



### Before you start ...

There are some important things to know before continuing.

### Voices of lived experience

This fact sheet is part of a series we created with families who have been through tough times to share their stories and motivate you to be an ally to families experiencing racism.

We hope these resources have something to offer all families, but recognise they are simply a snapshot reflecting the lived experiences of the families who helped us create them – other families will have different experiences and stories.

We also intentionally create resources that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of *knowing, being and doing* with guidance from our National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultancy Group and partners.

For more information please see [emergingminds.com.au/working-with-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples](https://emergingminds.com.au/working-with-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples)

### Language notes: 'Parents'

Emerging Minds acknowledges that families come in many forms. In our resources, the term 'parent' encompasses biological, adoptive, foster and kinship carers as well as individuals who have chosen to take up primary or shared responsibility in raising children. Our resources aim to support families and the children in their care. We acknowledge that every child is unique and has different strengths, vulnerabilities and experiences that shape their health and development.

### What is racism?

Challenging and ending racism is everyone's responsibility.

One of the difficult things about racism is that it can be hard to name and see its effects clearly. Children learn racial prejudice very early, often before or by the time they start school. They learn directly from modelled behaviours, beyond the spoken word. However, we are not often taught to see, name and respond to racism. Racism can have a big impact on the wellbeing of children, parents and families. It can also create intergenerational disadvantage (while supporting intergenerational privilege of white people).

Additionally, in relationships where racial difference exists, people may use racism to abuse their partners, recruit their children into racism and also use the racism embedded into the Family Court and criminal justice systems to dominate and use violence against their partners. Women of the global majority who have migrated to Australia are especially vulnerable, as partners may also use the insecurity or vulnerability of visa conditions or citizenship to control them. This behaviour is not only harmful to the targeted parent, but to their children's social and emotional wellbeing as well.

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**Everyone needs to try, even people who never face racism, they need to have solidarity. Everyone needs to try. It's not my job. We are all living in one society, if all the people feel safe and secure, they can reach their own potential. And it overall benefits the society.**

M, IRANIAN-AUSTRALIAN MOTHER,  
LIVING ON KAURNA COUNTRY



ANNA, 6 YEARS OLD

### If you don't experience racism...

- Can you remember a time when you could have, but didn't, name racism, even in your own thoughts or actions?
- What can get in the way of you seeing and naming racism?
- What would support you to more clearly see and courageously name racism?

We invite you to read [\*Struggling with money and racism at the same time\*](#) and then think about:

- What does it take to respond to racism or its effects on children and families?
- What does it take to believe someone if they are telling you they have experienced racism?
- When does that feel more possible to respond to racism?
- When does that feel less possible to respond to racism?
- If you have children, what do you think about when deciding if and how to talk about racism with them? What opportunities do you have to raise anti-racist children?
- What values help you to do this?

'As a young female Muslim, I have encountered many unfair situations. After school at a bus stop, male students from local senior schools block the stairway. As I was walking towards the stairs, these male students shouted sexual obscenities to me and made me feel unsafe and uncomfortable. Moreover, as a Muslim, I feel there is a high level of discrimination in my community which makes me feel unsafe.'

**Secondary student, South East Queensland, in *This place I call home*<sup>1</sup>**



You might now like to read [Families responding to racism](#) and think about:

- What stood out to you from reading these stories?
- Who or what supports you to respond to racism?
- What are ways that you might join together with others in solidarity?

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**It makes me feel disgusted. I'm no different to you just because I'm a different skin colour to you.**

SECONDARY STUDENT, SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND, IN *THIS PLACE I CALL HOME*'

## Challenging racism and repairing harms

It makes a difference when organisations, institutions and governments take a stand against racism. Anti-racism education needs to be part of our children's learning throughout their experiences of childcare, kindergarten, schooling and tertiary education. Those in roles of leadership or positions of power need to step in and take action. Culturally and racially diverse representation in the workforce is also essential.

If you are in an organisational leadership position and you don't hear much feedback or complaints about racism that does not mean it is not happening. People may be concerned about impacts on their role or too busy surviving to take the risk of bringing racism to your attention. It is everyone's responsibility to make it more possible for those harmed by racism to name it in ways that don't put them at risk or require burdensome emotional labour of them.



'Racism is harmful, whether it's reported or not. No one wins. For the kids witnessing it, but not calling it out, this is harmful for them as feelings such as guilt and powerlessness may stay with them. For the kids experiencing racism but not reporting it, harm is being done. They are negatively affected mentally, physically and socially. The body keeps score. They may internalise their responses or externalise responses such as anger and aggression, which further leads to them getting into trouble as everyone will then respond to this "unacceptable" behaviour and they become the troublemakers, yet they are the victims to begin with.'

**Julie Ngwabi, practitioner, who is also from the global majority**

Thanks for taking the time to read these stories and reflections. Together we can stand up to and dismantle racism.

## Resources to help you become a better ally for families experiencing racism

### For families

- All Together Now has created a [guide for adults having conversations with children about racism](#).
- Racism. It stops with me has [information on being an ally](#).
- The useful reflective article *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack* identifies some of [the daily effects of white privilege in the life of a white person](#).

### For practitioners

- [Understanding children's mental health in culturally diverse communities](#) is an online course which explores practice considerations that support culturally responsive and inclusive practice with families.
- Our short article *Racism, children's mental health, and anti-racist practice* provides a starting point for practitioners to [understand racism's harmful effects on children's mental health and wellbeing](#), while introducing ways to support children through anti-racist practice.
- Our webinar on [supporting culturally and linguistically diverse children and families who experience racism](#) raises awareness and provides some guidance for practitioners.

### Dive deeper into Emerging Minds podcasts

- Our podcast episode *Dismantling interpersonal racism to support culturally diverse families* explores [how racism impacts the mental health of children and families from the global majority](#) in Australia.

AVAILABLE HERE

**View all Money, housing and health resources**



Are you a practitioner wanting to share this resource with a person or family?

First, check out our practitioner guide: [emergingminds.com.au/resources/practitioner-guide-money-housing-and-health-resources](https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/practitioner-guide-money-housing-and-health-resources)

If you are a professional working with families from the global majority, you might also be interested in our online course, [Understanding children's mental health in culturally diverse communities](#).

### Emerging Minds Families

For more resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of your family visit [emergingminds.com.au/families](https://emergingminds.com.au/families)

Or you can follow us on social media or our podcast channel:

 [instagram.com/emergingmindsau](https://www.instagram.com/emergingmindsau)

 [facebook.com/EMFamilies](https://www.facebook.com/EMFamilies)

 [emergingminds.com.au/families/podcasts](https://emergingminds.com.au/families/podcasts)

### References

1. Queensland Family and Child Commission. (2018). *This place I call home: The views of children and young people on growing up in Queensland*. Queensland Government.