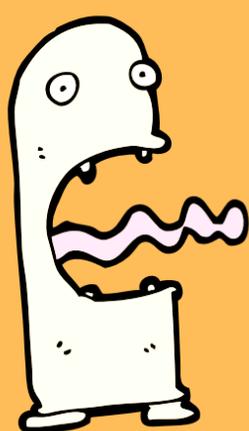


Ten Tips for Talking about Race

THINGS TO REMEMBER. THINGS TO PRACTICE.

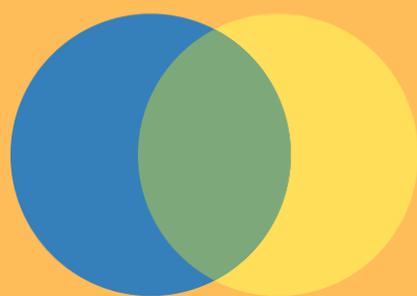
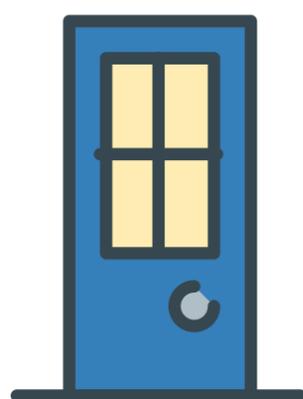


1.) NORMALIZE DISCUSSING RACE

Use the terms. Reference the ideas. The more you do so, the less uncomfortable it will feel to talk about race.

2.) FIND MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS

Look for places where others will be somewhat willing to enter, where they have some skin in the game, and where they can see how they might personally benefit from the discussion. Remember that racism and white supremacy negatively affect everyone, and consider how you might help them see that as well.



3.) BE HUMBLE

You're also a work-in-progress, and you've made mistakes in the past. You've been on your own journey. At some point in the future, you'll hopefully look back and see how much you didn't know at this point. We're all on this journey together.

4.) PREPARE & PRACTICE

Know what you're talking about. Practice, practice, practice. Don't be sloppy.



5.) BE CLEAR

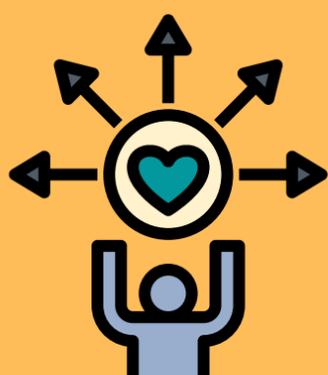
Offer sharp and clear definitions. Don't throw around terms that someone else might not know—especially if you're throwing them as a way of leveraging power over someone. Check for understanding during the conversation—in a way that's not paternalistic.

Racism: A system of oppression that emerges from beliefs that one race is superior to another based on biological characteristics. Racism is fueled by the ideology of white supremacy, which designates white people as superior to people of color. In racist systems, white and light-skinned people are granted unearned privileges or advantages by society just because of their race. Social attitudes, actions, and structures that oppress, exclude, limit, and discriminate against individuals and groups.



Ten Tips for Talking about Race

THINGS TO REMEMBER. THINGS TO PRACTICE.



6.) MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN BLAME AND RESPONSIBILITY

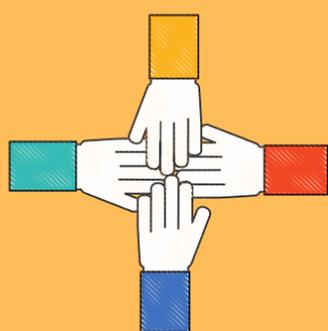
The way things are is not our fault, but it's our responsibility to clean up the mess we're in because many of us are benefiting from the privileges granted to us because of our race, class, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, and so on.

7.) BE CLEAR ABOUT PURPOSE

Have conversations about race to help others grow and meet students' needs, to help others feel more whole, and to help our world heal—not so that you can feel righteous and powerful.



8.) BUILD RELATIONSHIP



Build trust. If your purpose is to help someone grow and gain insight, then the space in which that conversation happens needs to be safe-enough. We don't need to aim for a "safe" space—that's a subjective evaluation around which there'll be disagreement. The purported lack of a "safe space" is also often used as an excuse for why we can't have conversations about race. Safe-enough doesn't mean comfortable.

9.) EMBRACE EMOTIONS

Invite, accept, and acknowledge emotions—your own and those of others. There's no way we can (or should) have conversations about race without having any emotions. Emotions can be our partners, a resource, and our teachers. Tears are not the problem—it's how we respond to those tears that can be an issue. And remember: Systems of oppression don't want you to have emotions, so if you reclaim and accept them, you're actively rebuking these systems.



10.) SOLICIT FEEDBACK



Ask for feedback on any conversations that you facilitate around race, reflect on how your facilitation and leadership, own any messy moments that you are responsible for, and commit to the process.

White supremacy: The belief system that underlies the concept of whiteness—a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and individuals of color by white individuals and nations of the European continent for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

