

3 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

BEFORE ENGAGING WITH OTHERS



What is your truth?

What is your truth? How do you see the issue of race play out in our country, community and schools? What experiences have you have growing up and as an adult that have informed your view of race? Has that view shifted over time? Why? Why not?

Before we start any dialogue, it's important to check in with ourselves and understand what experiences (both positive and negative) we are bringing to the discussion. This is our lens through which we see and understand our world. When our core truth is clear to us, only then can we evaluate our understanding and begin to ask more questions.

What do you value?



What do you value? How do your beliefs about your students, your culture and/or your faith influence what you value? What results do you want to see for our nation's students and our public schools? How do these values influence your perspectives on race?

Our values form the core of how we relate to our nation's problems and opportunities. When we understand our own values and priorities we are better positioned to enter sensitive discussions with a set of shared beliefs.



What's your privilege?

What's your privilege? What are the ways that you might have advantages over other groups of people (this could be by your race, gender, socio-economic status, immigration status, etc.)

Each of us (yes, even the most disenfranchised) has an identity that benefits from the exploitation of another group, so understanding our own privilege is essential to dismantling oppression. Having privilege also doesn't mean that you haven't experienced oppression in other ways. But without awareness of the ways we have structural advantages in our lives, we cannot understand all of the ways privilege and oppression intersect through issues like Institutional Racism.

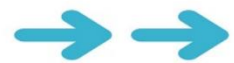


Get more information at:
Race Matters: How to Talk About Race,
Annie E. Casey Foundation.

3 TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH OTHERS

ON INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

1 Lead with your values



Lead with your values. It is easier to find common ground on values statements than on prescriptive solutions. Don't try to persuade people that their beliefs are wrong. Instead, find a value focus that is equally dear and compelling to them. The one value that research shows as promising is "opportunity." This allows us to discuss the policies, programs, and practices where access to opportunities are lodged. Additionally this mutes either-or debate about whether personal responsibility or systems are to blame, since opportunity goes hand in hand with personal responsibility. Since this debate is off the table, the focus can be on barriers to opportunity, and the evidence can highlight how similarly situated individuals encounter very different circumstances in terms of opportunities. (E.g., white children with college-eligible academic performance enter college at higher rates than African American and Latino children with college-eligible academic performance.)

Keep it Results Focused



Keep it Results Focused. Keep the conversation focused on the results people want to achieve (e.g., all children graduate from high school) rather than who's to blame for present inequities. Of course, figuring out how to get the desired results will require a focus on what's to blame; that discussion can be directed to policies, programs, and practices that need to be changed.



Narrative before Numbers

Narrative before Numbers. If people see numbers that don't fit the model they use in thinking about race, they'll reject the numbers. For example, suppose you present statistics about disparities in juvenile detention that show that even when youth of different racial groups behave the same way, African American, Latino, and Native American youth are disproportionately detained compared to their white counterparts. People wed to the dominant model of the self-making person will still attribute the explanation for those numbers to some unspecified fault of the youth of color themselves. Their dominant narrative trumped your well-researched numbers.



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