

Let's Talk About Race: Understanding The Conversation as Jews in this Moment

with Shahanna McKinney-Baldon and Kendell Pinkney



Webinar Viewing Guide

Shahanna and Kendell both shared such rich narratives we can all listen to and learn from and at the same time, each gave us rich ideas to help shape our practice. We created the following guide for you as you watch the webinar and begin examining your own personal and professional practices using the questions below. All times are based on the recording playback, followed by a quote and several guiding questions.

Topic: Setting Norms and Group Culture

Time: 8:20 min/sec

Quote: *“Be fully present, respect the experiences others, lead with curiosity, expect mistakes, expect non-closure, pay attention to what is happening in your body.”*

Guiding questions:

1. How do these norms that Kendell shared resonate with you?
2. What norms would you add?
3. How might you use them in your setting?

Topic: The “Jewish Charge” for Diversity Time (#1)

Time: 16:00 min/sec

Quote: *“Jews have always been diverse and that we have a lot to draw upon in our Jewish Heritage [and Jewish values] to flex our muscles around approaching our diversity in a way that lifts us all up and strengthens all of us. We can also extend those muscles to our inter-group work with our non-Jewish neighbors as well.”*

Guiding questions:

1. What are those “muscles” that Shahanna is referring to?
2. Can you share one or two examples? How might you flex it?

Topic: The Power of Language and Identity to Shift and Shape a Culture

Time: 18:42 min/sec

Quote: *“The impact of the term JOC - how does it shape the identity of JOC and white Jews? What are the impacts on other identities that aren't ‘covered’ by these heuristics?”*

Guiding questions:

1. How do we talk about people who experience racism?
2. Does the language used to describe different groups impact or elevate your understanding of identity? How?

Topic: "Race is not immutable."

Time: 25:49 min/sec

Quote: *"How the term 'Race' has evolved, and how different societies draw the line in different spaces. Jewish educators should have an understanding of contemporary American racism to appreciate the impact it has on the experience of racial and ethnic minorities in American Jewish spaces today."*

Guiding questions:

1. Shahanna shared that Jewish educators should have an understanding of contemporary American racism. What is your commitment to understanding contemporary American racism? What help do you need or want in defining that work?
2. Will you read a book? Listen to a podcast? Watch a documentary? Engage with someone who can help further your understanding? Consider making a list in a place you can and will be able to engage.

Topic: Personal Accountability

Time: 32:33 min/sec

Quote: *"... people need to make a decision that they're going to engage with this work, and that they will do it with commitment and kavannah - they will do it over time. And they will do it in community. They will have a chevruta that they bring along with them or some other sort of accountability partner or accountability relationship. And that they will stand tall and reach to manage up when the situation warrants. So, I might not be the principal at my school and the classroom teachers might not have a voice on this policy... but part of my commitment needs to be that I will reach to manage up and support those decision makers...."*

Guiding questions:

1. What does it mean to engage in Teshuva, in racial justice, in an authentic way?
2. How can people within Jewish organizations engage in racial justice?

Topic: How to Create Diverse Place and Space

Time: 35:29 (and 40:07) min/sec

Quote: *"Who's around, who are your staff? Who are your volunteers? Across your silos and at all levels of your organization... who's around?"*

Guiding questions:

1. How do role models factor in your organization? Who is considered a role model in your setting... and why?
2. How can you expand the diversity of the adults in your setting?
3. What can you add/do in order to represent more diversity in your learning materials and imaging?

Topic: Institutional Change

Time: 38:50 min/sec

Quote: *“People need to make a decision that they’re going to engage with this work, and that they will do it with commitment and kavannah. And they will do it over time. And they will do it in community. They will have a chevruta they will bring along with them or some other sort of accountability partner or accountability relationship. And that they will stand tall and reach to manage up when the situation warrants. So, I might not be the principal at my school and the classroom teachers may not have a voice on this policy... but part of my commitment needs to be that I will reach to manage up and support those decision makers.”*

Guiding questions:

1. What do you want your personal commitment to racial justice work to be?
2. What kind of investment do you think your organization needs to engage in (e.g., leadership, financial, staffing/capacity building)?

Topic: Jewish Charge for Diversity Time (#2)

Time: 50:32 min/sec

Quote: *“Jewish educators have a huge leg up in Jewish education spaces working with diverse Jewish students... because in the Jewish education setting... we are one family, everybody is Jewish. And, we get to leverage that in service of all this wonderful work that we’re talking about. In public education, what I’ve found, is that is a different kind of a stretch for educators, there’s this extra thing, there’s this extra muscle that needs to be developed and not just flexed, to really claim all these children. All these students ... as mine... as my family. But, in the Jewish education space, it’s not negotiable... It’s a matter of flexing a muscle that’s already there... we have this gift.”*

Guiding questions:

1. Can you recognize the gift Shahanna is describing? In yourself? In your school?
2. What can you do to build upon, what can you leverage with this gift?