

# UNIT 6

## Mindfulness for Social Justice

In this unit, we explore how mindfulness helps us to address stereotypes and implicit bias. We focus on the need for compassion for ourselves and others. We use mindfulness practices to develop metacognition skills to help us to become aware of our implicit bias. Students begin to explore how they can use what they've been learning to address societal challenges such as discrimination and racism.

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When you talk about stereotypes and bias, racism and sexism with your students, it will be helpful to frame the conversation in the context of broader societal forces of power and oppression. You might point out that if a group of people has more power in our society, then stereotypes the powerful group may believe about the group that has less power may be used to harm them, either on purpose or without realizing it.

As Ijeoma Oluo says, “Racism is any prejudice against someone because of their race, when those views are reinforced by systems of power.”<sup>1</sup>

To talk constructively about sexism, it helps to understand the historical and structural power differences between men and women. To have a constructive conversation about race, it helps to understand how our society’s history of structural racial inequality impacts our lives today.

The good news is, mindfulness practice, combined with an understanding of our brains, kindness and gratitude practice, empathy and compassion, equips us to do this work in transformative ways - for ourselves and for our communities.

In this unit, we have drawn on the work and wisdom of Dena Simmons, Zaretta Hammond, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, Robin DiAngelo, Ijeoma Oluo, Tovi Scruggs-Hussein and Rhonda Magee among many others. Please see the Resources section to find links to their work.

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1 Oluo, Ijeoma, *So you want to talk about race* (Seal Press, 2019) 26.