Is Your Turkey Cooked?

**Impact:** Youth feel supported in having conversations about racism that may come up while home for the holidays.

**Risk:** Medium

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Directions:**

- Check in using the “window”.
- Arrange chairs so they are in a half circle with an opening at one end to serve as the stage.
- **Explain** that the purpose of this activity is to give participants a chance to prepare for and process things that may come up over the thanksgiving break related to their racial justice work. Make sure to acknowledge that many folks do not observe this holiday and that the correct story is given to the group regarding indigenous history.
- **Explain** to the group that the faculty will choose players to engage in a role play in front of the team. **Explain** that some of these scenarios lend themselves to white family contexts and some are for families of color.
- **Remind** the group that racial justice work with families is a lifelong process and is full of nuance. The goal of this activity is not to completely change the hearts and minds of the people pushing back. Instead it is to look for a softening in the family member where they are open to listening in a new way as evidenced by body posture, tone or a pause.
- For each scenario allow the scene to get started and give it enough time to unfold. If a young person gets stuck, freeze the scene and let them ask for help, bring in another “family member” or exit the scene entirely and let another person try.

*The dinner table:*
Uncle: “So your dad told me you’re doing this race project...I guess it’s not good enough that we elected a Black president, huh?”

*Hanging out in cousin’s room:*
Cousin “I’m glad you’re getting paid for this, but you know White folks are never going to understand.”
Watching football:
Grandma: “What’s this I hear about racial healing? Segregation ended years ago boy…”

In the kitchen:
Stepmother: “I’m glad you are learning about racism, but remember your Irish grandmother had to work just as hard when she first came to this country… people these days get a lot of handouts.”

At a party:
Friend: “Did you hear about the shootings in Dorchester? Surprise, surprise it was a bunch of gang bangers. Hispanics are always murdering each other.”

Driving to Grandma’s house:
Mother: “I think this project is cool because there is a lot of reverse racism out there. Black people are racist towards Whites too!”

At the table:
Super progressive aunt: “I’m so glad you are doing this race work!! You know when I was your age I started a fund at my school to save the whales!”

In your room playing video games:
Uncle: “I’m so glad you are doing work on racism, really important topic! I have a question for you though, what are we going to do about elder abuse?!”

While carving the turkey:
Your dad: “Racism is never going to change unless the majority starts to care more about it, and you know that’s never going to happen!”

In front of the TV:
Older cousin: “Where is the party you are going to? Roxbury? You know that is in a bad neighborhood, right?”

At your aunt’s house:
Aunt “These anti-Trump protests are not going to solve anything. You didn’t see people protesting when Obama got elected. These people just need to accept the loss and respect their new President.”

In the kitchen
Stepfather: “I just think all this talk about race is what is causing the divide in our country. We need to get away from all these labels”.

**Things to offer the team as they are coached:**

1. **The “Mashed Potato Moment”:** when you lift your head from your plate, ask a pointed question (e.g.: If that is true, then I wonder why we still have racial inequities....etc>) and then look down and start eating again. This is a good technique to get everyone else talking so the young person doesn’t have to do the work. Particularly effective in families where communication is hard already.

2. **Families are really complicated!** We know that racism impacts white families and families of color (although it is internalized differently). We also know that racism thrives in an atmosphere of silence and it has been incredibly destructive for whites and folks of color. The ultimate goal of this activity is to get families talking. In this activity we have begun the tender process of repairing relationships and communication patterns.

**Closure and Check Out**

**Facilitator’s Notes:**

- Our supposition is that there is no such thing as reverse racism, so negative statements about communities of color made by people of color come from internalized racism. See glossary.