



Libraries Talk about Race Independent Study: Engaging in Sensitive Conversations and Handling Pushback

Instructions: (Choose **one** of the following activities and share your response on the discussion board)

1) Making the Values Driven Connection

DO: Review and reflect on organizational values. Think of your values as your guide to why sometimes sensitive conversations about race, equity, diversity and inclusion are important.

-List each value and the connection diversity, equity and inclusion.

-Articulate what each value causes each person to think, do or be relative to diversity, equity and inclusion.

-Discuss how the values help create a culture of inclusion.

-Share how the organizational values align with or disconnect from your personal values

2) Setting the Stage for Why We Should Talk About Race

DO: Discuss the following question:

-Under which circumstances do I feel more or less comfortable discussing issues of race and ethnicity?

DO: Reflect and write down your own thoughts for the following statements:

-Talking about race is challenging because ...

-Talking about race is necessary because ...

-Talking about race is beneficial because...

3) Handling Conversational Pushback (Pick **one** "Pushback")

Pushback 1: I don't see color. I don't need to talk about race.

People typically make this statement from a place of good intention. However, the words, "I don't see color," can communicate racism. It is not racist to see a person's race or ethnicity. It is a reality. We proclaim colorblindness as a way to say we are inclusive—we're not racist. The impact of ignoring or avoiding differences often serves to additional confusion and frustration across racial and ethnic lines. Not talking about race or ethnicity doesn't create safety or neutrality. It often results in further isolating or

excluding individuals who are not part of the majority culture. Rather than avoiding conversations about race, honoring and celebrating differences should be encouraged.

DO: Watch this YouTube video, Color Brave TED Talk

– https://www.ted.com/talks/mellody_hobson_color_blind_or_color_brave?language=en

Question: What does it mean to be color brave? (Respond to the question, reply to the responses of others.)

Pushback 2: Talking about race will divide us even more. It's not helpful for building our team.

DO: Discuss the following questions (Pick 1 or 2 questions to discuss and respond to others)

- What barriers exist that prevent people from discussing race and ethnicity?
- Why do people assume that differences will be divisive?
- Does avoiding conversations about our differences perpetuate assumptions, stereotypes, and biases?
- What topics are taboo in the workplace? Why? Is it helpful or harmful?
- What mindset should we cultivate to create space for listening and understanding about life and work experiences that are different from our own? What is the value in doing so for our organization?

Pushback 3: If I say something, I'll be labeled a racist. It's not safe for me as a white person to have conversations about race.

DO: Discuss the following questions (Pick 1 or 2 questions to discuss and respond to others)

- What makes me fearful about having conversations around race? Is it fear of hurting someone, or fear of looking like a bad person?
- What would it take for you to feel safe sharing your thoughts, opinions and ideas?
- Positive contact between diverse people can lead to less prejudice and more positive, cooperative outcomes. How can we create space for people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to feel supported while also creating transparent space for white people to freely share without fear?
- Learn into learning versus worrying about or looking for offense (regardless of your race or ethnic). Are you willing to risk the awkwardness to have greater understanding about the experiences of those who are different than you?
- Are you receptive and attune to the unique perspectives and experiences of other people?