

Introduction:

This activity is based on a video of a TEDx Talk by Jay Smooth. The activity has two parts. The first, which explores ideas presented by Smooth, can be done independently of the second. The second asks participants to consider contextual elements of the video to explore their own thoughts and feelings.

Facilitator notes:

The Participant Instructions include two parts – you can decide to do both or one or the other. You will need to edit the Participant Instructions based on which part you decide to facilitate. The Participant Instructions also include a long list of discussion questions. You may choose to add your own or subtract ones you do not feel are relevant to your group. You need to consider in advance whether the group operates with enough psychological safety and openness to engage productively with the questions and topics.

Additionally, some learners thrive with the written instructions in their hands. For others, especially when there is a lot of detail that is not central to what they need to do for the activity, it is a distraction from taking in other types of information and details that you may offer verbally and/or on slides.

We suggest that you edit and present the participant instructions keeping the above information in mind.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Explain why people may find it hard to discuss race.
2. Identify daily practices that may reduce prejudiced thought and action.
3. (If participants engage in the second part of the activity) Examine their own responses to specific social identifications.

Time:

60 minutes (Part 1: 30 minutes; Part II: 30 minutes).

Group Size:

Entire Group; Small Groups.

Materials:

Computer or tablet and Internet connection to watch or listen to Jay Smooth's TEDx talk (in [Links](#)); Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)).

**Facilitator may ask participants to watch video in advance.*

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Minimization
- Acceptance
- Adaptation

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Other Skills:

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; Emotional Resilience.

Part 1 Activity Instructions (30 minutes):

1. Ask participants:
 - Have you ever been "called out" for something you said or wrote that offended someone?
 - How did you respond to being called out? Why do you think you responded that way?
 - How easy is it for you to talk about race? Why do you think that is?
2. Watch/listen to the video (linked below in the citation and in [Links](#)) together. Full hyperlink here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQtaU>.

Facilitator note: You might consider pausing the video at particular places to ask questions (included in #3 below).

3. Ask:
 - How did you feel as you watched/listened to this video?
 - What was an "aha" moment for you?
 - What confused you or made you want to push back?
 - What connection can you make with your own life?
 - How do you understand the analogy to dental hygiene? What are some ways in which prejudice builds up daily? What are some measures you can take to engage in daily hygiene to prevent build-up?
 - What are some ways that as a collective (class, institution, organization, geographic community—it is suggested that the facilitator name the structure that brings the group together), we can practice "daily hygiene" with regard to racism?
 - Smooth states, "It is the connections we maintain with our imperfections that allows us to be good." How do you interpret this statement?
 - Based on the video or your own ideas, why is it important to talk about race?
 - What are your takeaways from the TEDx Talk or this discussion?

Part II Activity Instructions (30 minutes):

1. Divide into small groups of 3-4 participants. Give groups 15 minutes to discuss, using Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)):



The small group discussion involves sharing responses to Jay Smooth's TEDx Talk and analyzing the video critically to explore possible connections between various responses and the unconscious thought processes that he mentions.

- Do a round robin in which you each share your initial response – thoughts and feelings – as you watched the video. Keep in mind that all responses are valid.
 - *Facilitator note: If you feel that participants are equipped to answer and that the space is safe, include the following questions in the participant instructions:*
 - *Can you think of a time when someone has called you out for racism, or when you have done the calling out?*
 - *How did you feel in that moment?*
 - *How did you respond?*
 - *How might you respond differently in the future?*
 - **The above questions are included in the participant instructions but delete if you do not want to include it in the activity facilitation.*
 - Discuss what might have contributed to your initial response beyond Smooth's words. For example, you might discuss characteristics of Jay Smooth, how he spoke, the context of the talk, how the audience's response was shown on the video, aspects of the collective watching/listening experience for your group, your own experiences with race and being raced, etc.
 - Imagine how changing one aspect that you discussed might lead to a different response. For example, what might your response have changed if Jay Smooth spoke African American Vernacular English? If he hadn't used humor and left time for the audience to laugh? If the setting hadn't been a college auditorium?
 - How do you feel about your own answers to these questions?
2. Bring all groups back to from a large group. Remind participants to focus on their own learning and not share what someone in their group said.
3. Ask:
- What did you learn about what may affect varying responses to this video?
 - If discussion hasn't addressed these issues, you may want to raise some of the following questions.
 - Do you think your response and the conversation might have been different if...
 - Smooth's skin were very dark? (Reference to colorism)

Facilitator note: You can ask and share the below information on colorism if you think appropriate:

- Can anyone give a definition of colorism?

Based on the answer, either affirm or offer the following definition:

"Colorism refers to discrimination based on skin color. Colorism disadvantages dark-skinned people while privileging those with lighter skin. Research has linked colorism to smaller incomes, lower marriage rates, longer prison terms, and fewer job prospects for darker-skinned people. Colorism has existed for centuries, in and out of black America. It's a persistent form of discrimination that should be fought with the same urgency as racism."

(Nittle, N. K.). (2021, February 28). *The roots of colorism, or skin tone discrimination*. ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-colorism-2834952>

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- Smooth had spoken African American Vernacular English? (Reference to linguistic bias)
- Smooth had been a woman? (Reference to sexism)
- Smooth's talk had been recorded in an empty urban lot with trash in it? (Reference to educational elitism, anti-urban bias)?
- Smooth had spoken in a sharp tone and hadn't left time for the audience to laugh? (Reference to white fragility)
- How will you apply what you learned to your daily life?