



Ten Tips for Creating a Safe Space for Honest Dialogue about Race

Prepared for Heights Community Congress

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1. Recognize that we all have prejudice (preconceived ideas about others) that can damage others (and ourselves).
2. Invite diverse voices to the conversation, preferably some who are knowledgeable and/or experienced. Ask, “Who is missing in this conversation?”
3. Come with a willingness to share and to learn—ask questions out of genuine interest.
4. Focus and limit our conversations until trust increases (sometimes it is better to agree not to talk about specific issue/problem right away).
5. Seek true dialogue:
 - Do not try to persuade others of a position; do seek to understand others and their views
 - Suspend judgment, become curious, and search for understanding
 - Explore your doubts as well as your certainties
6. Examine your assumptions by checking in with others rather than hiding or defending them.
7. Acknowledge and be open to seeing weaknesses in your own view while looking for insights and truth in the views of others.
8. Speak from personal experience (use I statements) and do not generalize about your group or another group.
9. Be open to a change of heart as well as a change in thinking.
10. Follow the Four Cs (prepared for Heights Community Congress from Davis Management Consultants):

CARING - start on time, speak one at a time, give each other equal opportunity to be heard, respect each others right to an opinion, Seek first to understand then to be understood. Discourage side conversations.

CANDOR - be open and honest in your disclosure of information.

COMMITMENT - Jump out of your comfort zone. Be willing to try new things. {*The only thing worse than not knowing, is not wanting to know. -African Proverb-*} Attempt to participate fully.

COMMUNITY - working toward open communication and building unity among us.

Suggested Basic Ground Rules for Dialogues

- We will respect confidentiality, committing to not share sensitive information outside the group.
- We will share time equitably to ensure the participation of all.
- We will listen carefully and not interrupt.
- We will keep an open mind and be open to learning.
- We will not be disrespectful of the person speaking even when we do not agree with the views being expressed.

Adapted from the US Community Relations Service