



TOOLS FOR SPEAKING ABOUT RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

A Guide for Families and Professionals

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For the reader

During the summer of 2020, we conducted a survey on the topic of 'Racism and discrimination as experienced by couples and families of two cultures in Finland'. We received answers from 147 people across Finland. Thirty percent of the intercultural families who replied to the survey had experienced racism aimed at their family monthly, and fifteen percent experienced the same daily.

The survey raised the issue that, intercultural families and the professionals working with them need more information and means to intervene in situations of racism and discrimination. It also highlighted the need for more information and means on how to talk about racism and discrimination with children, as well as different opportunities to discuss these issues with peers.

Now you are looking at the **Tools for Speaking about Racism and Discrimination – a Guide for Families and Professionals**. This guide is meant for intercultural families, adoptive families, and professionals working with them. It will introduce subjects such as: anti-racist upbringing, initiating discussions about racism, child identity formation, the importance of emotional skills when dealing with racism as well as how and where to report incidents of racism and discrimination. In addition to the guide, we have developed a workshop model for processing and discussing experiences of racism and discrimination.

Thank you to the Ministry of Justice, for the support we have received in creating this guide and the workshop model.



Definitions

How do we define racism and discrimination in this publication?

ANTI-RACISM

Anti-racism is an active action aiming to reduce and counteract racism in society. Recognizing different forms of racism and raising awareness about them is also part of counteracting racism. The starting point is that we do not yet live in a society that is just to unprejudiced or fair.

RACISM

- ◇ Racism is where a specific group of people are regarded or believed to be inferior to others. This belief connects to the opinion that different races are all different to each other, and that those differences between them justify treating people differently.
- ◇ Dominance and racism are intertwined. Racism produces relations of dominance and submissions between people.
- ◇ In practice racism manifests itself in many ways: as assumptions, ways of thinking and finally in societies institutions and conventions, in ordinary, every-day actions and words, as structural racism in legislation, in society's institutions and in conventions.
- ◇ Racializing is a process which involves assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices which are linked to people based on their features such as skin color.
- ◇ How is racism maintained? According to the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman: "Racism is a system in which politics, institutional conventions, culture and other norms sustain racialized societal power arrangements. It is part of social, economic and political systems of which everybody is a part."
- ◇ Because all members of society are involved in this, counteracting racism is also a shared responsibility for all of us.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination means treating someone unequally to someone else based on the grounds of their personal features. These features can be the origin, age, nationality, language, religion, conviction, opinion, political activity, labor union activity, family relations, health, invalidity, sexual orientation or other reason related to the person.

- ◇ Discrimination is prohibited in national laws and in international human rights agreements. Everybody has the right to equal treatment.
- ◇ Discrimination can manifest in different ways: as direct, indirect or, for example, as denying reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities.
- ◇ Harassment and instructing to discriminate are also actions prohibited in the Non-Discrimination Act.

Source: The Non-Discrimination Act 1325/2014 www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ikup/2014/20141325



Anti-racist upbringing

Through their actions and communication, parents of families with two cultures strongly influence what kind of worldview the child builds. Studies show that even a one-year-old child can understand ethnic background and be aware of its implications. Therefore, it is important to reflect on one's own thoughts, prejudices and on the ways in which one acts in one's environment.

What kind of world does our family live in? Is it diverse, multicultural, permissive? Does it offer an opportunity to encounter difference in everyday life as a natural part of life or is our family the only "different" one? How can we as parents support our child's identity and growth towards being a part of a multicultural world?

The section "Anti-racist upbringing" is also well suited for other adults, such as grandparents, who deal with the issue in the lives of children in bicultural families.

Your own action

- ◇ Partake in discussions about the racism, discrimination and diversity around us.
- ◇ It is important to distinguish between partaking and being a part of something as well as exclusion in one's own actions.
- ◇ Critical self-reflection, recognition and admitting one's prejudices are a good starting point in recognizing one's own cultural competences.
- ◇ Open discussion and talk about difference supports the child's growth
- ◇ If parents do not talk about racism with their own children, the children will gather the knowledge from elsewhere by making their own interpretations of their parents' behavior and communication or by learning from their friends, books and the world around them.
- ◇ You do not have to know everything. Start the conversation from where you are currently at and from what you know. Be always prepared to have a conversation when an issue is encountered.

Cooperation with early childhood education and schools

The goals of multicultural early childhood education include

- ◇ supporting the child's growth and development
- ◇ strengthening the child's own identity
- ◇ supporting the family in preserving the child's own native language and culture

Cooperation between early childhood education and the multicultural family is built within the framework of early childhood education and care partnership (ECEC partnership). This parent and professional partnership therefore forms the jointly responsible adults in caring for a child's growth, development and learning. ECEC partnership requires that workers exhibit strong cultural knowledge and respect towards families, patience, and willingness towards genuine cooperation.

Remember that as a parent you are the best expert when it comes to your child. Therefore, it is vital to make sure that the ECEC partnership is partaken in mutual understanding and cooperation with yourself, to promote what is best for your child.

Know your child's rights and opportunities to access education regarding their native language and the languages spoken at home

According to the Constitution of Finland, everyone residing in Finland has the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture.

Those eligible for native language lessons organized by public schools and schools partaking in the agreement are

1. Pupils for whom the language in question is a native language (in the Finnish Population Information System)
 2. Pupils for whom the language in question is a language spoken at home = a language spoken in with either one of the child's guardians
 3. Finnish pupils who have resided abroad AND studied in the language in question in primary education
- ◇ A pupil with Finnish listed as their native language in the Finnish Population Information System can thus also take part in the lessons provided that either condition 1) or 2) is met.
 - ◇ partaking in the education of one's native language is voluntary
 - ◇ the pupil signs up for the education of their native language in the same way as they sign up for school or for the seventh grade (when entering junior high).



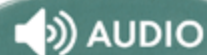
S2 – Finnish as a second language taught in early childhood education and at school

- ◇ If a student's native language is other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami or if they have a multicultural background, they can study Finnish as a second language and literature - syllabus (S2) on the grounds of primary education curriculum.
- ◇ To be eligible for S2 classes, the student's basic language competences in Finnish must be insufficient in one or more sectors of language competence. This means that the child's competences are not sufficient for daily interaction at school or in daycare.
- ◇ In early childhood education (in daycare) S2 sessions are organized for children, starting at three years old to help in advancing the child's possible language competence. This helps with keeping up with classes in school.

Considerations:

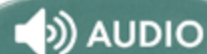
- ◇ Cultural competence: Where do you come from? What is your own cultural background like? How does it affect the way you act and think?
- ◇ How do you act when in situations that are unjust or discriminate against someone?
- ◇ What kind of prejudices do you have?
- ◇ How do you act when you encounter racism or discrimination in my environment?

Initiating discussion



AUDIO

- ◇ If talking about racism is difficult for you, consider why you feel that way.
- ◇ Acknowledging the existence of racism and discrimination helps in preparing for unexpected situations with children.



AUDIO

How can a parent guide their child to react to situations in which they face racism or discrimination? How should the parent react in those situations?

"When experiencing racism or discrimination, it could be beneficial if the child themselves would find a safe and balanced mindset and space where they would not be too submissive and would be able to defend themselves, whilst also remaining calm. Sometimes it is better to leave the situation, although sometimes it can be better to face the person acting racist. The most important thing is to find a balance between extreme solutions. Often the solution can be found in regulating feelings."
(Expert interview, Anu Castaneda, 2021)

- ◇ Without imposing values, discuss with the child about diversity, racism and about what is right and what is wrong – while taking into consideration the child's age.

- ◆ clarify your own values and those of the family
- ◆ recognize and admit your own prejudices
- ◆ the earlier discussions about racism are initiated, the better the child learns and understands.

- ◇ Racism needs to be discussed in a way suitable for the age group

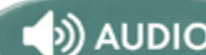
- ◆ what is it – use distinct words (white/black etc.)
- ◆ what is right and wrong
- ◆ this is not new but has gone on for centuries

- ◇ Notice and point out any racist or unjust action while with the children, exemplifying antiracist behavior.

- ◇ When the child asks about a racist action they saw or heard about

- ◆ be honest
- ◆ tell them if you do not know
- ◆ ask the child questions: What do you think? Why did you say so? What does this mean for you? What else did you notice?
- ◆ showing emotion is ok
- ◆ underline and repeat the wrongdoing
- ◆ encourage hope for the future and bring out that we can be an influence and do something to change things – protests, for example.

"It is good if the parent has the courage to show their support to the party that has been oppressed or discriminated against, while still remaining calm and mature. This often means that one has to be straight forward and clear but, simultaneously calm and logical. Regardless if the situation has occurred to your own child, a child you know, student, or a stranger on a bus or in a grocery store, the initial setting remains: the support that strangers show to the child is just as important and valuable as the support received from familiar people."
(Castaneda A., 2021)



AUDIO



◇ If the child has experienced racism, create a safe atmosphere where expressing emotions is allowed. Allow the child to be sad and comfort them, do not undermine them

*"It is important to validate the child's suffering by making it clear that, the situation that has occurred is wrong and that it is not fair in regard to the child."
(Castaneda A., 2021)*

◇ See to it that the toys, books and TV-programs in the child's environment include people who look different and are of different colors

◆ you can also discuss with the child why this is not always the case

◇ Think about what kind of friend circle you have, what kind of environment you live in.

*"It is important that the child confides in an adult, that they feel safe with. The adult can be their parent, someone in school, a coach or even a godparent. However, sometimes even adults who can be viewed as safe, can become confused and are not able to respond to the situation in a way that the child would want and need them to. They can unintentionally dismiss what has happened for example saying "I'm sure they didn't mean it." This is a natural response, but it does not give the child what they need, which is for their experience to be validated, taken seriously as well as intervening in it. The adult could instead give the child guidance afterwards by talking about the situation and describing it more, in order for the safe adults to provide them with the support and reaction that they want and need."
(Castaneda A., 2021)*

Tips for discussions about racism and discrimination with children of different ages

0–6-year-olds

- ◇ Celebrate people's differences:
 - ◆ "Mom, Sarah from daycare has brown skin!" – "Isn't it great that we are all different!" or "Yes, isn't it beautiful?"
 - ◆ "Some have brown skin, others light, some are tall, and others are short. Some are in a wheelchair and daddy has glasses – we are all different and special people – if everybody were the same, it would be really boring, wouldn't it?"
- ◇ Respond openly and directly when a child notices a person who looks different to them and asks why
 - ◆ Talk with clear words and openly about people of different color: white, black, brown, Asian, etc. "You noticed that Lisa is the Asian person in the group"
 - ◆ These words also need to be explained to a young child: "Your skin color is this, it is called white even though it's not really white." The child is not "color blind".
- ◇ Talk about being just and fair – the child understands what is fair and what is not – "if you were bullied because you had brown hair/Samira is being bullied because their skin is darker than yours, is that fair?" or "it is wrong to bully someone or call someone names because of their appearance. It feels very bad, and it is not right, or would you think it's right?"
- ◇ If your child says something insulting without understanding what they said ("That lady's skin is dirty"); do not hush them but start a discussion about the subject: "Honey, their skin is no dirtier than yours, but there are different skin colors." Tell the child how the comment can make someone feel without embarrassing the child who did not know they said something hurtful.
- ◇ Talk about how one could reply if something racially insulting about appearances etc. is said to your own child, and tell them that they need to talk about it with an adult.
- ◇ Console do not downplay, if a child has been racially insulted.

7 – 12-year-olds

- ◇ Ask and discuss together what the child has seen at school, in the media and online – what kind of social media discussions the child has seen – what kind of stereotypical viewpoints can be found
 - ◆ "Why people who look a certain way are bad guys in the program and others are not"
 - ◆ "Have you noticed that the series about the doctor only has white doctors in it?"
- ◇ Talk openly about racism, differences and acceptance and what kind of feelings they trigger – underline that racist action are unjust and wrong.



Child identity formation

"A human's personality and identity transform and develop, in relation to other people. "
(Castaneda A., 2021)

A child's identity starts developing at the age of 12 and continues to develop throughout their life. Forming an identity is an important part of understanding oneself and one's social environment. Adams and Marshall (1996) listed five main pillars for identity formation:

- ◇ a structure and order to self-knowledge
- ◇ a sense of consistency and coherence to beliefs, goals, and self-knowledge
- ◇ a sense of continuity for one's history and future
- ◇ goals and direction
- ◇ a sense of personal control of their choices and outcomes

Often, children identify themselves according to their gender, family and daycare group or class in school. Children can identify themselves on grounds of culture, religion or language. In these cases, their identity is also a cultural identity. The term cultural identity is used to refer to a certain nationality or ethnic group.

The child's view about their culture and background should be supported and respected in daycare. For the child's cultural identity formation, it is important for the parents to have a positive outlook on their own language and cultural background. The child's identity is strengthened when understanding and acceptance towards their culture and origin grows.

Language has an important role in developing a cultural identity. Teaching it and supporting the learning process are primarily the parents' responsibility. With acceptance and by bringing languages and cultures into the child's life in early childhood, we can support the child's development, learning, social skills and the formation of their cultural identity. For identity and a cultural identity formation, it is important that the child is allowed to define themselves as black, brown, POC, for example, or as whoever they feel they are.



Developing a cultural identity becomes more complicated after childhood. Especially in modern societies, identity development and formation are a critical part of an adolescent's development. A cultural identity is developed when the adolescent's critical thinking develops, their understanding of social and historical events grows and then they learn to examine their personal experiences and possible experiences of discrimination.

Why it is important to support a child's growth into two cultures



Often parents experience challenges when raising their kids between two cultures. It is common that they want the child to understand and respect the parents' cultural heritage.

Studies show that children involved in both cultures are often more confident and successful at school than the children who have not had a chance to learn about and participate in the culture of their other parent.

There are many benefits to an intercultural environment:

- ◇ The experience and awareness about different traditions, religions, languages and customs support the child's open-mindedness.
- ◇ Children understand that there are many ways to live, celebrate and express themselves.

Practical tips and advice on how you can share your own culture with the child.

1. Enrichening culinary culture

Cooking together as a family is about more than just sharing food. While cooking, you can share memories and information about the dining habits of your country.

- ◇ Encourage your children to invite other children over. You can cook traditional food and tell stories about the food.
- ◇ In this way, your children and their friends see traditions crossing cultural boundaries.
- ◇ You can take this a step further by inviting other families to share a meal. Everybody invited can bring traditional dishes from their own cultures.
- ◇ You can visit different ethnic restaurants.
- ◇ For children, it is important that parents offer practical examples. It helps them understand that differences are a positive thing.

2. Language as a tool for cultural upbringing



According to studies, children who speak many languages are creative thinkers, adapt fast to different environments and process information efficiently.

When you teach your child their native language or second language, it is good to be consistent. Children easily pick up sounds, words and their meanings by through listening. It is common to children mix two languages but eventually they become skilled in distinguishing between the two languages.

Tips for teaching a second language:

- ◇ You can choose a room where you only speak the native language, for example kitchen or bedroom.
- ◇ Encourage your child to read books and to watch programs in your native language at home.
- ◇ If you have young children, consider organizing a playgroup with other children from your home country.
- ◇ You can share the languages between parents so that one parent only speaks the other native language and the other speaks Finnish when around the child.
- ◇ When teaching a language to the child, it is important to remain consistent. Even if the child mixes or confuses the languages, it is important that the parent repeats the word again with their own language. Children learn through repetition.

Parents share the appreciation for their cultures through leading by example. Even though you live in Finland, you do not have to stop speaking your own language. If you stop speaking your own language entirely, the child will follow the example and feel that it is less important.

With your attitudes and actions, you can show that diversity is something to be proud of. Use your native language in public, with pride. Children will observe this and learn to take pride in their own cultures too.

The Parents' endeavors can teach their children to be accepting of the different people around them. They will learn that all differences should be respected and appreciated.

3. Creating new family traditions

As a parent you have a unique opportunity to create a multicultural home.

The roles of the parents also strongly affect how the positive sides of their cultures are brought out and how they are applied into the Finnish culture as well. The parents can take part in different cultural events and express the values, habits and customs of their own culture.

Tips:

- ◇ You can teach the child about the important festivities, habits and traditions of your home country. Which ones are important and why? What is being celebrated?
- ◇ At the same time, you can think about the different festivities in Finland. In this way, the child learns the customs of both cultures and you can support open-mindedness.
- ◇ You can listen to music from your own culture and watch programs in your own language.

4. Balancing cultural differences

Parents have a major role in raising children for life outside the home. The children from intercultural families have many benefits but also challenges when balancing between two or more different cultures.

An intercultural child will however have to modify the different cultures into a new way of looking at and seeing the world. The child themselves, also defines the kind of identity they create for themselves.

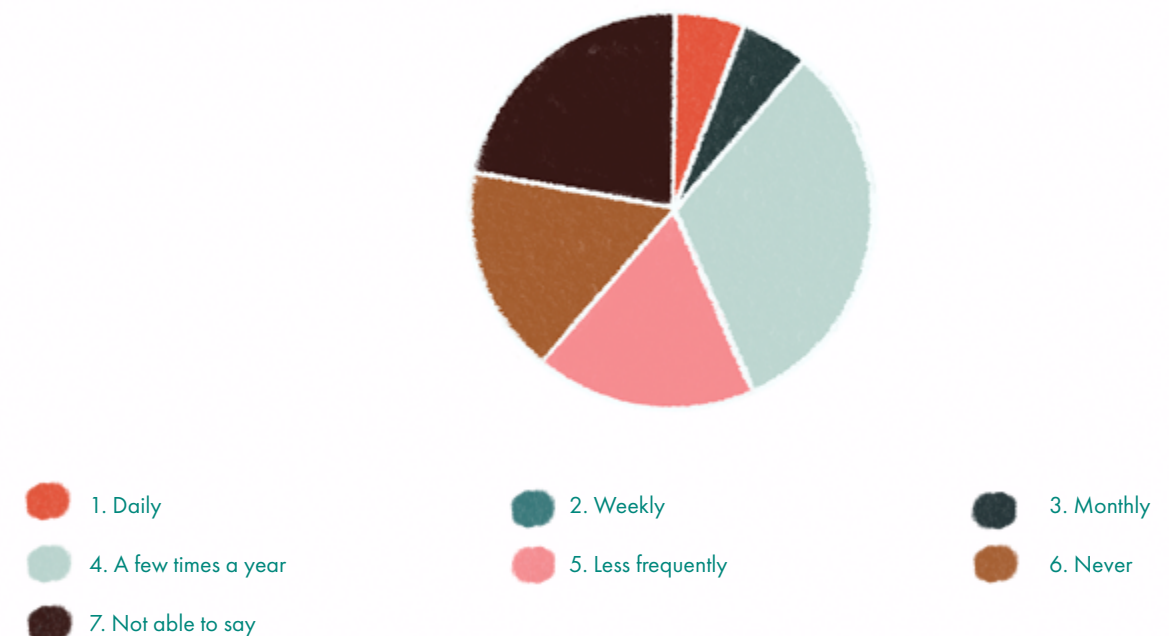
This can be confusing and challenging for the parent. You may face challenges concerning culture, generations and language, and these challenges may feel frustrating. But as a parent you lay the foundations for your child's future, which they appreciate and understand as they grow.

Tips:

- ◇ Be open to your child's questions.
- ◇ Talk at home about what it means to be and to be part of a specific culture.
- ◇ The more you can teach about your own culture and traditions, the narrower the gap between the two cultures remains.
- ◇ The more they know about their cultural heritage the more self-aware they become.
- ◇ Where possible, visit your home country.

The effects of racism on mental health

How often does your family experience racism? Answer by the spouse who has moved to Finland (18 answers)



A questionnaire done by Familia in 2020- Racism and discrimination experienced by couples and families of two cultures in Finland

The effects of racism are often deeper than we think. It is not always visible on the outside. Often it leads to its effects being disregarded in our society. Many young people feel that racism has affected their identity and mental health even years after the incident. Studies list following typical symptoms experienced by a person: shame, self-accusations, lack of feeling of belonging, anxiety and depression. Often, this can also lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. (<https://mieli.fi/>)

Children whose ethnic background is externally visible feel that they need to prove themselves to others more than an average white child. Often, they avoid situations and events without realizing the direct reason for the issue. Many places may strongly trigger memories of previous experiences stuck in one's mind. A person who has experienced racism remembers the experiences strongly and often its effects can be seen even after many years as avoidance towards a certain place.

It is important to recognize that the effects of racism do not only impact one sector. If a person repeatedly encounters such experiences, it can cause them chronic stress which leads to psychological and physiological symptoms.

When encountering racism, a person's reactions often include:

- ◇ Anxiety or stress
- ◇ Fast heartbeat
- ◇ Sweating
- ◇ Nausea
- ◇ Confusion
- ◇ Shame

Feelings often experienced after the incident:

- ◇ Sadness
- ◇ Hate
- ◇ Low self-esteem

With time, the person may also experience physical or psychiatric symptoms:

- ◇ Depression
- ◇ Anxiety
- ◇ Post-traumatic stress disorder
- ◇ Arterial hypertension
- ◇ Cardiovascular diseases
- ◇ Relationship issues
- ◇ Problems at work or at school
- ◇ Feeling of general weakening of wellbeing

Merely being part of a marginal group can be enough to cause stress. Racism only exacerbates the issue. Often the negative feelings of a person experiencing racism also affect their loved ones. However, because mental health is a culture-bound subject, it may not always be recognized. This may also prevent someone from getting help. Often, a person encountering racism might not know about their own rights or about how to act in the situation.

How can we make changes?

Making a positive change alone is difficult. Therefore, counteracting racism is a team effort and solving it requires teamwork.

- ◇ Educate yourself (mainstream culture has taught many things that are considered truths). You can learn a lot by researching and by reading historical books.
- ◇ If you see racism:
 - ◆ report it
 - ◆ intervene in the situation
 - ◆ try to discuss how their actions are affecting others

There are also many other negative effects that have not yet been recognized in society. Experiences of racism can have direct consequences on learning and learning outcomes. A stressed person's learning is slowed, managing feelings becomes more difficult for them, and they experience attention deficit issues and memory disorders. Therefore, assimilating new information becomes more difficult. (See Kurttila 2016.)

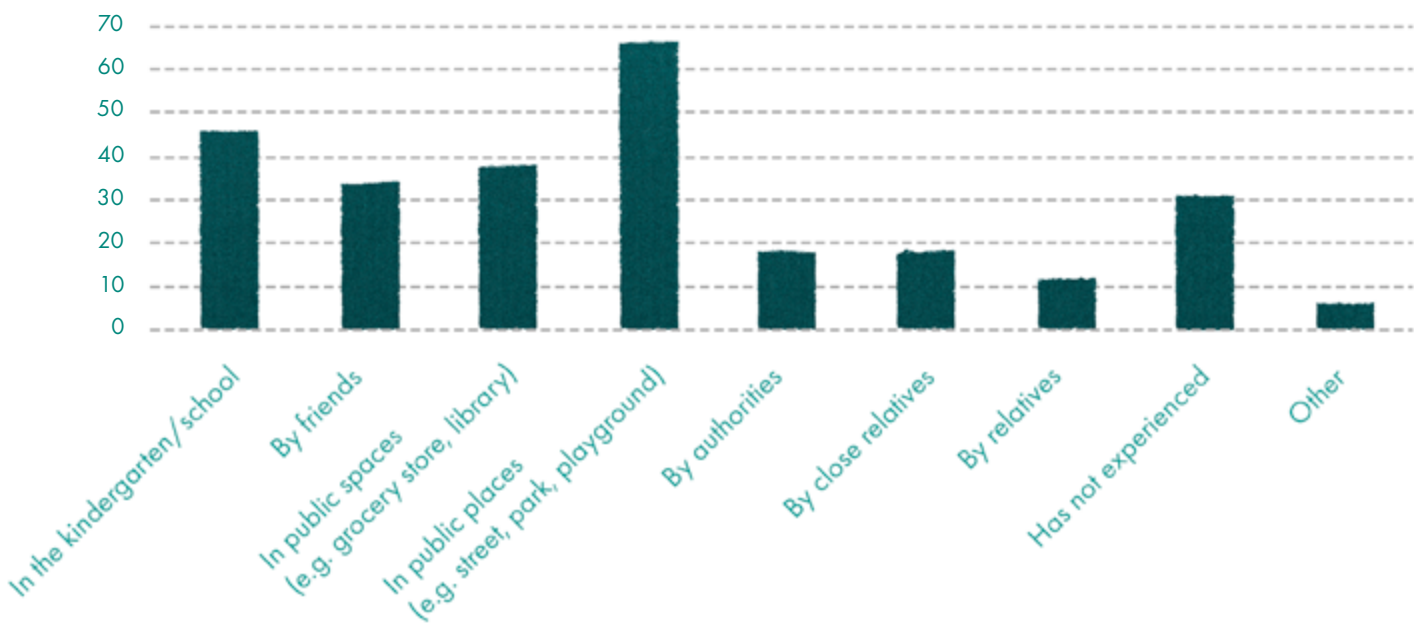
According to a school health care survey (2019), for example, generally students' problems related to coping and mental health have become more common.



What can teachers do to decrease the number of experiences of racism encountered by students?

- ◇ The feeling of inclusion originates from a feeling of safety in school buildings.
- ◇ Diversified communication, such as adding diverse persons to imagery or hiring persons with different backgrounds to institutions, can be useful.
- ◇ If a student feels equal in the classroom, it significantly increases the feeling of safety and boosts confidence.
- ◇ The equalization of the environment should be a continuous process. In that way, it would become normalized.
- ◇ It is important that the adult or teacher working with the child is aware of their own role and can provide safety for the child.
- ◇ Racist harassment needs to be taken into consideration as seriously as any other kind of harassment.
- ◇ In schools, it would be beneficial to have someone to contact directly if racism is encountered. It is important that it is recognized immediately and that actions would

Has your child experienced discrimination or racism in Finland? What kind of situations have these been? (Answers 115)



A questionnaire done by Familia in 2020- Racism and discrimination experienced by couples and families of two cultures in Finland



In Finland, the effects of racism on mental health have not yet been much researched. From the link, you can listen to a podcast on the subject.
<https://areena.yle.fi/audio/1-4584533>

The importance of emotional skills in dealing with experiences of racism

Emotional skills include recognizing, naming, managing and expressing emotions. One important element in wellbeing is knowing ourselves and managing our feelings is essentially connected to it. The strength and duration of emotions and the way in which our reacts to them varies from one individual to another. Different skills in managing emotions are needed in different situations. Emotions are with us all the time in in everything that we do and in every interaction we have. A person cannot decide not to feel. Instead, we can choose how to react to an emotion.

To understand other people's feelings, we first have to understand ourselves. Our feelings tell us about our needs. They are messages that we ought to listen to. Invalidating, disregarding and questioning feelings may already have been learned in childhood and recognizing emotions may be difficult. Built-up rejected feelings can cause different psychiatric and physical symptoms and lead to different addictions. A new, healthier reaction takes practice. One can start recognizing emotions by reading the body's signals: where is the emotion felt, what does it feel like, what does it want to tell us, what kind of action does it try to lead us to and what do we need? This may be difficult at first but little by little the competence develops.

What kind of emotional skills could parents practice or teach their children?

"The parent should have understanding and knowledge about emotional skills and emotional regulating. Otherwise, it will be hard to teach those to one's own child. In the beginning it could be beneficial to ponder what kind of emotional regulation skills you have and what is your Achilles heel?"

When the parent has control and the ability to regulate their own emotions, it is a lot easier to talk about emotions with their child. They will be able to discuss directly about what emotions are, and their what self-regulation means. They could ask what emotions certain situations have awoken and discuss if the child has acted in a certain way because of something that has happened to them. However, a large part of regulating emotions can be taught by example. When parents are regulating their own emotions the example of that will transfer to the child."
(Castaneda A., 2021)

Interactions are greatly affected by the expression of emotions. Emotions that are light and perceived as easy increase positive interaction, whereas heavy and unpleasant feelings make interaction challenging. The reaction to emotions can usually be seen in a person's behavior, discussions, facial expressions and gestures. If somebody treats us badly, we need emotional skills to stand up for ourselves without attacking and hurting ourselves, others or the environment and, on the other hand, to not submit and cause hurt with our submission.

Managing emotions is learned through early interactions. By managing feelings we can effect their duration and intensity. For the sake of wellbeing, it is good to learn to decrease the duration and strength of feelings that weigh us down. When we manage our feelings, they will not blur our thinking and we do not spend that much energy in struggling with a heavy feeling because by managing feelings, the situation stays under our control. A feeling that weighs you down first needs to be accepted. Then, attention needs to be directed elsewhere to advance from the situation you feel stuck in.

For professionals

In an intercultural family, you encounter a diversity of cultures, languages and conventions that are often different from the norm as formed by the country's natives. In encounters like these, the professional's own cultural competence and culturally sensitive approach to work is essential. Being aware of and making the diversity of the families visible, creates trust between the families and professionals.

Encounter

- ◇ Ask, do not assume!
- ◇ Every intercultural family is unique and they themselves choose for example; how different cultural backgrounds are taken into consideration, what languages are spoken and which religion is followed in their family.
- ◇ Encounter intercultural families in the same way as you do with other families: openly, forgetting about stereotypes.
- ◇ Respect: equal treatment and encounter, creating an accepting atmosphere, the first impression is important.
- ◇ Trust: A safe atmosphere, a space of safe interaction, openness, transparency in communication and in action.
- ◇ Listen and do not hesitate to ask about issues you do not know about, including cultural conventions. However, do not forget to ask in an appropriate manner!
- ◇ You are in charge of choosing your own attitude: understanding your own cultural background and examining your attitudes and their influence in the way you act.
- ◇ Approbative recognition: everybody needs to feel seen and heard
- ◇ Show that you are genuinely present in the situation
- ◇ Positive interaction
- ◇ Linguistic awareness in your professional approach is part of a pleasant encounter: consider the way you talk and modify it to better fit different situations. In practice, this can mean speaking in plain language and explaining concepts, issues and policies in a way best understandable way for the client.

Cultural competence

- ◇ The concept of cultural competence, cultural know-how, means demonstrating respect towards everyone from any cultural background and creating, as well as fostering, a non-discriminatory atmosphere in society.
- ◇ "I know the implications of my culture and background and also how they influence how I act." From this perspective, we look at others' culture and background.
- ◇ The cultural competence of professionals is composed of cultural awareness, knowledge, skills, encounters and motivation, where one's own cultural habits and values are mirrored to others' cultural habits and values.
- ◇ It means that the professional has culturally respectful interaction skills, an appreciative spoken- and non-spoken encounters. Interactions between the professional and the client occur in a way that both parties have the right to express their culture and to be accepted and heard as a representative of that cultures. "We are always the foster children of our culture" (Castaneda, Anu Paloma-training: Work Approaches for Working with Refugees - What does culturally sensitive work approach and cultural competence mean?)
- ◇ Knowing and examining one's own cultural background helps in understanding one's own prejudices and attitudes.

Culturally sensitive approach to work

- ◇ Cultural sensitivity is a concept related to cultural competence. Cultural sensitivity refers to the culturally respectful interpersonal skills of professionals as well as respectful verbal and non-verbal encounters and communications between a professional and client in a manner that involves the right of each party to express their culture and be accepted and heard in this context.
- ◇ Cultural sensitivity refers to the willingness, ability and sensitivity required to understand people with different backgrounds.
- ◇ Every one of us is, in addition to our cultural background, an individual with our own personal needs. This is important to remember also when encountering a client with a different cultural background.
- ◇ The client is to be primarily seen as an individual as opposed to stereotypes.
- ◇ More than only a professional's way of approaching their work, cultural sensitivity is also a way of organizing services. Targeted communication and personalized case management support the accessibility and influence of services
- ◇ Keep in mind that children sense adults' attitudes from as little as their gestures, facial expressions and tones of voice. Adults are to talk about children in a respectful manner also when in discussion without them.

The premises for cultural sensitivity in client work

- ◇ Respecting diversity
- ◇ Taking the client's life experiences and strengths into consideration
- ◇ Reflecting on the effect and significance of one's cultural background on oneself and personal attitudes
- ◇ Being open and patient
- ◇ Showing interest in different cultures
- ◇ Asking clients about their habits, values and culture instead of assumptions and generalizations
- ◇ Finding the courage to encounter clients as individuals rather than representatives of certain cultures
- ◇ Consider personal needs in services
- ◇ Where possible, utilize cultural interpreters
- ◇ Be flexible
- ◇ Find out where you can get advice if needed
- ◇ A holistic and flexible work approach: be ready to change the conventional procedures and policies according to the client's personal situation – the realization of equality – positive action.

Positive action

- ◇ The purpose of positive action is to ensure that everybody can enjoy equal rights.
- ◇ Positive action is not the same thing as favoritism, in which individuals are granted privileges in a discriminatory manner.
- ◇ Positive action is only allowed if its aim is to progress factual equality or to remove disadvantages originating from discrimination. If the conditions for positive action are not met, the action may be considered discrimination.
- ◇ A decree (YVL 9 §) stated in the Non-Discrimination Act, allows for specific measures regarding positive action.

Supporting the child's multilingualism

- ◇ Offer the child positive experiences about different cultures and opportunities to strengthen their identity and language skills with the help of books, play, games, movies and music.
- ◇ The language development of a bilingual child may differ from that of a monolingual child, and the child may use language differently in daycare, in comparison with their language use at home. Do not hesitate to engage the parents in discussion about any worries that may arise.
- ◇ Always take the child's and the parents' personal experiences, needs and wishes into consideration.

Considerations:

- ◇ Cultural competence: Where do you come from? What is your own cultural background like? How does it affect the way you act and think?
- ◇ In what situations have you been in, in which you have acted in an unjust or discriminatory way against someone?
- ◇ What kind of prejudices do I have?
- ◇ Diversity: Consider which different groups you are part of.

Considerations for work communities:

- ◇ What kind of attitudes, preconceptions and prejudices can different parties have? Remember that immigrants may also have prejudices.
- ◇ What kind of effect can different ways of communicating have? For example; facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice.
- ◇ How should one discuss their own feelings about multiculturalism in the work community?

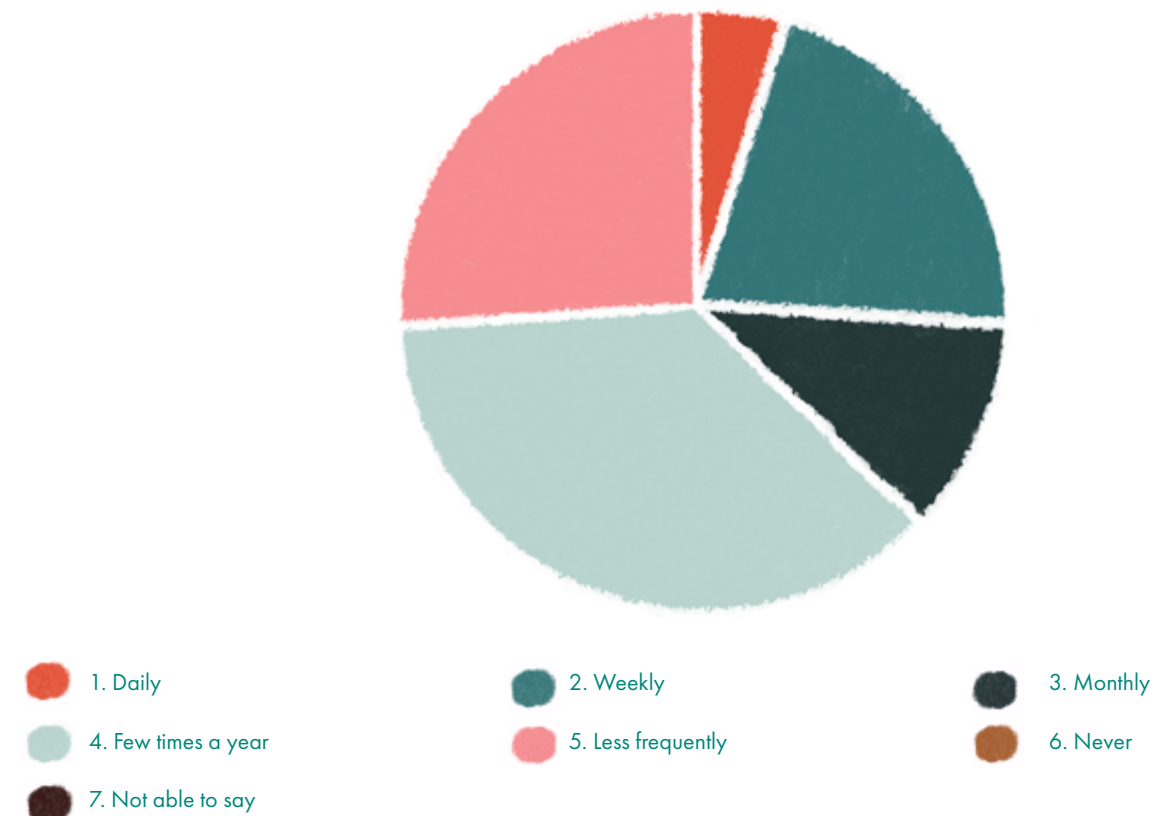


Reporting racism and discrimination incidences



Reporting experiences about racism and discrimination is important because only reported cases will be visible in statistics, which, in turn, affects decision making and actions taken on societal level.

How often do you experience discrimination? Partner who has moved to Finland (19 answers)



A questionnaire performed by Familia in 2020- Racism and discrimination experienced by couples and families of two cultures in Finland

In Finland, discrimination is prohibited on grounds of the constitutional law, the Non-Discrimination Act, the Equality Act and in other individual special enactments. Contacts concerning discrimination addressed to the Ombudsman for Equality are processed regarding all the grounds for discrimination.

If you suspect that you have been discriminated against, think about the following questions:

1. Was I treated differently to others?
2. Was it on grounds for discrimination that are prohibited?
3. Why do you suspect that you were treated differently to others due to your personal features?

HATE CRIME

Hate crime is a concept that is not separately defined by the Finnish law. The motive of the act determines whether it is considered a hate crime. Assault, illegal threat and defamation are the most common crimes committed with racist motives. Common reasons for hate crimes include skin color, national or ethnic origin, religion or conviction, sexual orientation, handicap or other reason. In the criminal code, these reasons increase the severity of the crime and will be taken into consideration when defining the hate crime.

Hate crimes are often found damaging and dangerous due to their character. Victims of hate crimes are not chosen randomly but for personal, usually visible feature(s).

HATE SPEECH

In the reference of The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, hate speech is defined as follows: "Hate speech covers all forms of expressions that spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance. "

Freedom of speech is to be taken into account when examining hate speech. Freedom of speech means the right to express, publicize and receive opinions, information and other messages without being preempted by anybody. In the Finnish legislation and in different international agreements freedom of speech is, however, limited so that violations on other basic rights or human dignity is not permitted under the aegis of freedom of speech.

Together Against Hate: hate-incident monitoring tool for reporting hate crimes and for gathering information:

<https://www.yhdessavihaavastaan.fi/en>

Where to report?

The Ombudsman for Equality

The Ombudsman for Equality has multiple means for intervening in discrimination and for promoting equality. Even though a person can, with justification, feel as though they have been a victim of discrimination, their case of discrimination might not be the kind meant in the Non-Discrimination Act. In these kinds of situations, the Ombudsman for Equality does not have the jurisdiction for estimating the situation. In these cases, another appropriate authority can estimate the situation.

- ◇ syrjinta.fi/en/customer-service
- ◇ syrjinta.fi/en/tackling-discrimination

Victim Support Finland

- ◇ Offers practical advice and moral support for the victims of crime or victims of attempted crime, for their loved ones and for those witnessing for them.
- ◇ www.riku.fi/en/victim-support-finland/

The police

- ◇ A racially motivated hate crime means a crime committed by someone with a racist motive. Examples of racist crimes include violence, defamation, discrimination, threatening, bullying or malicious damage. If you fall victim to racist crime, report the incident to the police.
- ◇ poliisi.fi/en/contact-information
- ◇ poliisi.fi/en/hate-crimes

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland

- ◇ An employer ought to promote their employees' equality, and they shall not discriminate against their employees or job applicants. (The Equality Act, §7)
- ◇ The Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland deals with suspected discrimination cases occurring in employment relationships, internships, other similar activities in workplaces and in recruitment processes.
- ◇ www.tyosuojelu.fi/web/en/about-us/contact

The Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI)

- ◇ Deals with, e.g., extraordinary appeals on the basis of procedural fault regarding tuition and early childhood education, claims for rectification, statements and student assessment rectification requests. For example, requests concerning rectification of student admission decisions are directed to the Regional State Administrative Agency.
- ◇ Guides and supervises municipal and private social welfare services and public and private health services.
- ◇ avi.fi/en/frontpage

The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal of Finland

- ◇ Supervises compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality both in private activities and in public administrative and commercial activities.
- ◇ The mandate of the Tribunal does not cover matters related to private life, family life or practice of religion.
- ◇ The function of the Tribunal is to give legal protection to those who consider they have been discriminated against or victimized.
- ◇ www.yvtltk.fi/en/index.html

The Office of the Chancellor of Justice

- ◇ A complaint may be filed with the Chancellor of Justice if the complainant believes that an authority, civil servant or other person/body assigned to carry out public duties has acted in an unlawful manner or failed to fulfil their responsibilities.
- ◇ www.okv.fi/en/

Terminology

TERMINOLOGY RELATED TO RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-RACISM

Ableism and disablism The term ableism refers to assumptions on grounds of which the world has, for the most part, been built to accommodate for the needs of those not disabled. Disabled people have been assumed as deviating from the norm and as of lesser value. Ableism leads to discrimination, which can also be termed disablism.

Everyday racism describes the society's so-called normal customs which lead those belonging to ethnic minorities to a weaker position. These customs are in-built in organizations. Therefore, the people in them start regarding them as normal. See micro-aggressions.

Blackface refers to a tradition where white people have portrayed themselves as black in a stereotypical way, for example by painting their face. The background originates especially from American theater tradition. Blackface is regarded as racist and insulting by those racialized.

Black Lives Matter (BLM for short) is a political movement in action since 2013 that opposes systemic violence directed at African Americans by the state, especially by the police.

Ethnicity refers to groups that share a common identity. It can be based on origin, language or culture. Often also to religion, beliefs, habits or memories of migration or colonialism.

Ethnic profiling The organisation 'Open Society Justice Initiative, defines ethnic profiling as a situation where ethnicity, race, national origin or religion is a central reason or the only reason for measures for law enforcement such as identity verification or personal search. In these cases, ethnic profiling is based on generalizations regarding ethnicity, race, national origin or religion. This leads to decisions regarding who is assumed to have acted or who is expected to possibly act illegally (residing in the country without the legal right or possessing narcotics). Source: The Stopped - Ethnic profiling in Finland, SSKH 2/2018

Inclusion means belonging or including, when people with different backgrounds and different identities are valued and welcomed as equal decision-makers and cooperation partners. When inclusion happens, people have the opportunity to grow and to feel or know that they belong. Mere attempts for diversity do not create inclusive environments. Part of inclusion is that a person feels that they can join as they are and that they are being accepted rather than being pressed to merge with the group in the dominant position and to give up their own identity.

Institutional / Systemic / Structural racism refers to conventions that produce different outcomes for people depending on what group they belong to. Institutional racism increases the differences between groups and white supremacy, while damaging racialized persons. Structural racism is not always easy to detect. Laws, conventions and customs do not necessarily include a clear statement about a certain population, but they produce privileges for white people and disadvantages for non-white people.

Marginalization happens, when the people of the dominant group place a certain group on the margin of society without giving them an active voice, identity or place. Marginalization aims to preserve the prevalent group's dominant position.

Micro-aggression means the little everyday words, actions and assumptions through which stereotypical assumptions about populations are distributed. Micro-aggressions can be intended or unintended, and they may be meant as benevolent. Compare with everyday racism. (source: fem-r.fi/sanasto) [<https://www.fem-r.fi/in-english/>]

Minority stress means excess stress that a person belonging to a minority experiences in their life due to their minority status. The stress can be connected to racist or discriminatory treatment experiences in the past and to the fear of their continuation in the future as well.

Variety / diversity Diversity refers to variety and to the fact that society is composed of different individuals and groups with different background. However, the status of these differs from each other. Programs declaring diversity are not the same thing as justice or inclusion. Diversity may be discussed without anything being done to institutional and structural systems that produce and maintain injustice.

POC (People of color) is a political or social (not biological) identity for people who have been racialized as non-whites. The term is used to bring out the fact that persons belonging to many different groups experience racism.

POC entails people who identify themselves as black or brown but is not synonymous with them. Many racialized people use the term, but it is less familiar in mainstream discussions. There is no distinct Finnish translation for the term.

Race is a social and political construction – which has no genetic or biological ground – and is used in society's institutions to categorize and compartmentalize groups due to their external habitat (especially skin color), origin, cultural history and ethnicity. The concept has been used and is still used to justify domination, abuse and violence towards people who have been racialized as non-white. On the other hand, also those racialized who take part in anti-racist action may find it important to use the term race when analyzing societal power-relations.

Racial anxiety means fear of stigmatization because of one's background when one interacts with people from other groups. Racialized people fear becoming targets for racism or discrimination. White people worry about being considered racists.



Racialization is a process in which features are associated with a person or populations according to their assumed race or ethnicity. Racialization can also be directed towards interpersonal relationships and conventions. The outcomes of racialization are racism or racist discrimination.

Internalized racism is both conscious and unconscious. An individual forms thoughts, beliefs and behaviors accepting the dominant society's racist figures of speech and stereotypes about their own group. Internalized racism is at the same time dislike for oneself and valuing the dominant group to a higher degree. Internalized racism is like any other form of racism but on an individual level.

Othering means placing a person or a population either on the outside of or to opposition with that which is considered the norm. Othering is made on conscious or unconscious assumptions according to which a certain group is a threat to the predominant order. See marginalization.

White privilege means power and privileges that whites or persons considered as white have access to without other merits, only due to this feature.

White fragility Defensive feelings and behaviors that white people exhibit when they are faced with unpleasant truths about racial issues. This can manifest itself as different emotions such as anger, freight, guilt or a feeling of wanting to debate, or as silence and as exiting situations that cause stress.

White supremacy means domination and abuse with the help of which the power and resources remain with the white. It is based on an ideology that sets being white as the standard, and which includes a belief that white people are superior to other groups.

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Diagrams

How often do you experience discrimination? Partner relocated to Finland (19 responses)

1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Monthly 4. A few times a year 5. Quite rarely 6. Never

How often do you experience discrimination? Finnish partner (127 responses)

1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Monthly 4. A few times a year 5. Quite rarely 6. Never 7. Cannot tell

How often does your family experience racism? Partner relocated to Finland (18 responses)

1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Monthly 4. A few times a year 5. Quite rarely 6. Never 7. Cannot tell

How often does your family experience racism? Finnish partner (126 responses)

1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Monthly 4. A few times a year 5. Quite rarely 6. Never 7. Cannot tell

In which ways has your family been discriminated against and/or treated in a racist manner? Experiences by Finnish partners (127)

1. Verbal messages (for example name-calling, insults, heckles, downplaying, commenting etc.)
2. Non-verbal messages (for example gestures, facial expressions, glances, staring, pointing etc.)
3. Social isolation (for example exclusion, abandon, rejection, isolation, avoidance, cutting contact etc.)
4. Prejudices, attitudes (for example judgement due to background/choices, prying etc.)
5. Physical treatment (for example pushing, hitting, other violence)
6. Unjust treatment (for example denying services due to partner's background)
7. We have not been discriminated against
8. Other

In which ways has your FAMILY been discriminated against and/or treated in a racist manner? Experiences by partners relocated to Finland (20)

1. Verbal messages (for example name-calling, insults, heckles, downplaying, commenting etc.)
2. Non-verbal messages (for example gestures, facial expressions, glances, staring, pointing etc.)
3. Social isolation (for example exclusion, abandon, rejection, isolation, avoidance, cutting contact etc.)
4. Prejudices, attitudes (for example judgement due to background/choices, prying etc.)
5. Physical treatment (for example pushing, hitting, other violence)

6. Unjust treatment (for example denying services due to partner's background)

7. We have not been discriminated against

8. Other

Has your child experienced discrimination and/or racism in Finland? In what kind of situations? (115)

In daycare/at school

By their friends

In public places

In public places outside

By public officers

By their close relatives

By other relatives

No, they have not

Other

If your child has experienced discrimination and/or racism, what kind of racism has it been?

- ◇ At school, Finnish as second language teaching repeatedly when changing schools. Adjusted textbooks directly because of a divergent name. Insults, name-calling, the n—word. Saying things like: "Here in Finland we don't usually". Violence and threats of violence. Downplaying. Denying told experiences: You must have misunderstood. Persecution allowed by the school.
- ◇ Friends have downplayed a teenager's religion and worldview, our family's values and rules and way of living and being. Up to bullying, the child's parents continued as they did when we contacted them, finally we blocked the whole family.
- ◇ Judgements based on skin color and told to go back to where they are from, even though they are born in Finland and have Finnish as native language.
- ◇ Their own grandparents do not want to get to know them or meet them.
- ◇ Bullying, downplaying, exclusion. Other children's parents have denied their children from playing with or talking to my child.

How have you dealt with discrimination and/or racism with your child?

- ◇ By discussing, through books and for example TV-programs. First and foremost, also by aiming to expose the children to positive representation as well and to make them feel proud about their own background.
- ◇ Discussion about the issue and we have said that it is a richness to be part of both cultures
- ◇ We have age-appropriately oriented discussions about why we are all different. We try to explain that everybody deserves to be treated with kindness and respect.
- ◇ I have told them about prejudices and about taking account color and appearances, and that in many people's eyes, they are not Finnish but not "black" either, when looking at it from the dad's perspective. But you are yourselves.
- ◇ By openly talking about every experience. By encouraging them to tell if they encounter discrimination and racism.

Links

100 race-conscious things you can say to your child to advance racial justice

<http://www.raceconscious.org/2016/06/100-race-conscious-things-to-say-to-your-child-to-advance-racial-justice/>

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Talking to Kids About Race and Racism

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/talk-about-race.html>

Talking to white kids about race and racism

<https://safespaceraudio.com/wp-content/uploads/DISCUSSION-GUIDE%E2%80%94TALKING-TO-WHITE-KIDS.pdf>

Talking to your kids about racism -How to start the important conversation and keep it going

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/talking-to-your-kids-about-racism>

Tips for How to Talk to Kids About Racism and Social Justice

<https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/tips-teach-explain-racism-to-children>