

Self-Assessment (Estimated Completion Time 15 Minutes) You are going to choose between two self-assessments found the next four pages. Select the one that fits you best. Follow the directions found on each one and read the page at the end of the self-assessment you selected.

For your reflection after completing your chosen assessment:

1. At what age did you first realize what your race was?
2. What do you remember from your childhood about how you made sense of human differences? If you have kids, is it different for them today than your own experience?
3. How have external factors influenced your thinking about racial difference? Good or bad? People, things, media, etc.?

Once you have completed this task, you might want to read the resource titled The Science of Equality.

Person of Color Racial Anxiety Self-Test

Place a check in the box for every question that your answer is, "yes.":

1. Do I feel nervous when a white person says "you people?"
2. Do I feel angry when white people tell me that I was only hired because of my color ?
3. When a white person wants to talk to me about race, do I feel nervous because I think they will become offended by my answers?
4. Do I feel angry or annoyed by the above questions?
5. Do I have a history of not speaking out on racism that I see and feel ashamed of that?
6. Does saying "Not all those people" or similar phrases make me feel better when someone calls people of color out for something?
7. Do I assume that I won't get an apology when I feel like I've been unfairly accused of being angry about something that is racist?
8. Do I feel better when I hear white people say, "I know what it is like to be your people because I am (married to, parent, dated, friends with) a person of color?"
9. Do I feel annoyed or angry when white people talk about how hard their ancestors had it when they immigrated, or explain their own hardships when a person of color talks about being oppressed?
10. Do I think that racism would go away if people stopped talking about it?
11. Does being told that something I say, think, do, or otherwise value is not as important make me want to shut down, leave, or express my discomfort/displeasure in some way?
12. Do I feel annoyed or angry when white people need to state that they have friends/family who are people of color when someone accuses them of racism?
13. Do I feel the need to prove that I'm as good as my white colleagues?
14. Do I feel that my opinions and perspectives about race will be discounted by white people, that they will not believe I have something unique and important to contribute to the race conversation, and/or that I will not be fully listened to when I speak?
15. Do I feel the need to defend myself on any of the above points in the comment section?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are dealing with Racial Anxiety. Take time to reflect on why you feel the way that you do. Take time to listen to different perspectives.

Racial anxiety can be acute, experienced as physiological threat (and cognitive depletion in anticipation of and following an interracial interaction. When people experience the physical symptoms of anxiety during a cross-racial interaction, they often distance themselves, are less apt to share eye contact, and use a less friendly and engaging verbal tone – behaviors which can obviously undermine an interaction (Dovidio et al., 2002).

At its worst, racial anxiety can cause an emotionally unhealthy situation for people of color because of racial power dynamics and the weight of being responsible for white folks' feelings while not having

space to express their own. There is also the weight that comes with people that you care about lashing out at and abusing you (verbally, emotionally, and/or digitally).

When we experience racial anxiety, we may not recognize it – and we are even less likely to recognize that the person with whom we are interacting may be experiencing it as well. Thus, as a result of “pluralistic ignorance,” whites and people of color are apt to behave in ways that confirm the other’s fears – failing to initiate contact through open body language, eye contact, and other non-verbal signals of welcoming interaction (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). The absence of this kind of body language makes both people appear unfriendly or unwelcoming. In sum, racial anxiety begets more racial anxiety.

—————

White Person Racial Anxiety Self-Test

Place a check in the box for every question that your answer is, "yes.":

1. Do I feel defensive when a person of color says "white people?"
2. Do I feel unsettled when people tell me that I benefit from white privilege?
3. When a person of color talks about race, do I feel defensive because they're describing things that I do or think as racist?
4. Do I feel angry or annoyed by the above questions?
5. Do I have a history of embracing or growing up in racism that I feel ashamed of and so I need to show people that I'm not racist anymore?
6. Does saying "Not all white people" or similar phrases make me feel better when someone calls white people out for something?
7. Do I expect an apology when I feel like I've been unfairly accused of racism?
8. Do I feel better when I say, hear, or read, "It's okay to be white?"
9. Do I try to convince people of color that they're wrong about racism by pointing out people from their racial group who agree with me?
10. Do I feel the need to talk about how hard my ancestors had it when they immigrated, or explain my own hardships when a person of color talks about being oppressed?
11. Do I think that racism would go away if people stopped talking about it?
12. Does being told that something I say, think, do, or otherwise value is racist make me want to shut down, leave, or express my discomfort/displeasure in some way?
13. Do I feel the need to state that I have friends/family who are people of color when someone accuses me of racism?
14. Do I feel the need to prove that I'm not racist?
15. Do I feel that my opinions and perspectives about race should be given equal weight to that of a person of color, that I have something unique and important to contribute to the race conversation, and/or that it is unfair to be told to listen more than I speak?
16. Do I feel the need to defend myself on any of the above points in the comment section?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are dealing with white fragility. Take time to reflect on why you feel the way that you do. Take time to listen to different perspectives.

If you are white, then your experience with Racial Anxiety has been named White fragility (Robin DiAngelo). This anxiety is a hindrance to racial healing because it prevents white people from being able to engage with non-white people in honest conversation as they may feel that they are expected to bear the burden of catering to white people's emotional comfort.

At its worst, white fragility can cause an emotionally unhealthy situation for people of color because of racial power dynamics and the weight of being responsible for white folks' feelings while not having space to express our own. There is also the weight that comes with people that you care about lashing out at and abusing you (verbally, emotionally, and/or digitally).

If we cannot talk honestly about the issues, then we cannot make progress.

*White Fragility, as defined by DiAngelo, is the result of white racial socialization. A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial comfort and status quo.

—————