

**Exercise**  
**The Spinning of \*Isms**

Smith and colleagues (2008) identified a number of ways in which individuals spin the truth about racism. Expand your thinking about these conceptual traps to include other “\*isms” such as those based on gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, and so on. Using the table below, identify one example from your own experience, attitudes, or beliefs that reflects each of the ways in which \*isms can be spun to soften their impact or hide the reality of cultural oppression. Remember that these are cognitive tendencies that we all struggle with, so try to suspend your judgment and simply explore how your own mind can lead you down these paths.

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| Colour-blindness/<br>culture-blindness = we<br>are all human beings   |  |
| Racism, sexism,<br>heterosexism, and so<br>on, are a matter of<br>opinion (and people<br>are entitled to<br>personal opinions)  |  |
| Racism, sexism,<br>heterosexism, and so<br>on exist, but only to an<br>extent (minimizing)                                      |  |
| Racism, sexism,<br>heterosexism, and so<br>on exist, but they are<br>overrated (not that<br>extensive and<br>minimally harmful) |  |
| Racism, sexism,<br>heterosexism, and so<br>on exist, but they are<br>elsewhere (outside of<br>oneself or one’s<br>community)    |  |

## Reference

Smith, L., Constantine, M. G., Graham, S. V., & Dize, C. B. (2008). The territory ahead for multicultural competence: The 'spinning' of racism. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 39(3), 337-345. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.39.3.337>