

create a culture of inclusion

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

LeadingAge®
New York

Dialogue Toolkit

identifying barriers and finding solutions



Introduction

How to Have Hard Conversations about Race at Work

This toolkit is designed to help members engage in conversations that are challenging in the workplace. Issues of inequity that exist either at work or outside of work can have a significant impact on staff. Leaders and staff should strive to be empathetic and address these concerns with a constructive, nonjudgmental approach. Although these conversations can be difficult and may be new to having in organizations, this toolkit provides two approaches to guide you in talking with your teams when difficult issues of diversity or inequity are present in the workplace. It's important to note, staff should always follow organizational policy if issues appear to be discriminative.

The BRAVE dialogue framework was developed by Enrica N. Ruggs, assistant professor of management and the director of the Center for Workplace Diversity and Inclusion in the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at the University of Memphis, and Derek R. Avery, the C.T. Bauer Chair of Inclusive Leadership in the Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston.

*Footnote: The second dialogue tool for having effective conversations at work is PAIRS – developed by Kathy Obear, Ed.D., www.drkathyobear.com, kathy@drkathyobear.com



BRAVE

The BRAVE framework provides organizations with a foundation that is based on building trust and establishing practices that support an inclusive, transparent, and equitable organizational culture.

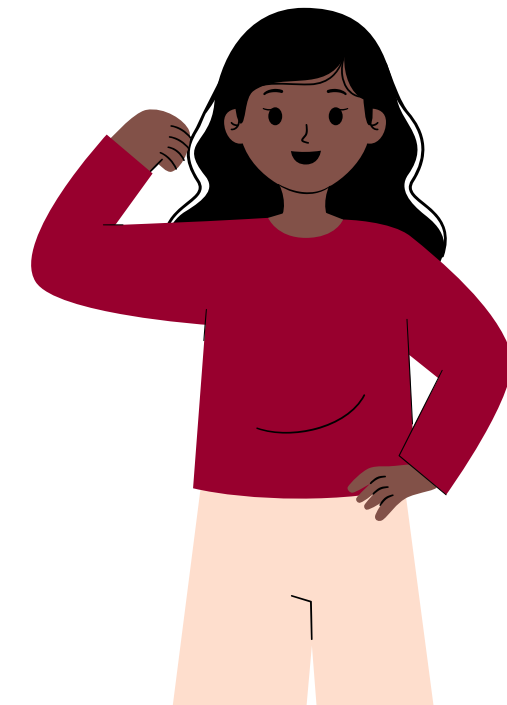
B-BUILD the intention, focus, and safety needed to have honest conversations about race.

Organizational suggestions

- Identify staff members in the organization who can hear feedback / complaints of inequity or discrimination in the workplace.

Resources

- Team Building Exercises
- Diversity Awareness Exercises
- Cultural Competency Training



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R- RESPECT

the sensitivity of the topic while encouraging / inspiring people to go beyond the superficial.

Organizational suggestions

- Support and fund the development of DEI committees, DEI initiatives and provide employee and management education on DEI topics.
- Support the initiative / development of employee resource groups that allow open conversations.



Resources

- Respectful Conversation Starters
- Unconscious Bias Training - Consider the perspective of others who may experience the team/organizational culture
- Sensitivity Training - Be kind and generous.



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A-ACKNOWLEDGE the uncomfortable realities of the past and present.

Organizational suggestions

- Acknowledge DEI with statement in Employee Handbook, website, and other visible areas.
- Require annual DEI awareness training as part of annual employee training.
- Use the PAIRS framework when having conversations with staff and teams.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Resources
<https://www.leadingageny.org/topics/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

Resources

- **The Privilege Walk**
- **Inclusive Leadership Training**



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V – VALIDATE the experiences of your staff with different racial and cultural backgrounds.

Organizational suggestions

- Schedule discussion time for open conversations about DEI.
- Use the PAIRS framework to validate feelings of staff and other teams.

Resources

- I Am But I Am Not Exercise
- Active Listening Training
- Reflective Supervision



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E-EMPHASIZE

how your organization is prioritizing goals around racial equity and inclusion for all.

Organizational suggestions

- Ensure DEI statements are embedded in organizational policies.
- Be intentional with seeking diverse candidates for open leadership positions and open board seats.
- Create equitable executive hiring practices.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Resources
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Resources

- **NonProfit HR Resources**
- **LeadingAge New York Toolkits**
- **LeadingAge New York DEI Page**



PAIRS

The PAIRS framework provides both managers and staff with a resource when engaged in difficult conversations about race, current or past racial injustices or discussions amongst team members that express differences of opinions.

[See examples here!](#)



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PAIRS – developed by Kathy Obear, Ed.D., www.drkathyobear.com , kathy@drkathyobear.com

P – PAN the environment and yourself; describe what you notice or engage others based on what you see (Pay Attention Now).

Suggestions

- I'm noticing what I'm feeling...anyone else?
- I noticed how quiet everyone got; I'm wondering what is going on for folks?
- It seems some people were impacted by that statement; am I right?
- I'm noticing you're speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- I'm noticing that people get interrupted as they try to share...
- You seemed to have a reaction to what I just said...



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A-ASK about the specifics behind the person's comment or behavior.

Suggestions

- Could you say more about that...Tell me more...
- Can you give us an example of what you're saying...
- Can you give me some background on this situation...
 - How were you impacted when...What were you feeling when...
- Help me understand what you mean by that.
- What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Can you help me understand what your intent was when you said/did...



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– INTERRUPT the dynamics.

Suggestions

- Let's slow down the conversation and talk about what just happened.
- Let's take a breath.
- We are not engaging according to our group norms.
- I'm going to interrupt and try a different approach to this conversation.



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R – RELATE to the person or their comment/behavior.

Suggestions

- I relate to what you're saying...I have felt the same way.
- I remember a time when I did the exact same thing.
- How do others relate to that comment?
- What you are saying seems to relate to what so-and-so just said.



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S – SHARE about yourself. Self-disclose with a story or example; your feelings in the moment; the impact of a comment or behavior, etc.

Suggestions

- When I hear you say that, I think/feel...
- Just last week... I remember when I...
- I was socialized to believe...
- I'm beginning to feel...
- My heart aches as you tell that story...
- I notice I'm feeling a little triggered...



Thank You for Helping Create a More Inclusive Workplace.



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