection questions about racism before watching the video.

Video Link: https://youtu.be/rSAw51caEeg
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Ages: 10+

Discussion Questions: Set B

Pre-reflection questions

What does racism mean to you?
How do you feel about racism?
How has racism played a role in your life?
How do you work through your feelings about racism?
How old were you when you first encountered racism and what happened?
How has the impact of racism changed you?
What do you wish you knew about racism at an earlier age?

Reflection questions

How did watching the video make you feel?
What did you notice about how the youth in the video described their experience of being Black in America?
What is something that you learned from watching this video?
How have your thoughts changed or stayed the same when you think about Black kids?
When you see images of Black men on TV, what do you see?
What are your thoughts about the images you see?
How might your thoughts about Black kids also carry over to your thoughts about Black men?
Can you think of a time when you were judged or treated differently based on the color of your skin?
When have others made you feel uncomfortable about your race, ethnicity, or culture?
What do you want people to know about you? How do you want to be seen?

WHERE DO YOU FEEL SAFE?

Video Link: https://youtu.be/N11L9xa7Qkk
Video Length: 0:37
Ages: 10+

Discussion Questions: Set A and B
Reflection questions

What did you see? How did it make you feel? In what ways is this the same as or different from your own experience?
Why do you think the boy stopped playing basketball?
Do you think you would've had the same reaction if you were the one playing basketball? What would you have done differently or the same?
How have everyday activities changed for you?
Because of the color of your skin, when have you felt unsafe in places that you were supposed to feel safe?
What makes a place feel safe?
How do you know where to go to feel safe?

BREAKING THROUGH EMOTIONAL BARRIERS

Video Link: https://youtu.be/ooAOc9Fwg0U
Video Length: 5:25
Ages: 10+

Discussion Questions: Set A
Reflection questions

Why do you think the instructor asked the young man to push through the pain?
Based on the video, what does mental fortitude mean to you?
Think of a time when you wanted to cry but felt like you couldn't. What made you think that you shouldn't cry?
When is it ok to cry? Why is it ok to cry during these times and not others?
When you either don't want to or aren't able to cry, what are some ways you work through your emotions?
Why do you think the instructor had the student get on his father's back?
What did you notice about how the instructor spoke to the student?
What did you notice about how the instructor spoke to the student's father?
Why was it important for the student to see his father also push through his pain?
How would you define masculinity?
How did this video's version of masculinity compare to your own?
Why do you think the instructor compared his class to being a Black man in America?
What are some similarities or differences you saw from your experience of being Black in America?

BREAKING THROUGH EMOTIONAL BARRIERS

Video Link: https://youtu.be/ooAOc9Fwg0U
Video Length: 5:25
Ages: 10+

Discussion Questions: Set B
Reflection questions

Why do you think the instructor asked the young man to push through the pain?
Based on the video, what does mental fortitude mean to you?
Think of a time when you wanted to cry but felt like you couldn't. What made you think that you shouldn't cry?
When is it ok to cry? Why is it ok to cry during these times and not others?
When you either don't want to or aren't able to cry, what are some ways you work through your emotions?
Why do you think the instructor had the student get on his father's back?
What did you notice about how the instructor spoke to the student?
What did you notice about how the instructor spoke to the student's father?
Why was it important for the student to see his father also push through his pain?
How would you define masculinity?
How did this video's version of masculinity compare to your own?
Why do you think the instructor compared his class to being a Black man in America?
What are some similarities or differences you saw from what you think it's like being Black in America?

SYSTEMIC RACISM

Facilitation Note: The definitions and terms in this video are more advanced and may not be suitable for your first discussion with youth.

Video Link: https://youtu.be/YrHIQIO_bdQ
Video Length: 4:23
Ages: 13+

Discussion Questions: Set A and B
Reflection questions

After watching this video, what stood out to you?
Which terms do you need to be repeated to better understand the definitions?
How has systemic racism shown up in your life? With you, your family, parents/caregivers?
Have you noticed opportunities that were given to you or taken away from you based on your race?
How do you think these opportunities were affected by systemic racism?
Outside of Club staff, how many college graduates do you know? Why do you think that is?
Think about your neighborhood, what types of people do you see? What are their races, cultures, religions and how might they be similar or different from yours?
What type of housing do most of your friends and family have?
Do they live in an apartment, house, mobile home, or somewhere else?
Why do you think people live where they live?
What are some prejudices you might have that you are not aware of?

GLOSSARY

Systemic Racism - A form of racism that is embedded as a normal practice within society or an organization. The rules, practices, and customs originated from old laws that benefited white people and left out Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other Persons of Color based on race. Although the laws may no longer exist, they still have an impact on current policies and practices that continue to exclude many groups of people.

Redlining - the act of dividing cities into sections that are considered either desirable or undesirable for investment. Black neighborhoods have historically been determined to be undesirable and have prevented Black people from having access to private and public investments from banks and insurance companies.

Implicit Bias - holding on to beliefs, attitudes, or stereotypes about other people that unknowingly affect one's understanding, actions, and decisions.

Mental Fortitude - the ability to focus and execute a task when faced with a challenge.

RESOURCES

BGCA provides many resources to continue having conversations about current events and concerns, and additional ways to support youth in processing their emotions. Use the resources below as a part of facilitated conversations or to support your organic conversations and opportunities to help youth process emotions.

BGCA Resources

- **Emotional Wellness Summer Planning Guide**
  https://www.bgca.net/Programs/Back%20to%20Club%20Resources/Emotional%20Wellness%20Planning%20Guide.pdf

- **How to Talk to Youth about Traumatic Events**
  https://clubexperience.blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/How-to-Talk-to-Teens-about-Traumatic-Events.pdf

- **Race Matters - Club Experience Blog Post**
  https://clubexperience.blog/2020/06/02/race-matters/

- **Summer Brain Gain READ** - A selection of modules featuring books with characters experiencing and overcoming discrimination or fighting racism.
  http://bit.ly/SBGREAD

- **Summer Brain Gain 2020 Program** - "Around the World" Module Two introduces youth to different cultures through various activities.
  https://www.bgca.net/Programs/Pages/Summer-Brain-Gain.aspx

- **Youth for Unity** - A program guide with activities for youth and discussion prompts for parents around diversity, prejudice, and discrimination.
  https://www.bgca.net/youthforunity

RESOURCES

External Resources

- **Teaching Tolerance "Let's Talk" Guide**
  A guide to discussing race, racism and other difficult topics with youth
  http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TTDifficultConversations web.pdf

- **Racial Equity Conversation Starters**
  Conversation starters and process outline for facilitating dialogue about racial equity
  https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/ConversationStarters.pdf

- **Creating Space to Talk about Race**
  Tips to set up a safe space to talk about race and biases
  http://neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Talk-About-Race-in-the-Classroom.pdf

- **Raising Youth of Color in a Complex World**
  https://parentandteen.com/raising-youth-of-color/

- **BrainPOP: Helping Kids Understand the Black Lives Matter Movement**
  https://blog.brainpop.com/helping-kids-understand-black-lives-matter-movement/

- **Black Lives Matter 2020 Curriculum Resource Folder**
  The national Black Lives Matter At School coalition's Curriculum Committee has developed lessons for every grade level that relate to the 13 principles of Black Lives Matter. These free, downloadable lessons challenge racism, oppression, and aim to build happy and healthy youth communities.
  https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LGslwJwhXvpVnDgw0uC-n794l6EGzpuH