

RaceEqualityMatters.com

RACE
EQUALITY
WEEK
3-9 February 2025

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LLOYD'S

#EveryActionCounts



Together
we will end
homelessness

The 5-Day Challenge





Introduction

Race Equality Week (REW), organised by the organisation Race Equality Matters (REM), is a UK campaign that **aims to encourage participants to address the barriers to race equality in the workplace.**

Running from **3-9 February** this year, the campaign invites organisations and individuals to participate in activities to address race inequality in the workplace.

The theme for REW this year is **#EveryActionCounts**. It draws attention to there often being too much talk and too little action when it comes to tackling race inequality in the workplace. This theme aims **to move beyond awareness of issues relating to race so that the focus is on meaningful action.**

What is the 5-Day Challenge?

To support and encourage the REW theme, each year staff members across the UK are encouraged to take part in different activities on each of the days of Race Equality Week. The 5-Day Challenge includes videos, articles, and activities to help everyone **reflect and take action to drive race equality.**

Recognising that our daily lives both inside and outside of work are busy, each of the challenges typically take no longer than 5 minutes each day.

Over the next 5 days, we encourage everyone to take just 5 minutes each day to go through the activities. Whilst we encourage discussions about the topics explored in the challenges, there is no pressure to share your personal answers with anyone.

Days 1 to 4 of the challenge each consist of:

- A specific theme.
- An eye-opener – a daily self-reflective question related to the theme.
- A thought-provoking short video.
- A bit of theory/science to explain how actions or behaviours may impact feelings of being included or belonging.
- Simple suggestions on how to take action.
- Access to additional resources if you would like to explore the topics further in your own time.

Day 5 will involve reflecting on the week and how we can take forward the actions to make a real impact.



Day 1 - Intersectionality

How do different parts of who we are (like race, gender, and culture) affect our experiences and interactions at work?



Today's Eye Opener - 1 minute



Which of the following apply to you?

*Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of characteristics.

- I am from a marginalised ethnic background
- I have lived experience of homelessness
- I am disabled
- I identify as being part of the LBGTQ+ community
- I am religious
- I am not male
- I did not go to university



What if you were told you could only use one characteristic to describe yourself to others? How difficult would it be pick that one characteristic?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Not sure
- Difficult
- Very difficult



When we talk about diversity we often focus on just one aspect of it, like race or gender. As the above activity shows, we all have many identities that make us who we are, meaning that we often don't fit into single categories.

Video - 2.5 minutes

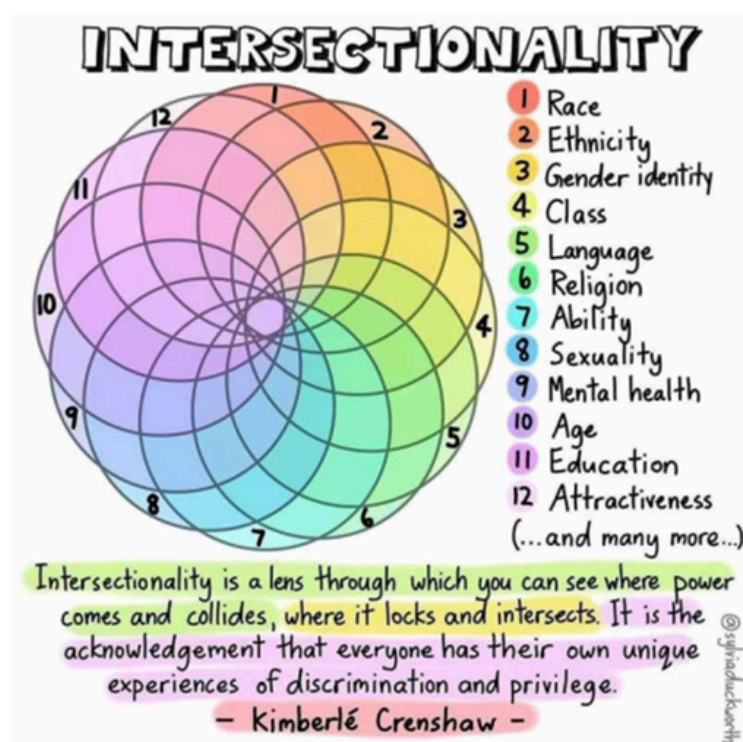


So what exactly is intersectionality? [Watch this video](#) to find out...

*Please note that this video refers to a non-disabled person as 'able bodied'. To avoid ableist beliefs, we don't use this term at Crisis and instead use 'non-disabled' to describe people who are not disabled.

Understanding intersectionality

Intersectionality means understanding that everyone has many different parts of their identity such as race, class, sexuality, and gender. These characteristics overlap and combine to make up our unique identities and experiences. The overlapping nature of these characteristics also result in interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.





Intersectional disadvantage



Looking at the statistics, some employees from marginalised ethnic backgrounds face additional disadvantages due to also having other characteristics

For example,

- A Black woman faces sexism because she is a woman and racism because she is Black. This has real impact on her opportunities and career progression.
- Black and South Asian women face longer delays in securing their first jobs compared to their white counterparts, despite being equally or more qualified according to research by Total Jobs and Diversity Trust.
- Black disabled women and girls are often denied equal access to training and education resources.
- Asian women are seven times more likely to be mistaken for someone of the same ethnicity (McKinsey & Co 2023).

Data gathered by The Collaboratory and Race Equality Matters revealed that:

44% of respondents say their company's hiring practices do not reflect an understanding of intersectionality.

13% said their workplace created a sense of community for people with intersectional identities.

This shows how important it is for workplaces to understand the effects of intersectionality and to work on reducing its disadvantages.



Action - 1 minute



How can you support colleagues with multiple marginalised identities and promote an inclusive workplace culture for them?

- If you're comfortable, share your own intersectionality with others to raise awareness and promote intersectional thinking.
- When you're talking to a person, always remember that they are multi-dimensional, not one-dimensional.
- Actively embed equity into your ways of working by understanding that different people will need different resources and approaches based on their unique identities and circumstances.
- Learn more about intersectionality and different people's experiences of it by reading about it, listening to others, and attending events.
- Create safe spaces where people can share their intersectional identities and explore topics relating to them.

Action/s I will take:	To be achieved by:



Additional resources



If you're interested in exploring intersectionality further, please see below some links to additional resources:

[What is intersectionality and why is it important in the workplace?](#)

[There is no Hierarchy of Oppressions by Audre Lorde](#)

[Intersectionality Matters! A podcast hosted by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the founder of the term 'intersectionality'](#)



Day 2 - Recognising Privilege

How can we use our privilege as a force for good?



Today's Eye Opener - 30 seconds



Which of the following apply to you?

- I can observe the festival days of my religion without having to take annual leave, as I already get the days off as traditional Bank Holidays
- I am not significantly older or younger than my colleagues
- I do not receive comments about my accent or the way I pronounce certain words
- I am rarely ignored or interrupted in meetings
- I am invited to social activities at work which I feel comfortable attending and included within
- I feel I can share my opinions in meetings without fear of negative repercussions
- I feel safe leaving work alone when it's dark to make my way home
- I feel comfortable being myself at work without feeling I have to behave differently to fit in

**Some people can tick all of these boxes, but others cannot tick any.
Privilege isn't something we can control, but we can choose how we use it.**

Recognising our own privilege - whether it's based on race, socioeconomic status, or other factors helps us understand how we can support others, especially those from marginalised groups.

Video - 4 minutes



[Watch this video](#) which explains what privilege is. It also explores some ways in which privilege is present within the workplace.

Could you be privileged without even knowing it?



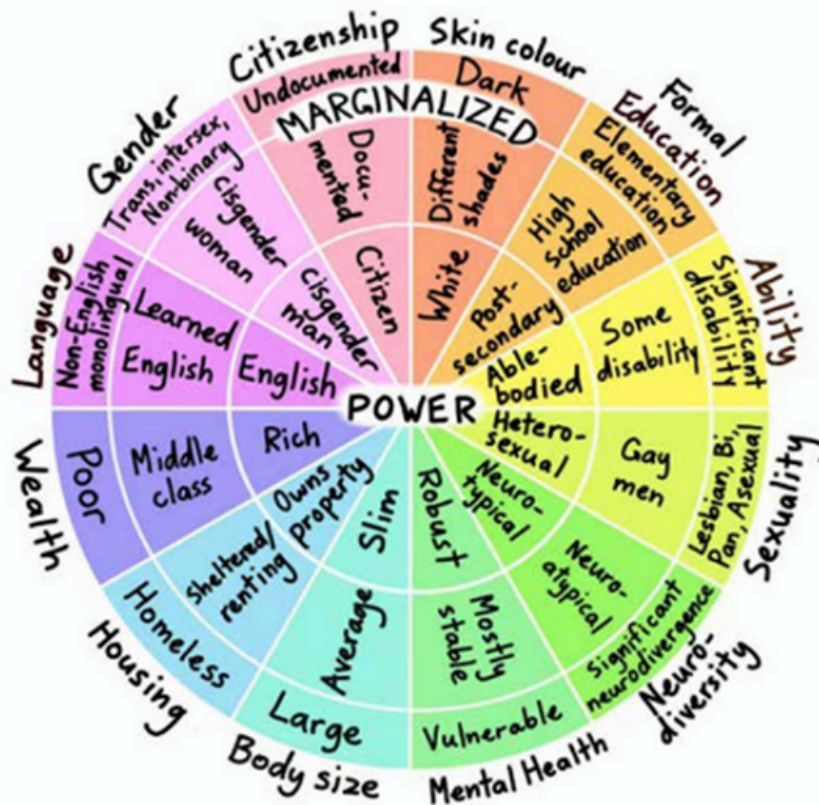
Some people have certain opportunities or things they don't have to worry about such as:

1. Having your voice heard and your opinion taken on board
2. Being comfortable to say no
3. People pronouncing your name correctly
4. Not having an accent

Some people don't have any of these privileges. Reflecting on this helps us recognise some of the advantages we may have ourselves.



The Wheel of Privilege



The further you are from the centre ('power'), the more you have been discriminated, marginalised, or deprived of equal opportunities. As you explore different categories, notice how your level of power changes.

Privilege and power are always relative; we are always more privileged than someone and less privileged than someone else.

You might catch yourself thinking, 'I've had it tough too', or 'I have worked hard to get to where I am'. Having privilege does not negate your hard work or personal challenges.

We all have existing forms of privilege. Allyship involves using your privileges to support those who have less, and recognising that some individuals have more advantages than others.



Action - 45 seconds



How can you become an active ally and use your privilege to remove barriers and obstacles for others? Ideas to consider:

- Amplify voices and actively listen** to people from diverse backgrounds. For example, if a colleague from a marginalised ethnic background is spoken over in a meeting, respectfully intervene. For example, 'Sorry, can we go back to what Muhammad was saying? I'd like to hear more about that'.
- Respectfully challenge harmful behaviour** both in person and online. For example, if you hear someone make a racially insensitive comment, address it. For example, 'I don't think that's appropriate, and here's why...'
- Learn about microaggressions and how to challenge them.** [More information about microaggressions can be found here.](#)
- Always be inclusive.** For example, when planning projects and social events, ensure everyone has an opportunity to be involved.
- Consider reverse mentoring.** This is where someone is mentored by someone from a different background to them. Both people can learn from each other and share knowledge.
- Think about and question norms and biases within the workplace** which may benefit those who have privilege. How can you change your own ways of working to remove barriers for those who are less privileged?



#EveryActionCounts



Together we will end homelessness

Action/s I will take:	To be achieved by:

Additional resources



If you're interested in learning more about privilege, please see below some links to additional resources:

[Famous 'school race' video which visualises white privilege](#)

[50 potential workplace privileges adapted from the book 'Better Allies: Everyday Actions to Create Inclusive, Engaging Workplaces' by Karen Caitlin](#)

[How to use your privilege to even the playing field](#)

[Check Your Privilege: A podcast by Myisha T. Hill](#)

[Talking about privilege at work](#)



Day 3 - Inclusive Language

Have you ever used words and later realised that they were hurtful or not inclusive?



Today's Eye Opener - 15 seconds



How often do you describe someone by their race or ethnicity by saying 'the Black guy', or 'the Asian woman'?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always

Video - 1 minute



[Watch this video](#) for an overview of inclusive language and why it's important.

Why inclusive language matters

- Language shapes how people are seen and treated.
- Non-inclusive language can offend, upset, or make people feel that they don't belong.
- Inclusive language ensures everyone feels valued and heard.
- It creates a respectful and welcoming environment.

By recognising and respecting individual identities and experiences, inclusive language helps create a culture where everyone can feel welcome and belong.



Language do's and don'ts

Do use inclusive greetings.



'Ladies and gentlemen'



'Hi guys'



'Hi everyone'



'Hello all'



Don't use racial identifiers unnecessarily



'the Black employee'

Refer to the person by their role or name or what they are wearing.



Do use gender neutral terms



'chairman'



'chair'



Don't use stereotypes



You are intimidating / aggressive



Avoid assumptions based on appearance



'Where are you really from?'



Can you tell me more about your background?"
(If relevant to the conversation.)



Don't make jokes at the expense of any group

Avoid language that derives from negative stereotypes about any group



Don't use outdated terms



Half caste



Mixed Heritage



multiracial



What if I get it wrong?

It's okay to learn and grow with inclusive language. **We are all human**, and mistakes will happen. Language is constantly changing and evolving. Most people appreciate discussing issues and are willing to understand and forgive mistakes, rather than avoiding or ignoring important matters. What matters most is how you handle those learning moments. These conversations will help to create an inclusive environment.

If you make a mistake, remember to:

- Be open to feedback
- Acknowledge and apologise - don't be defensive
- Learn to get it right for next time
- Move forward - don't dwell on it

Going through this process shows that you are open to the thoughts and feelings of others, and want to be inclusive and respectful of them.

Action - 1 minute



What steps can you take to ensure your language is more inclusive in both written and verbal communication? Ideas to consider:

- When discussing someone's background, ask open-ended questions. For example, what traditions do you celebrate?
- If you come across a name you are unfamiliar with, then you could say: 'I know how important names are, can you tell me how to correctly pronounce your name?'.
Use people's preferred terms - in many circumstances, there isn't one correct way to describe all people who have shared protected characteristics. Try to use the language people choose to use to describe themselves, where appropriate. Ask if you're unsure what language to use.
- Use gender-neutral language to address groups of people. For example, 'hi everyone' instead of 'hi guys', and 'welcome everyone' instead of 'welcome ladies and gentlemen'.
- When discussing someone's personal life, use neutral terms to avoid making assumptions. For example, if appropriate, ask 'do you have a partner?' instead of 'do you have a husband/wife?'.



#EveryActionCounts



Together we will end homelessness

Action/s I will take:	To be achieved by:

Additional resources



If you're interested in learning more about inclusive language, please see below some links to additional resources:

[How to promote inclusive communication in the workplace](#)

[How inclusive communication can revolutionise workplace culture](#)

[Why inclusive language matters - TEDx Talk](#)



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Day 4 - Code-switching

Have you ever had to change the way you speak or act to fit in?



Today's Eye Opener - 15 seconds



How often do you find yourself changing the way you act and speak in the workplace to fit in?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Always

What is code-switching?

Code-switching is when people change how they speak, behave, or present themselves based on their social surroundings or audience. The aim is to fit in and not be seen as an outsider or someone who doesn't belong.

We all naturally adapt to different situations, however, for many people, the need to change who they are can be significant. As a result, code-switching can have a profound impact on their interactions and identity.

People code-switch to fit in, avoid exclusion, and in some cases, to simply survive.



Video - 2.5 minutes



[Watch this video](#) to learn why code-switching is used as a mechanism by many people from marginalised ethnic backgrounds.

Why do individuals from marginalised ethnic backgrounds code-switch more, and how does this impact wellbeing?

People who are part of marginalised groups often encounter stereotypes that portray them negatively.

These stereotypes lead to discrimination and create challenging environments where individuals feel the need to adapt their behaviour to fit in and succeed. For example, 75% of women from marginalised ethnic backgrounds have changed their demeanour to appear more 'approachable and friendly' during a job interview, in an attempt to counteract negative stereotypes.

According to Harvard Business Review, these are the three main reasons colleagues from marginalised ethnic backgrounds code-switch in the workplace:

- **To increase their chances of being hired** by downplaying their association with groups that face discrimination so they appear more 'professional'.
- **To avoid negative stereotypes:** Black men, for instance, are often stereotyped as 'aggressive' or 'intimidating'. This leads many to adopt softer tones or overly polite behaviour to counteract these perceptions.
- **To connect with those with power and influence** by expressing shared interests, which improves their chances of promotion since people tend to favour those they see as similar.



Action - 1 minute



It's important that we feel as though we can bring our authentic selves into work. How can you contribute to reducing the necessity for colleagues from marginalised ethnic backgrounds to code-switch in the workplace? Ideas you could consider:

- Actively listen to colleagues from different backgrounds without interrupting or assuming stereotypes.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to participate in meetings, discussions, and social activities, no matter their cultural background.
- Share your stories about your culture in a safe space to build trust and authenticity, making it easier for people to learn and do the same.
- Respect and acknowledge cultural practices, holidays, and traditions.
- Be open to the idea of changing the way your team works to include a different way of doing things, or a different cultural norm.
- Challenge assumptions, stereotypes, and biases to make sure everyone feels welcome and valued.
- Model inclusive behaviours in your daily interactions.



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Additional resources



If you're interested in learning more about inclusive language, please see below some links to additional resources:

[How does code-switching impact teams?](#)

[The cost of code-switching - TEDx Talk](#)

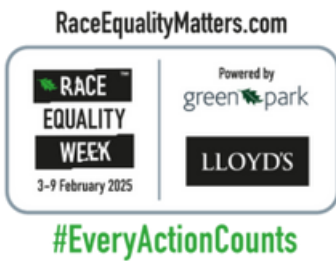
[How to avoid code-switching in the workplace](#)

[To code-switch or not to code-switch? - TEDx Talk](#)



Day 5 - Reflecting on the Week

What have you taken away from this week? How can you turn words into actions?



Recap of the week

In the 5-Day Challenge we have explored just some of the issues that impact colleagues from marginalised ethnic backgrounds. For some of us, these issues will already be very familiar, as they are our own daily experiences.

To summarise, this week we have focused on:

- **Intersectionality** and the impact this has for those from marginalised ethnic backgrounds who have additional marginalised identities.
- **Privilege** and how we can use it to remove barriers for those who have less privilege within certain spaces.
- **Inclusive language** and the importance of it in ensuring everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued.
- **Code-switching** and the reasons why some people feel the need to change their natural behaviours to fit in and succeed in the workplace.

So what next?

The only way we will achieve race equality is if each and every one of us take action. It's crucial to recognise the collective responsibility to confront behaviours and biases that uphold inequality.

It's time for us all to:

- Take action by reflecting on our own behaviours, biases, and assumptions.
- Take action by challenging the systems, behaviours, and structures around us that uphold racial inequality.
- Take action by engaging with each other to learn about individual experiences, and how we can create environments where everyone feels respected, included, and that they belong.



Reflection Activities



A lot of information has been shared across the week, so now is a good opportunity to take some time to reflect. Here are some suggestions for ways to reflect on the week:

- Review Days 1-4 and explore some of the additional resources for each day.
- Go back to the actions you committed to each day. Think about how you can practically embed them into your day-to-day activities and interactions at work.
- Have a conversation with a colleague about a topic/topics explored during the week. You could discuss and share your own reflections or thoughts on the topics.
- If you have direct experiences of the issues covered, reflect on what you'd like to see from colleagues to show allyship. What actions would be the most supportive and make the biggest difference to you? These may be actions suggested in this resource, or additional ones.
- Take a look at [the Race and Ethnicity section of the EDI Digital Library](#). What books could you add to your reading list to enhance your understanding of some of the topics covered this week?