

# **How Do I Make Sure I'm Not Raising the Next Amy Cooper— A Discussion Between embracerace Staff and Dr. Jennifer Harvey**

**Webinar Discussion Guide**



## **Pre-Thinking**

Before you start this conversation with children, it is important to do some self-reflection. Some questions to consider are:

1. What emotions come up for you as you think about talking to your child(ren) and/or student(s) about race?
2. What were the conversations in your household about race when you were growing up?
3. What is your goal? What do you hope your child(ren) will learn or gain through these conversations?
4. What personal work will make you a better role model/teacher for your child(ren)?

## **Discussion/Reflection Prompts for “How do I make sure I’m not raising the next ‘Amy Cooper?’”**

\*If you have not watched the Amy Cooper/Christian Cooper Central Park video you may want to watch it to better understand the context of this conversation.

## **General response to Dr. Harvey’s discussion with embracerace:**

1. What are your thoughts, feelings, reactions to this discussion?
2. What surprised you?
3. What did you learn? What was most helpful?
4. Do you have any questions you still need answered?

## **Starting the conversation:**

1. Dr. Harvey makes the point that it is important to be willing to have the conversation. In the webinar, she says *“You don’t have to get it right, you just have to have the courage to start”*, and later *“We’re not trying to fill our kids, who are empty vessels, with all the accurate information. We are trying to partner with them. And they will sometimes ask the most brilliant questions. They will show us what they don’t understand. And we get to try again tomorrow. And so, we do not have to be right or perfect. We just have to be brave. We just have to start.”*
- **What was your reaction when you heard these quotes during the webinar- or what is coming up for you right now?**

2. Dr. Harvey offers a prompt adults can use to start this conversation with kids: *“I’ve not really talked to you about this, and we actually need to start talking about it. I want to tell you what I see and let’s talk about what you’re wondering about.”*
  - **If you said something like this to your child, what would you want to share about race, social justice, and your community? What do you think your child may be wondering about?**
3. Books are mentioned as a great tool to start the conversation.
  - **If you read with your child(ren), how diverse are the books you are reading? How are Black and brown people portrayed? What are these books teaching your child(ren) about race? Do you know what books your child(ren) are reading in school? Are you comfortable with the level of representation in these books?**

### **Christian Cooper/Amy Cooper incident:**

1. In discussing the Amy Cooper incident, Dr. Harvey says *“Because the reality is white Americans, without explicit anti-racist engagement in our homes, could very easily, any of us and our own children and youth, be raised in ways that would show up in that way.”*
  - **Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**
2. The discussion covers the idea of weaponizing white privilege, and how both Amy Cooper and Christian Cooper understand what it means for a white woman to call the police on a black man, even when the white woman is in the wrong. Dr. Harvey recounts that she shared the conversation she had with her children and they said *“Well, she was being racist and she was hoping the police would come and be racist with her.”*
  - **What do you think about that quote? What are other ways people ‘weaponize’ or use white privilege to their advantage? Have you ever considered this idea of ‘weaponizing’ white privilege before?**
3. Dr. Harvey also recounts that she asked her children what they would have done *“to activate (their) moral imagination, so they practice, what would (they) embody if (they) had been in this moment?”* She reminds us that there are ways to use white privilege to support people of color, such as staying until the police arrive as a witness.
  - **Although we want to build a society where unjust privilege holds no place, until then, what are ways we can help ensure white children/people are using their privilege to support and not hurt people of color? Do you agree that using white privilege in support of racial equity is possible and appropriate?**

## Anti-racist work

1. Dr. Harvey talks about the importance of modeling anti-racism for our children: speaking honestly about our own biases, addressing family and friends when they do/say something racist, supporting teachers, connecting with the organizations and leaders in our community that are creating change.
  - **What is one thing that you will work on to be a better role model for your child(ren)/ student(s) when it comes to anti-racist work?**
2. In the webinar, they also discuss that the media highlights the extreme manifestations of racism, but that what we really need to be focusing on are the everyday, pervasive, almost routine ways racism shows up in our lives.
  - **What can you do to better understand these everyday examples of racism and how can you start addressing these things when you see them? When in conversation with your child(ren)?**
3. *“One of the truths of anti-racism is the ability to make a mistake and be humble about that and learn...And so, I think we partly help our kids do that by modeling that too, modeling humility, telling them we’ve made mistakes, showing when we learn something new, when our language has changed around something.”*
  - **As you think about having this conversation with your children/students, what are you most scared/nervous about? What are you most excited about? What will be your first step?**