



# The Anti-Racist Cookbook

A Recipe Guide for Conversations About Race That Goes Beyond Covered Dishes and “Kum-Bah-Ya”

## 2020 Supplement on Video Discussions About Race

During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual meetings are often the only way to conduct business and communicate with others safely. Services like Zoom and GoToMeeting offer platforms for virtual discussions about race, but there are challenges:

- It is easy for participants to “multitask” and focus on emails and other computer-based distractions.
- People who participate in meetings are shown in small videos in which their body language is often hard to perceive.
- Technical problems caused by internet disruptions or not understanding the virtual platforms sometimes arise.
- Facilitators must manage questions from participants that are stated verbally or placed in a “chatbox.”

It is vital to humanize the experience of discussing race virtually. For example, participants should use the camera function to enable seeing one another.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in addition to the ground rules discussed on pages 46 through 49 of the *Anti-Racist Cookbook*, we recommend the following ground rules for virtual discussions:

1. Turn on your camera. That will help us create a sense of community.
2. Avoid distractions. In a virtual setting, it is easy to lose focus on what is being shared by checking email or monitoring your phone. We will provide breaks so that you can attend to those things.
3. If you are having technical problems, send a message to \_\_\_\_\_ (one of the facilitators) in the chatbox.
4. Be intentional about showing that you are listening to others. Look into your camera, nod your head, or use a “thumbs up” sign to let others know you are paying attention.
5. Throughout our discussion, facilitators will prompt you for questions by either (1) asking you to type, “I have a question” in the chatbox, (2) asking you to use the hand-raising icon in the “Participants” window, or (3) asking you to open your mic and state your question. We will avoid written questions in the chatbox unless we ask for them to be placed there.

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<sup>1</sup> Of course that requires the use of a computer or tablet with a working camera. Although a phone can also work in a pinch, we find that the images are too small to recommend.

6. Do not use the chatbox to communicate with other participants unless facilitators prompt you to do so. Personal chat messages can distract from the discussion.

The third ground rule requires designating an individual to monitor and address technical problems that may arise. Having that designated person frees the other facilitators to concentrate on the discussion at hand. We have also found that participants asking unprompted questions or sharing personal messages through the “chat function” can be distracting. The fifth and sixth ground rules address that problem by setting expectations for when and how the chat function should be used.

Discussing the reasons for these supplemental ground rules helps participants take greater responsibility for staying engaged in your virtual discussions about race. If you have participants that are new to virtual meetings, you should also discuss the controls that GoToMeeting, Zoom, and other platforms offer.