

OVERT VS COVERT RACISM

Most of us recognize and stand solidly against overt expressions of racism such as racial slurs, violence, cross-burnings by the Ku Klux Klan, and practices of blatant racial segregation and discrimination. But overt racism is only the tip of the iceberg.

More often, racial discrimination is disguised and shows up in subtle ways (covert racism) such as implicit biases, microaggressions, and racially coded language. Often, people who say and do these things are unaware of the racism that informs them. Study the pyramid below to learn more about the differences between overt and covert racism.

OVERT RACISM

Generally socially unacceptable

Hate crimes •
Lynching •
Anti-immigrant violence •
Blackface/Brownface •
Painting swastikas • Burning crosses • Racial slurs • The Ku Klux Klan • Public harassment of POCs speaking other than English

COVERT RACISM

Socially acceptable/practiced

White silence • Racial profiling • Denying institutional racism • Police brutality against People of Color (POC)/'Law and order' • Tone policing • "There's only one human race" • Invalidating or disbelieving POC experiences with racism • Touting respectability politics • Fear of People of Color • Denying white privilege • 'Bootstrap theory' • Microaggressions • Rewriting history • Eurocentric school curricula • 'All Lives Matter' • Using POC culture as Halloween costumes • "You don't have an accent!" • "But they have Black colleges!" • Prioritizing white people as experts on everything • Denial of racism • Tokenism • Cultural appropriation • Treating children of color as adults • 'You're so articulate' • White self-segregating neighborhoods, churches, schools • "Where are you REALLY from?" • Weaponizing whiteness • Coded racist language and actions • "My intention was not racist!" • Racist sports mascots • Mass incarceration • Colorism • School-to-prison pipeline • English-only • Fetishizing POC • Meritocracy myths • "We need qualified people" • Eurocentric beauty standards • 'White savior' complex • Claiming 'reverse racism' • Colorblindness • 'Playing the race card' • Excusing/ 'white-splaining' racism • Mission trips



[Wonder what some of these terms mean?](#)

Visit r2hub.org/library/over-and-covert-racism for more information on the terms in this pyramid.



RELIGION & RACE

The United Methodist Church