

Anti-racist Resources for British Fencing - Black Lives Matter Conversations & Actions

The following resource has been created to support coaches delivering sessions as part of Muslim Girls Fence and has been adapted for British Fencing's general use. The resource is a 'working document' and useful information will continue to be added to it overtime.

It's important to recognise that whilst its valuable that these conversations are happening, they are pointless if they don't lead to any action and actual change in real life. It's also a time for reflection; why has it taken 400+ years of oppression and violence against Black people for these conversations to happen in 2020, and why hasn't anti-racism been an everyday part of our lives? Also, we need to point out that everything discussed here goes beyond 'diversity' and 'inclusion' which are often meaningless and without any real substance.

- € Don't be afraid/hesitant to name what you are talking about whether it's anti-Blackness, anti-Black racism, the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and unfortunately many many more and why they were murdered. It's important to say their name and name the topic rather than referring to it as something abstract and/or vague. This makes it easier to understand and deal with and learn from.
- € It's not enough to say "I am not racist", **we all need to be anti-racist**. This means reflecting on not just our individual behaviour and mindsets, but also actively working to dismantle structural and systemic inequalities in our society. Everyone has individual prejudices which need to be confronted. For instance, think about who do you celebrate/support as an individual and as an organisation? However, structural racism is often the most harmful and detrimental to society. For example, we see lots of Black and Asian authors now being published, but we know that they get paid a lot less than white writers. We know that Black boys are more likely to be stopped and searched, and convicted and imprisoned than white men, not because they are criminals, but because the police are institutionally racist (see the Macpherson report). There have been 1,741 deaths in police custody in England and Wales since 1990. We know that job applicants with names that don't sound English are less likely to get passed application stage. But the issues are deeper than this; structural racism is prevalent in sports, housing, healthcare, and education. Examples of these can easily be easily googled. Relying on

power holders to make decisions about people they have no contact with and know nothing about is disingenuous and needs to be challenged.

- € What is white privilege? You may have heard this term being used. Have a look at this quiz to check your own privilege. The quiz was made originally for museums and galleries, and has been adapted to be more relevant to sports:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8k7n4xilsos20ws/White%20privelege%20test.docx?dl=0>
- € And in case you were wondering, [Reverse racism is not a thing and nor is it possible](#)
- € You might feel like it's not your responsibility or place to talk about these issues or you might feel discomfort when engaging with this subject matter - It's OK to feel discomfort, as it is the first step to learning. It's OK for us to acknowledge what we don't know, recognise our privileges and prejudices, and where our gaps in knowledge are, and listen to the voices of Black communities to further our understanding. Being uncomfortable is part of learning.
- € Read up on how white British identity has historically been tied to ideas of superiority over other races. This is rooted in colonialism, orientalism and the British empire, so reflect on how this is still part of mainstream consciousness and ideas about 'Britishness'.

These are a few links that expand on this

Where does WHITENESS come from? <https://www.instagram.com/p/CA8Ux5iBXBr/>

[A non-exhaustive list of definitions you should be aware of when educating yourself about racism](#)

- € If you feel you don't have enough knowledge to talk about this, ignorance is not an excuse to not address the issue. It is your responsibility to un/learn about racism and anti-Blackness, and reflect on your own prejudices and where they came from (e.g. media narratives, dominant stereotypes that are harmful and untrue, etc.) There are many resources available, online and free of charge, and there is also a short resource list at the end of this document.
- € However, if conversations you are in become offensive, rather than staying silent – which is complacency – you need to shut down any racism, and educate people who look like you. Redirect them to resources as an opportunity to learn more.
- € Some participants may not wish to partake in conversations about BLM during sessions, and may actually be using sessions as a respite from the current situation. Like-wise, participants should be able to voice their uncomfortableness. Whilst discomfort is definitely a part of learning, we do not want to create a hostile environment, especially

for our Black participants. With this topic in particular, prioritise the feelings of Black participants, who could be affected the most. Offer to share resources and how we could all do better to tackle and improve the issue. Again, anything that smells like prejudice, discrimination, racism, needs to be shut down immediately and not tolerated at all.

- € Make it clear that this is not an 'All Lives Matter' conversation, but is specifically about anti-black racism that is present in all our communities and of which we contribute to. "All Lives Matter" has become a term used as a form of silencing any conversations that are specific to the oppression of Black communities and racism within society. We know that all life matters, but not all life is in danger or undergoes discrimination at the same rates. We also know that all life is equal, but not all communities are treated equally.
- € For example, if you were to go to the doctor with a broken leg, it would be odd to say, we shouldn't pay it specific attention, because all bones matter. The bone that needs attention is the one that is hurting the most. So at the same time, whilst yes of course all lives should be important – Black lives are in more danger from police brutality, violence, discrimination in healthcare, housing and unemployment, and institutional racism than people from other backgrounds.

Here are a few quick links that expand on this point:

[Why saying All Lives Matter is not helpful, problematic and wrong](#)

[10 Steps to Non-Optical Allyship](#)

- € Keep in mind that if you are white, from a non-Black community or person of colour, you also have privilege and are part of structures that are anti-Black. Ensure that you center black communities and their voices, as this is not about our non-black individual or communities experiences of racism, you can do this by reading things written by Black writers, and promoting your participants to do the same. Ensure that you reflect on how you contribute to structures that are anti-black.
- € Remember that the onus is not on Black people to carry the weight and emotional labour of educating us about anti-black racism. Emotional labour means that a person has to manage their own feelings, in order to explain to someone else what the problems are e.g a Black person shouldn't have to explain to us what anti-black racism is and in the process of this, they'd have to manage their own pain/suffering when explaining the subject. We want to ensure that our Black friends and communities are given space to heal during this time, without having to educate non-black communities. The responsibility is on each of us to educate ourselves further, deepen our understanding, and find ways to take action. There has already been a lot of time put into creating a lot of resources for free which are available online for us to educate ourselves in order to be better allies.

[Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter movie documentary \(2016\)](#)

Racism isn't just a US problem, it's very much prevalent here in the UK, as is police brutality and death of black British people at the hands of the police. Around 1,741 people have died in police custody in the UK since 1980 and not even one police officer has been convicted in relation to these deaths. You can read more about this here:

[The UK is Not Innocent - Police Brutality has a Long and Violent History Here](#)

Here is an easy to digest infographic that visualises these points:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBD2InOII0W/>

- € More representation of Black people does not take away the need to reflect on prejudice and systematic racism that exists within institutions. Visual representation of people without internal change to the systems that disadvantage them, is tokenistic and does not contribute to real, meaningful change.
- € These are some ways in which we can support and help:

[How Can I Help From The UK?](#)

[George Floyd Memorial Fund](#)

[Minnesota Freedom Fund](#)

[National Bail Out](#)

[Black Lives Matter UK](#)

Black Land and Spatial Justice Fund - <https://www.gofundme.com/f/black-land-justice>

Free Black University - [https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-free-black-university?utm_medium=copy link&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet](https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-free-black-university?utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet)

Sign petitions and write to your MP regarding justice for Belly Malinga and Shukri Abdi:

Write to your MP - <https://www.writetothem.com/>

Shukri Abdi - <https://www.change.org/p/manchester-police-justice-for-shukri-abdi>

Belly Mujinga - <https://www.change.org/p/govia-thameslink-justice-for-belly-mujinga-justiceforbellymujinga>

Further resources

One way to ensure we are better allies, is to read and educate ourselves on anti-blackness, and the history of it. Below are some places to start:

- Akala, “Natives: Race & Class in the Ruins of Empire”
- Layla F Saad, “Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World”
- Kalwant Bhopal, “White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-racial society”
- James Baldwin, [“The White Man’s Guilt”](#) (essay)
- Ijeoma Oluo, “So you want to talk about race”
- [About Race podcast series by Reni Eddo Lodge](#) & “Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race”
- Brit-ish by Afua Hirsh