



Day 8: What is Environmental Racism?

Despite wanting the best for their families, people with limited means are often less geographically mobile and have fewer affordable choices when deciding where to live. This has led to residents with low incomes, and often also people of color, [living in areas with high rates of air and water pollution](#) (6:07), such as in industrial areas, near highways, or in close proximity to toxic waste sites.

[Environmental racism is largely tied to residential segregation](#), meaning that people of color are often concentrated in neighborhoods that have frequently been disempowered, both politically and financially. [Neighborhoods with large non-white populations tend to have lower property](#) values with cheaper prices for industries to acquire the land, leading to greater pollution.

Communities of color are often concentrated in areas that face greater environmental harms, while the forces of residential segregation create systemic barriers that make it more difficult for individuals to move to less environmentally harmful areas.

Even if the concept of environmental racism is new to you, remember that it is a form of [systemic discrimination that has been happening in the Capital District](#) for a long time.

Did you know that residents and organizations in the community are already working to address environmental racism, disparities, and sustainability? Check out the links to the [Radix Ecological Sustainability Center](#) and [Soul Fire Farm](#) to learn more.

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Option 1: Read [The Atlantic's coverage](#) of the EPA National Center for Environmental Assessment's 2018 report that showed how people of color are more likely to experience exposure to pollutants.

Option 2: [Have you heard of environmental racism? Watch this 3-minute video](#) on how numerous systemic issues contribute to differences in exposure to potentially harmful environmental conditions.



Option 3: Check out the [Principles of Environmental Justice](#) developed at the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

Questions to Consider for Self-Reflection:

- What issues of environmental injustice exist in your community?
- What steps do you think you can take to begin addressing environmental injustice?

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