

Talking about Race and Racism: Skills for Navigating Difficult Conversations *Focus on Empowered Speaking*

This worksheet contains statements that are **purposely triggering**. Please take a moment to prepare yourself to read these.

1. **Please introduce yourselves to each other. (2 minutes)**

2. **Choose a trigger statement to work with. (No more than 2 minutes)**

- We shouldn't be renaming things, even if they are named after people who supported racism. We need to keep our history.
- I'm not racist... I have plenty of Black friends.
- I treat everyone the same. I don't see color.
- I don't see why to emphasize that Black lives matter. All lives matter.
- Slavery happened so long ago, they should be over it by now.
- Other: _____

3. **Designate who will be Person A, B, and C for Round 1.**

Persons A and B will be involved in the role play. Person C will set a timer for 6 minutes for the first round, read the instructions out loud, and help keep A and B on track.

Person A: You start the role play by saying your group's selected triggering statement to Person B. You continue to respond/react in a way that feels true to the character you are playing. **You do not have to bring any particular skills to the table.** However, even though you are playing a character you might not agree with, please keep an open heart to your character; **do not make him/her a caricature.**

Person B: You are the one "doing" the empowered speaking practice at each step of the conversation.

Person C: Please read the directions aloud, step by step, for everyone as A and B do the practice, and help the group stay in the role play.

(Instructions continued on the next page)

Beginning the Role Play

Person A: Say the triggering statement to Person B.

Person B: [Empowered speaking] Say some version of the following: “It sounds like you and I are thinking about this differently. Are you open to hearing my thoughts about it?”

Person A: Agree to hear Person B.

Person B continues with empowered speech. Ground your speech in the things you value most. After you have spoken *briefly*, ask Person A for a reflection of what he/she heard you say.

Person A: Attempt a reflection, but you don’t have to get it “right.”

Person B: [Empowered speech.] Thank Person A.

If the reflection was accurate, add anything you would like.

If the reflection was off, say, “I’d like to try again, because I can see that I was not clear,” and add what you want them to hear. **Ask again for a reflection.**

Person A: Reflect.

Person B: [Empowered speech.] Thank Person A. Add anything you would like and ask for another reflection.

Person A: Reflect.

Person B: Thank person A and make a request.

Give this first pairing 5-6 minutes,

Then have everybody switch roles.

Ideally, each person will have a chance to play all three roles, Person A, B, and C.

If you have time after the role plays, please chat about your experience in the roles.
