



## Intersection and Social Construct of Race and Gender *Resource Guide*

This Resource Guide was originally developed in June 2015 in response to the tragic shooting at Mother Emmanuel Church. The media coverage of the shooting brought to the surface, once again, issues of bias, both conscious and unconscious. As D&I practitioners, breaking through bias in the workplace is one of our constant challenges.

This horrific news came right on the heels of the Rachel Dolezal story. If nothing else, this story produced important and thought provoking conversations around the social constructs and intersections of race and gender in this country. The diverse range of perspectives on this issue have been incredibly compelling for us to follow here at DBP. The implications for our work as D&I practitioners are profound as we consider how one defines their own identity and how that plays out in the workplace.

This is an opportunity for you to proactively lead conversations across your various stakeholders groups- your teams, your ERG's, your leaders- to further your dialogue.

**Conversation Starters:** This set of questions is meant to provide a framework to assess the current state of your organization's construct of race and gender.

1. What are the factors that contribute to employees feeling the need to cover their true selves at work?
2. What are the implications of masking in the workplace?
3. How do the social constructs of race and gender impact the work of our affinity groups? Our D&I agenda?
4. Where is bias, conscious and unconscious, most visible in our organization and how do we move towards conscious inclusion?
5. Are there opportunities for us to support/promote the intersection of diverse identities?

### Additional Reading

Vanessa Weaver's recent Diversity Best Practice piece, [Uncovering Your Authentic Self](#), (Diversity in the News) is a timely reflection on covering and masking your true self.

In his piece [Mimicry Is Not Solidarity: Rachel Dolezal and the Creation of Antiracist White Identity](#), Tim Wise writes, "Allyship involves, at its best, working with people of color, rather than trying to speak for them."



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### Additional Reading (cont.)

[Black Like Her](#) is an examination of the social construct of race. The author, Jelani Cobb, states, "Rachel Dolezal is not black—by lineage or lifelong experience—yet I find her deceptions less troubling than the vexed criteria being used to exclude her."

In [Why Comparing Rachel Dolezal To Caitlyn Jenner Is Detrimental To Both Trans And Racial Progress](#), Darnell L. Moore states, "In attempting to pass as black, Dolezal falsely represented her identity. Trans people don't lie about their gender identities — they express their gender according to categories that reflect who they are."

[150 Years After Emancipation, Dylann Roof Is A Chilling Reminder Of How Little Has Changed](#) gives us food for thought on the progress or lack of progress we've made.