



Toolkit 1

THE RACE CONVERSATION

Breakthrough Diversity



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Foreword

In the last few months after the injustice we all felt for George Floyd, there was an almighty rush for all to be seen to be saying and doing the right thing. Organisations have shown their solidarity. A constant flow of focus groups, panels and open debate within walls and behind closed doors

The outcry, 'this is not right', 'there needs to be justice', 'how can I help', 'what can we do to make things better'. But behind it all we still hear, I am uncomfortable to have a conversation about race, for fear I may say the wrong thing and offend or upset. I do not feel qualified to have open discussions about 'Race'

This Toolkit has been designed to start and keep the conversation going. It is intended to take the uncomfortableness away and bring the 'Race conversation' to the fore front and position us all in a comfortable place, to discuss race

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**'Your Best Self is when you Bring your
Whole Self to the Table'**

How do I start the Conversation?

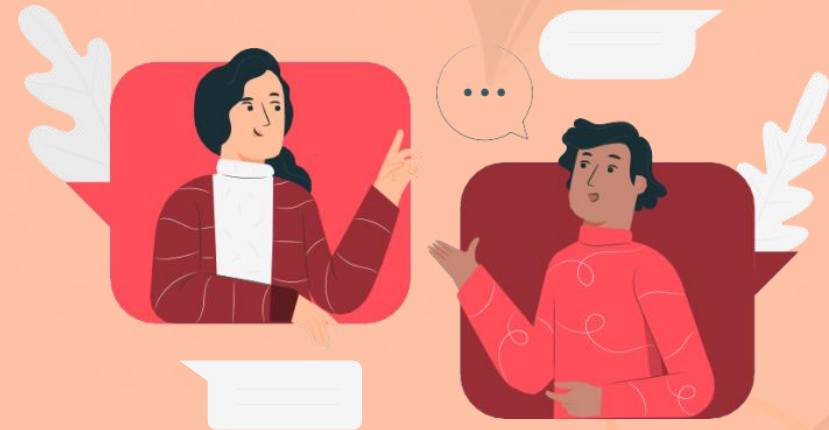
We all have topics in our lives that we find difficult to discuss. Some may be about money, or relationships and emotions, sexual orientation, or our colour and race. Having these conversations openly with your colleagues, family and friends; in reality, can be far easier and better than carrying them as inner thoughts, never to be released. Allowing our minds to play tricks can create a wall, that does not need to be there. For the purpose of this Toolkit we will focus on one topic 'Race' and to be specific the 'Black Race'. There will be a further series of Toolkits that will cover 'Race' in all its forms and ethnic minority groups

For some of us, having discussions about race may seem unfamiliar and uncomfortable, maybe due to our unconscious biases, our up-bringing, experiences and surroundings. Our close networks or lack of 'Black' friends. Whatever the reason It is important especially in the workplace that we address these feelings. In so doing we can create an environment, where colour blindness does not cloud our judgement and all can benefit, share and understand different perspectives and experiences. Afterall we are just having.... 'A Conversation'

Let us Prepare to have the Conversation and Overcome any Discomfort

Below are some suggestions

Do not Single me out



Racial equality and equity; is everyone's responsibility, so why lean on me to make this easier by singling me out, to give you the answers

Invite everyone in the team to participate. This will take away any awkwardness and uncomfortable feelings, that all attendees may be experiencing. They may be more comfortable expressing their thoughts and asking questions, as part of a wider group

Be mindful though, that we are not all the same and ask the group if there is anyone, who would prefer to have this conversation in private

Am I Positioning this right; is this the right atmosphere and environment?



Approach the conversation with empathy and respect. Ask yourself what it is that I am trying to achieve, how do I come across; am I preaching, or acting as a saviour, or just being an ally, a sponsor or mentor. Do I appear open, with no hidden agenda?

Acknowledge that it may be hard for some individuals to be open and have discussion about 'Race'. Be prepared for that and do not push, let people participate in their own time

Ensure that you put everyone at ease. Treat them as individuals and emphasise that they are not obliged to participate. They can take part when they feel comfortable to do so

This will show that you respect their feelings and it also encourages a more productive, collaborative and open discussion. Keep the door open, do not just tick the box and walk away

Be willing to listen and learn. Do not use the time as an opportunity to discuss your own experiences and compare. Do not feel offended by what is being said. Ask the person to provide more detail, if something has been said, which needs clarity or concerns you. Sometimes different tone and words may have a completely different meaning to what you may be thinking or registering

Everyone will have different thoughts and perspectives, even people from the same cultural background

Do not interrupt, let everyone involved have their say, remember we are all learning together and the more we hear and learn, the richer the conversation and outcome

Are you Listening?



Confidentiality is Key



Create a safe space for people to speak openly, let the group know that everything they say will be treated in confidence and no one should share what has been discussed outside of the group

If an issue is raised that is of a serious nature, and needs to be escalated to HR, you should take appropriate steps to address the issue in a considered and sensitive manner. This is to ensure that both the individual and company are appropriately protected

I'm not OK with this and feeling Anxious It is OK not to be OK. To support and ensure that the wellbeing of the group is being addressed, ask your colleagues how they are feeling on a regular basis

After your initial group conversation or even prior, some individuals may be feeling anxious, that they may or in the meeting have said too much. They may even think that what they say will reflect badly on them; their current position and future career in the organization

Look out for the signs, is a team member being unusually quiet, or taking a lot of time away from the office. Has their work deteriorated? Do they no longer participate in group conversations or attend group meetings

Current events can impact on our wellbeing and affect our day to day lives, BE AWARE!!!

Be available to give support and give guidance based on their required needs

If your organisation has a Wellbeing support mechanism in place, ensure that this is made available to the individual. This will allow them to get the assistance and guidance needed with confidence and in their own time

Language and Tone

To stop concerns around using the right language and tone; getting in the way of a meaningful conversation, see the Glossary in this toolkit for help with terminology

Ask your colleagues for their preferred terms and try to use these during the conversation.

If a term or word is used that you do not understand, ask, if the intention and tone is right, the response should be the same

Actions Speak Louder than words

If there are actions that come out of the discussions, ensure that you follow through and communicate the outcomes. This will encourage the individuals to continue having the debates and be open; if they can see that the issues and concerns are being addressed and well managed

Do not be afraid to be open about what can or cannot be done, be prepared to manage expectations in a fair, constructive and sensitive way. Do not shy away from any issue or subject unless it is of an offensive or illegal nature. Do not make false promises



HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY,
you will gain more credibility and continuous support

**'Encourage each other to be open and frank. Bring ones 'Best Self' every day to work.
Be courageous, honest and true as this can lead to the most effective, inspiring and important outcomes'**

Your Quick Check List - The Dos and Don'ts



The Race conversation is everyone's responsibility

Create a safe place to hold these discussions

Listen to what is being said

Language and tone may differ because of culture

Confidentiality is key

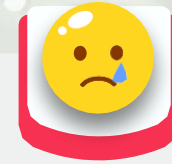
It is OK, NOT be OK, consider other's feelings

Share any mental health details with your team, in case they need additional support

Actions speak louder than words

Be honest and manage expectations

Learn together and educate yourself



Do not single any one out, unless they want to have a private conversation

An unprepared discussion, can make the person feel uncomfortable and awkward

Do not interrupt or fill the time with your own stories

Do not be offended, if unsure, ask for clarification. if the intent is right then the response should be the same

Do not share what has been discussed, outside of the group, unless it is of a serious nature and needs to be escalated to HR

Do not ignore individual feelings and sensitivities, ALWAYS CHECK

Do not assume that all is ok, some of the group may need support. By sharing, they can connect with these groups privately

Follow through with any agreed actions. It will show that these conversations are being taken seriously

Do not shy away from an awkward conversation. Honesty is the best policy

Do not ignore some of the education and learning provided. After all, we are in this together

GLOSSARY

Make your conversation informative and more comfortable, familiarise yourself with the below terms

Ally : is a person who stands up and speaks out for an individual or group that is being targeted and/or discriminated against

Advocate : A person who publicly recommends or supports a cause or policy

Bias : is a preconceived opinion about something or someone

Champion : is someone who publicly fights for and defends an aim or principle, such as the rights of a group of people

Direct Discrimination : where a person is treated less favourably than someone else because of a specific characteristic, such as; gender, gender identity and expression, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or age

Ethnicity : has to do with group identification. Individuals can choose the ethnic group(s) with which they most identify for example, Hispanic, African, Celtic

Equality : is about ensuring that every person has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and abilities

Equity : is about fairness, opportunity, access and advancement of individuals, whilst aiming to eliminate and identify barriers that prevents the full participation of some groups

Gaslighting : A form of psychological manipulation that leads the victim to question their own sense of reality in relation to racism or another form of harassment. This often includes dismissing an individual's experiences or memories

Indirect discrimination : where a policy that is meant to apply equally to all individuals, puts some people with a specific personal characteristic at a disadvantage

Institutional racism : is that which, covertly or overtly, sits within the policies, procedures, operation and culture in the workplace

Intersectionality : Intersectionality recognises that diverse groups can often be disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other personal characteristics

Meritocracy : is an elite group of people whose progress is based on their ability and talent and not class, privilege or wealth

Micro aggression : are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards ethnic minorities

Macro aggression : are deliberate and purposeful hostile, derogatory, negative racial insults or actions towards ethnic minorities or racial groups that are meant to create debilitating and traumatic results

Prejudice : is preconceived ideas or feelings, that can be unreasonable and of a hostile nature, towards an ethnic, racial, social or religious group

Privilege : refers to an unearned advantage or entitlement based upon an individual's characteristics, including (but not limited to) their ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or religious belief. For example, all white people will benefit from and take for granted certain advantages because of their skin colour. Having white privilege does not mean that an individual has not faced struggles - simply that race has not been a factor that has made their life harder. Not having wealth or other forms of privilege does not cancel out white privilege

Race : is a grouping of individuals with shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society. The term race is widely used in legal and political contexts for example, White, Black, Asian etc

Racism : is a racial or cultural belief, negative stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination supported intentionally or unintentionally by institutional power and authority used to the advantage of one racial group against another
Stereotypes: are beliefs or expectations about characteristics associated with a group of people

Sponsor : an individual who supports and plays a key role in promoting, advocating and shaping a person or project work

Stereotypes : often consist of descriptions of traits, abilities and interests, physical characteristics, and expected role behaviours

Visible minorities : is a person or group visibly not one of the majority race in a given population



BOOKS

[Stories for Boys Who Dare to be...](#)

[23 Books to help kids](#)

[You can do anything](#)

[Mirror me write](#)

[Books for children about race](#)



ARTICLES

[Johnny Henry Smythe](#)



VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0w3o8uHVkKQ&feature=youtu.be>

EDUCATE YOURSELF

GRASSROOTS - CHILDRENS CORNER



1. Anti-Racist Baby - Author by Ibram X. Kendi, illustrated by Ashley Lukashevsky

AntiRacist Baby is a picture book that encourages all parents to uproot racism in their families

2. I Love My Hair! by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley, illustrated E. B. Lewis

Sometimes the most important thing for a child to see is some version of themselves represented on the page. Throughout this book a girl named Keyana goes through the journey of learning to love her special hair,

3. All Are Welcome, by Alexandra Penfold, illustrated by Suzanne Kaufman

This best-selling picture book imagines a school where all kids are welcomed with open arms, regardless of colour or race

4. Young gifted and Black by Oliver Bonas

Meet 52 icons of colour from the past and present in this collection of stories about changemakers to inspire and empower the next generation.



<https://www.16personalities.com/personality-types>
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>

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