

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Discussion Guide

A video-based discussion guide to facilitate relevant conversations.

Growing Up Black

Ages

10 - 18

SMART GIRLS SG SKILLS MASTERY AND RESILIENCE TRAINING

Table of Contents

Introduction 2
How to Use this Guide 3
Club Voice: Growing Up Black 6
Colorism 7
Representation Matters 8
Systemic Racism 9
Glossary of terms 10
Resources 12

Introduction

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 kids. The images and videos of the unfair treatment of Black adults, children, and teens are impacting youth. Youth need opportunities to see and hear a variety of Black experiences and ways to process their emotions about what they've seen.

This video-based discussion guide is designed to facilitate a listening session and provide a safe place for youth to process their feelings through conversations that recognize and acknowledge injustices. These conversations are designed to counter negative physical, emotional, and social effects; and support youth in developing pride around their identities. The conversations are not intended to be a place where staff and youth try to solve problems. This resource will highlight some of the experiences of Black girls. Topics include; growing up Black, colorism, representation, and systemic racism.

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 and experiencing with trusted adults.

This guide was developed to be implemented with both Black girls and youth of varying races, cultures, and identities. Each topic and video are accompanied by two sets of questions.

- Question Set A is specifically designed for Black girls.
- 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 is not intended to solve problems. Guiding questions included within this guide can be used throughout multiple sessions. The instructions are broken down into four sections:

- Before the session
- During the session
- After the session
- Selecting videos

Before the session

- The SMART Girls: Growing Up Black Discussion Guide is not a therapy or counseling tool and should not be used in this way. Understanding your role and professional ability as a youth development staff is critical. Some of the discussions may cause youth to become emotional, share personal stories about past trauma, or even open up about their mental health. It is important to keep in mind that you are not expected to take on the role of a therapist or counselor, nor would it be ethical for you to do so.
- You should be able to recognize when youth are disclosing abuse or another traumatic event and to report and refer as appropriate. You are not alone in supporting Club youth. There are many caring adults and professionals available and able to provide support when necessary. If you have a social worker or therapist on staff, ask them to be available to step in if needed during or after the program. If you do not have a social worker or therapist on staff, consider familiarizing yourself with the local agencies in your area.
    - BGCA Incident Response Guide
    - Visit 211.org for more information on local resources
    - Utilize the free Crisis Text Line by texting CLUB or 741741 to talk with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.
- Prepare to establish an emotionally safe environment for youth during the discussion. Consider providing manipulatives for youth to play with during discussions, providing youth opportunities to pass during the discussion, acknowledging that this is a place where talking about feelings is welcome, and following-up with youth after the discussion as needed.
- Determine your audience by age group. The recommended age groupings are 10-12, 13-14, and 15-18. Breaking youth into groups that closely match their age allows for age-appropriate open dialogue.
- Review the Resources section for additional tools to help you prepare to facilitate the sessions.
- Consider adding adaptation components to make the experience unique for your youth while increasing their level of comfort in having intimate discussions with their peers.
    - Invite youth to lead the conversation

    - Provide a snack or meal for youth to eat together during the discussion
    - Allow youth to reflect on the conversation by providing journals or trackers
    - Make paper and markers available for drawing
    - Add an element of movement to the conversation
    - Ask youth to build something individually or as a group while having discussions. This can be as simple as putting together a puzzle.
- 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

- Create a safe space by co-developing Group Agreements with youth to determine how they want to feel during the conversation. Developing Group Agreements can be found on page 5.
- Reference the Group Agreements at the beginning of each session and allow new participants to contribute and commit to them.
- Before watching and discussing any videos, give a sensitive topic disclosure. This statement should acknowledge that talking about personal experiences with race and racism may be upsetting for youth, and lead to a variety of strong emotions; encourage youth to take breaks as needed and to talk about their feelings with adults they trust. An example is below:
    - *"This is a safe space where you are safe to feel and talk about your emotions and ask for help. Today we are going to be talking about some things that may cause you to feel some strong emotions. Everyone has a different experience with these topics, and there is no wrong way to feel. You can pass and take a break at any point if you are feeling uncomfortable or overwhelmed. I am here to help. Does anyone have any questions before we start?"*
- Watch one video at a time and facilitate the corresponding discussion questions before moving on to the next topic.
- As the discussion is taking place, invite youth to share. Encourage them 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.

- Encourage questions if youth are still cautious to share their response, ask them what questions came to mind for them as they listened to the discussion.
    - Offering up an opportunity for youth to ask questions, allows them to speak without the pressure of discussing their personal experience.
- Remain actively engaged throughout discussions to answer any questions, provide suggestions, and listen for things that may need follow-up. Follow up with any youth to see if they are feeling dysregulated (mad, sad, scared, or worried) to ensure their emotional safety. Provide them with an empathetic listening ear, and space to self-regulate. Be sure to follow your Club's policy for Mandated Reporting if a youth discloses anything related to abuse, neglect, or their personal safety while sharing.
- 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 afterward who appear to need additional support by stepping aside to discuss how they are feeling and determine how you can help.
- Reading over the suggestions that youth provided for future sessions.
- Follow up with youth to gain insight into their suggestions
- Continue the conversation by inviting youth who submitted suggestions to help co-create future sessions.
- Develop age-appropriate sets of questions for the new topic areas.
- Gather your group again to facilitate conversations around the topics they suggested.

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, drugs, or 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.

Club Voice: Growing Up Black

Video: https://youtu.be/8n2rBonW5k0

Video Length: 5:18

Ages: 10+

Set A

- How did watching the video make you feel?
- What stood out to you about this video?
- What does it mean to be a Black girl?
- What is the best thing about being a Black girl?
- How is being a Black girl different from being a Black boy?
- What does racism mean to you?
- How has racism played a role in your life or the lives of people you know?
- What do you wish people knew about Black girls?

Set B

- How did watching the video make you feel?
- What stood out to you about this video?
- From your perspective, what does it mean to be a Black girl?
- What common themes did you hear between the speakers?
- What is something that you learned from watching this video?
- What does racism mean to you?
- How has racism played a role in your life or the lives of people you know?
- How might someone's experience with racism differ based on their race?
- How have your thoughts changed or stayed the same when you think about Black girls and women?

Colorism

Facilitation note: Before leading this conversation, understand the definition of the term colorism.

Colorism: when someone with lighter skin is favored over someone with darker skin. Colorism occurs within all races, as all have varieties of skin tone and hair color. (https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/)

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB812yqDwPM

Video Length: 1:20

Ages: 10+

Discussion Questions: Set A and B

- What stood out to you about this video?
- How did watching the video make you feel?
- What was the main issue in this video?
- If you have heard of the term colorism, how would you define it?
- Why might someone be treated differently because of their skin tone?
- How might someone feel if they were treated differently than others because of their skin tone?
- How have you seen instances of colorism depicted in the media?
- What could you do if you saw someone being treated differently than others because of their skin tone?
- What is something you learned from watching this video?

Representation Matters

Video: https://www.instagram.com/p/CHvzoiGnnxn/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Video Length: 1 min

Ages: 10+

Set A

- What stood out to you about this video?
- How did watching the video make you feel?
- Why do you think some youth have heard of Mari Copney and others have not?
- What potential barriers do you see for Black girls becoming involved in advocacy? How might these barriers be removed?
- Who are some people you can think of who advocated or sparked a change? How many of these people are women or girls? How many of these people are Black women or girls?
- How can you spark change within your Club/community?
- What leadership traits do you have that could assist you in sparking change?
- What women leaders in your Club/community inspire you?

Set B

- What stood out to you about this video?
- How did watching the video make you feel?
- Why do you think some youth have heard of Mari Copney and others have not?
- Who are some people you can think of who advocated or sparked a change? How many of these people are women or girls? How many of these people are Black women or girls?
- What potential barriers do you see for Black girls becoming involved in advocacy?
- How would those barriers differ based on your race, ethnicity, or culture?
- What could you do to help remove barriers for Black girls?

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

- After watching this video, what stood out to you?
- Which terms do you need 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 of terms

Activism The policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.

Activist An activist is someone who actively advocates for political or social change. Often used to describe black leaders engaged in activism. Others who also push for causes, however, often are called advocates. (https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/)

Black Girl Magic a movement that was popularized by CaShawn Thompson in 2013.[1] The concept was born as a way to "celebrate the beauty, power and resilience of Black women," as described by Julee Wilson from HuffPost,[2] and to congratulate Black women on their accomplishments (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-black-girl-magic-video_n_5694dad4e4b086bc1cd517f4)

Colorism When someone with lighter skin is favored over someone with darker skin. Colorism occurs within all races, as all have varieties of skin tone and hair color. (https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/)

Culture A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication. (http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary)

Discrimination The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories. (http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary)

Ethnicity A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base. (http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary)

Race A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups. (http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary)

Racial and Ethnic Identity An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience. (http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary)

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.

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.

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/

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/TT Difficult Conversations web.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