

## Week 9 Policy Highlight

As the nation focuses on vote counts and outcomes, consider the work of protecting voting rights and making voting accessible to all. Of voting rights, Dr. Kendi writes: “Racist voting policy has evolved from disenfranchising by Jim Crow voting laws to disenfranchising by mass incarceration and voter-ID laws. Sometimes these efforts are so blatant that they are struck down: North Carolina enacted one of these targeted voter-ID laws, but in July 2016 the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit struck it down, ruling that its various provisions ‘target African Americans with almost surgical precision.’” (p.22). “Assure Every American Can Vote” is a program of the Brennan Center at NYU. The Brennan Center works “to make voting free, fair, and easy. The Brennan Center’s reforms are modernizing American elections, starting with automatic voter registration and measures to ensure election security. And we fight restrictive voting policies that make it harder to vote.” You can explore the Center’s work here: <https://www.brennancenter.org/>.

Wondering how to talk with students, friends, family about the elections? While aimed at supporting teachers’ work in classrooms, this issue of *Teaching Tolerance* offers practices and ideas that could also be useful when talking with friends and family: <https://www.tolerance.org>.

## Week 9: Individual Activism

Referencing the Black Lives Matter movement, and sharing his own path to queer antiracism, Dr. Kendi asserts that, “We cannot be antiracist if we are homophobic or transphobic” (p. 197). Black trans women must be protected in the ALL Black Lives Matter antiracist work. Their average life expectancy today in 2020 is just thirty-five years. The Human Rights Campaign has tracked at least 34 targeted murders of Black trans women just this year ([hrc.org](http://hrc.org)). These facts necessitate inclusive antiracist action.

To gain a deeper authentic understanding of the reality faced by Black trans women, we encourage you to watch “Disclosure”, a documentary on Netflix featuring Laverne Cox and other trans actors who expose the ugly history of misrepresentation and queer racism faced by those who paved the way for trans visibility and representation in Hollywood.

*\*\*Disclaimer: The curriculum committee respectfully pushes back against the author’s use of the term “homosexual” beyond presentation of the historical background of the introduction of the term. “Homosexual” is a term offensive to many queer individuals for its connection with misinformation and racist ideals focused upon the supposed hypersexuality and religious based criticism that pinned HIV upon primarily the gay male community. Our action will be to share our position in inquiry with the author to open dialogue and increase understanding around queer identity.*

## Week 9 Introduction

*“Through groups like the Black Women’s Alliance (1970) and the National Black Feminist Organization (1973), through Black women’s caucuses in Black power and women’s liberation groups, Black feminists fought sexism in Black space and racism in women’s spaces. They developed their own spaces, and a Black feminist consciousness for Black women’s’ liberation, for the liberation of humanity.” (pp. 186-17)*

Welcome to Week 9, everyone. This week our groups will be transitioning from reflecting on the spaces we occupy to exploring the overlaps of gender, sexuality, intersectionality and racism in Chapters 14 (Gender) and 15 (Sexuality).

In Chapter 14, Dr. Kendi shares with readers his reflections on how patriarchal assumptions were visible in his own family dynamics, and the spaces Black feminists have historically battled within. We are left with summation that “to be truly antiracist is to be feminist. To truly be feminist is to be antiracist. To be antiracist is to level the different race-genders, is to root the inequities between the equal race-genders in the policies of gender racism.” (p. 189) Reading groups are encouraged to discuss why it is important for each of us to make visible and audible the experiences of Black women and Black queer folk, and to discuss the layers of privilege that exist in sexuality. Discuss how the following statement

resonates with your group members: *A cisgendered white male holds power and levers of opportunity that exceed all other sexual identities across the spectrum.*

In Chapter 15, Dr. Kendi is transparent with the grappling he did with his own queer racism. He reminds us that the most ideal place to stand is in front of the individual, thing, or concept that forces us to sit with our discomfort to shed old stories, racist childhood upbringing, and assumptions that perpetuate racism. As we observe the ‘Karens’ in society today, making blasphemous racist reports to the police and standing on lawns pointing guns at peaceful protestors, it is important to acknowledge the privilege and power of these “patriarchal women” (p.199).

**Week 9: Chapter 14 (Gender) & Chapter 15 (Sexuality)**  
**Pre-ABC Reflection, Discussion Prompts, Actions & Resources**

Activity	Time estimate*	Reflection, Dialogue, Action	Process Suggestions
<b>Self-Reflection</b> Prior to ABC meeting	5-10 minutes*  Prior to meeting	<p>Kendi’s book is a kind of memoir. He is writing his story and writing about racism and anti-racism. While Kendi does recount the experiences of his mother as seen through his eyes, he first explicitly talks about gender and the experiences of Black women more than half-way through the book. To what extent do you think this matters? Why?</p> <p>How did you discover your sexuality? What social messages influenced the development of your sexuality? Did the individual primarily responsible for your understanding of sexuality reflect your identity?</p>	<p>Read and think about these questions before and after reading the chapter.</p> <p>Read the chapters before the ABC meeting.</p> <p>If you cannot read the chapter(s) before the meeting, come to the ABC meeting anyway. Participate humbly knowing that you have not read the chapter.</p>
<b>Discussion</b> ABC meeting	Greeting and Settling in 10* minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check in with each other (How are you?)</li> <li>2. Welcome and Agenda</li> <li>3. Review and check on Participation Norms (very brief)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the group doing? Any changes to norms needed?</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Review chapter to identify a key passage or two (to warm-up get back into the chapter after a busy day)</li> <li>5. Take turns sharing a passage.</li> </ol>	<p>Arrive early to the meeting so you can catch up</p> <p>Facilitator welcomes everyone and shares the agenda (made at the previous meeting.)</p> <p>Facilitator asks the group to reflect briefly on participation norms. Ideas for how to reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review individual participation and norms silently. Facilitator asks each individual to reflect on one norm the individual has done well and one they need to work on. End.</li> <li>➤ Review group process while silently reflecting on norms. Facilitator asks for feedback: What is one norm we are</li> </ul>

			<p>doing well? One we need to improve on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review norms by reading them aloud followed by individual reflection or by group discussion: On which one norm should we focus today?</li> <li>➤ Review norms. Facilitator asks: How are the norms working? What do we need to change, if anything?</li> </ul>
	<p>Discussion 50 minutes*</p>	<p>What is gendered racism? How does racism disproportionately impact women, particularly Black women? What about the impact on Black people who are gender non-conforming?</p> <p>Based on previous arguments Kendi has made, why is it important to make visible and audible the experiences of Black women and Black queer folks?</p> <p>Do you perceive homophobia and racism to be intertwined? Why or why not? What does it mean to be a queer antiracist to you? What relationship does the Black community share with the queer community?</p>	<p>Everyone has a voice. Ideas for making sure all voices are heard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each person chooses a passage. The discussion begins with each person sharing the passage and why.</li> <li>2. Round robin, each person talks building on previous speaker—in order, around the room.</li> <li>3. Each one asks one. After making a comment, the speaker calls on the next person to comment.</li> <li>4. Pairs. First pairs share their thinking in response to the question. Then each person responds.</li> </ol> <p>Return to the chapter/text frequently during the discussion. Remember one purpose is to understand the chapter/book/ideas.</p> <p>Facilitator keeps track of participation and asks questions to ensure that all participants get a chance to talk. In addition, active participants ask questions of their colleagues.</p>
	<p>Reflection and Action 5 minutes*</p>	<p>Reflect individually: Based on the discussion, what personal action will I take this week?</p>	
	<p>Next Steps 5 minutes*</p>	<p>Plan for the next book club meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What chapters are next?</li> <li>• What actions have we committed to for next week's meeting? Restate the plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Facilitator takes notes and reads/restates the plan for the next meeting after the discussion. "We have agreed to..."</p>
	<p>Closing 5 minutes*</p>	<p>Thank each other and say good-bye!</p>	

<b>Action</b>	Will vary**	<p>What are some ways in which queer black individuals are oppressed within systems designed to provide “equality”? What is the root cause behind the policing of gender in politics and society?</p> <p>Discover and learn about an LGBTQ advocacy or support organization in your local community. Do they mention or share resources regarding homophobia and racism?</p>	Never underestimate the power and importance of everyday actions you yourself can take.
<b>Learn More</b>	Will vary**	<p>Read related critiques of Kendi’s book, such as the one below:  Brendane Tynes’ Twitter Account  <a href="https://twitter.com/b_tynes/status/1277412194867650569">https://twitter.com/b_tynes/status/1277412194867650569</a></p> <p>A Book Review by Mr. L-Mani S. Viney  <a href="https://www.mrviney.com/theclassroom/ho wtobeanantiracistreview">https://www.mrviney.com/theclassroom/ho wtobeanantiracistreview</a></p>	

\*These are suggested times. Different groups might spend time differently. The main guideline is to spend time intentionally.

\*\* It is expected that more time might be dedicated to action and learning more as the group progresses through the book.