

HOW TO HAVE COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

“ People who are skilled at dialogue do their best to make it safe for everyone to add their meaning to the shared pool - even ideas that at first glance appear controversial, wrong, or at odds with their own beliefs. Now, obviously they don't agree with every idea; they simply do their best to ensure that all ideas find their way into the open.

Kerry Patterson / Crucial Conversations

HOW TO CREATE SPACE

- **LEADING** with vulnerability and being willing to share your experience
- **LISTEN** and encourage the group to listen to one another as well
- **ALLOW** people time and space to share their thoughts without interruption
- **ASK** follow-up questions for clarity if necessary
- **SHARE** what is valuable about someone's question or comment
- **ACKNOWLEDGE** that it is okay not to have all the answers
- **INVITE** people into the conversation who have not spoken
- **BRAINSTORM** ways to participate as part of the solution
- **THANK** the group for participating

START THE CONVERSATION

- How are you feeling about everything that's going on in our culture right now?
- Where are you struggling?
- What do you think I need to know?

We have reached a clear inflection point in our country's history of racism. The video-recorded murder of George Floyd catalyzed a movement that demands a social justice reckoning the likes of which we have not seen before. Humans of all stripes are taking to the streets, speaking out on social media, and pushing the status quo to the breaking point. Your student-athletes are going to want to talk about it!

Conversations about racial justice and equity are difficult but they are also critical, and they can be transformative. We must create respectful space and opportunity for our young people to talk with us and with each other. We must examine our own biases and do our own work before we can openly listen to our student-athletes, especially when they say things we may not understand or agree with.

RESOURCES

READ...

“Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High,” Kerry Patterson

LISTEN...

11 Vox podcast episodes give more context to protests happening across America
<https://www.vox.com/2020/6/18/21294263/anti-racism-police-violence-protests-vox-podcasts>

HOW TO TALK ABOUT... ALLYSHIP



Ally is not a noun. Where allyship is concerned, like with baseball, you're only as good as your current stats.

Kent Alexander / Anti-racism Educator

HOW TO BE A BETTER ALLY

- **UNDERSTAND** your privilege and use it for good
- **EDUCATE** yourself about different identities and experiences
- **THINK** about at least one thing you **CAN** do - Learn and practice ally skills
- **CHALLENGE** your own discomfort and prejudices
- When helping a single person, **STEP BACK** and think about systemic changes as well
- **PAY ATTENTION** to your motivations. Focus on what will authentically support others in need

START THE CONVERSATION

- What does being an ally mean to you?
- Why do you think allyship is important?

Today, as we sat in silence for 9 minutes...I watched this black man lift his fist high into the air. About halfway through I watched his arm grow weak and his elbow start to drop. This white man must have noticed it too because he moved beside him and lifted up his arm to support this black man's elbow so he could continue to hold it high for the remainder of the 9 minutes. This is allyship. This is love.

~ Kayla Bruegger, Denver



If we are going to create true equity and justice, we must encourage and challenge folks who are not oppressed to stand with their peers. Engaging in the struggle as an ally does not mean that you fully understand what it feels like to be oppressed, but that you are willing to carry the load with those who are. In particular, white allies can work with other white people to create much needed change in areas people of color may not have access to, i.e. eliminating prejudice and discrimination and fighting oppression. They can also amplify the voices of their peers.

It is important to understand performative allyship and how that can be counterproductive to being an effective ally for marginalized groups and people. Finally, understand that being an ally is a journey, and we all make mistakes. Don't let that hold you back from taking action.

RESOURCES

READ...

"So You Want to Talk About Race," Ijeoma Oluo
"Better Allies," Karen Catlin

LISTEN...

"That's Not How That Works"
https://www.nohowthatworks.com/?r_done=1

HOW TO TALK ABOUT... EQUITY



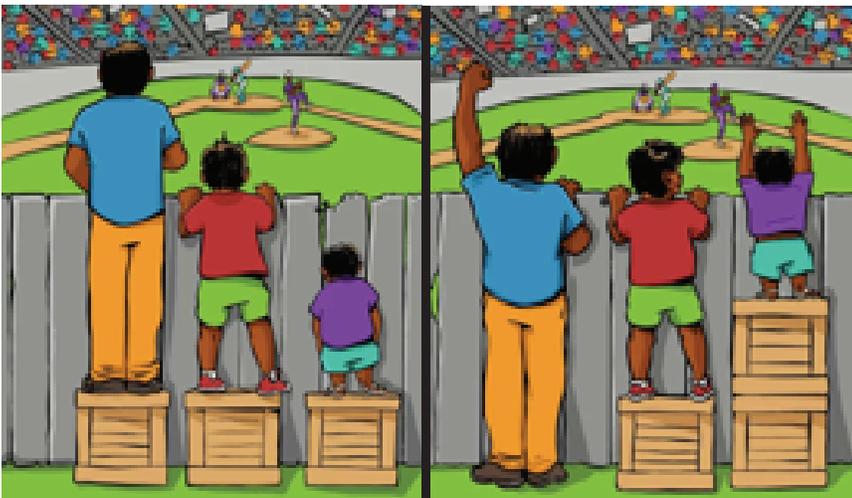
Equity is the only acceptable goal.

Paul Farmer / Medical Anthropologist and Physician

START THE CONVERSATION

- How do you see inequality play out in your life?
- How would you explain the difference between equity and equality?
- What do you think needs to be done to create a more equitable society? Team?

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?



Equity is defined as fairness or justice in the way people are treated (Merriam-Webster). Most social justice movements are aimed at the pursuit of equity. Despite that reality, there is often confusion about the difference between equity and equality that impacts the movement.

Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality is treating everyone the same. Equality seeks to increase fairness, but it is only effective if everyone needs the same thing. Equity seems unfair because some people may get more than others in an effort to create balanced opportunity. A common example of the equity vs. equality dichotomy is that equality is giving everyone a pair of shoes while equity is giving everyone a pair of shoes that fits.

RESOURCES

READ...

"12 Resources to Help You Understand and Promote Racial Equity"

<https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/reading-list-promote-racial-equity>

WATCH...

"Equity and Equality"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCS7Rus4_-Y

HOW TO TALK ABOUT... INTERSECTIONALITY

“ If we aren't intersectional, some of us, the most vulnerable, are going to fall through the cracks.

Kimberle Williams Crenshaw / Lawyer and Leading Scholar of Critical Race Theory

TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

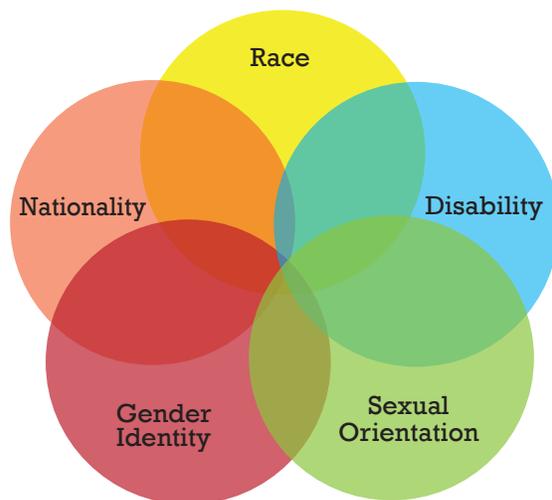
CRITICAL RACE THEORY: Provides critical analysis of race and racism from a legal point of view.

<https://spacrs.wordpress.com/what-is-critical-race-theory/>

START THE CONVERSATION

- What are some important aspects of your identity?
- Are there any identities you hold that people may not immediately recognize?
- How can you utilize the theory of intersectionality in your life? Suggestions: recognize difference, avoid oversimplified language, analyze the space you occupy, seek other points of view, show up

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?



Intersectionality is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise. (Oxford Dictionary)

Put simply, intersectionality is the recognition that most people have multiple identities that affect their life experience. Too often conversations center one aspect of a person's identity while pushing others to the background, i.e. talking about race but not gender. This oversight often causes harm and contributes to oppressive attitudes or experiences.

RESOURCES

LISTEN...

“Intersectionality Matters!”

<https://aapf.org/podcast>

WATCH...

“The Urgency of Intersectionality”

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

“Intersectionality 101”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2lyYjE>

HOW TO TALK ABOUT... RACISM

“ The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it's the only way forward.

Ijeoma Oluo / Writer

TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

ANTI-RACISM: Conscious action to address racism in all its forms.

MICROAGGRESSION: Statement or action that conveys hostile, derogatory or negative racial messages or assumptions about a group of people, particularly marginalized groups; may or may not be intentional.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho_WW7M5E3A

START THE CONVERSATION

- Is just not being a racist enough?
- What does being colorblind mean to you?
- What are some ways you can practice anti-racist behavior?

RESOURCES

READ...

“How To Be an Antiracist,” Ibram X. Kendi

“So You Want to Talk About Race,” Ijeoma Oluo

“Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria,” Beverly Daniel Tatum

LISTEN...

15 Informative podcasts to learn about race relations in America

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/entertainment/g32816869/podcasts-about-race/>

WATCH...

“How Can We Win?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llci8MVh8J4>

“Our collective house is burning down, and we're tip-toeing around afraid to say “Fire.” This is how Dr. Allan Johnson describes our collective reluctance to use clear language when dealing with a range of social justice issues. Racism is one of those concepts, and we must actively seek to understand it if we are going to address it. Racism is a powerful system of social and institutional power that creates false hierarchies of human value based on ethnicity and skin color. It is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities. Racism's logic extends beyond race to how we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class, culture, and geography, and even changes the way we see and value ourselves.

Increasingly, conversations are challenging participants to think about what it means to be actively anti-racist. If we are going to address our cultural issues in any impactful way, we must all be consciously working toward a society where all members are safe, valued and treated equally.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT... WHITE PRIVILEGE

“ Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do.

Peggy McIntosh / Educator and Activist

TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

WHITE FRAGILITY: State in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. <https://robindiangelo.com/publications/>

PODCAST on White Fragility:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/17/879136931/interrupt-the-systems-robin-diangelo-on-white-fragility-and-anti-racism>

START THE CONVERSATION

- Why do you think the term “white privilege” makes some people so uncomfortable?
- How do we have conversations about white privilege that invite understanding instead of defensiveness?

RESOURCES

READ...

“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>

“What is White Privilege Really?”

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2018/what-is-white-privilege-really>

WATCH...

Put a finger down “Check Your Privilege”, viral TikTok Challenge

https://www.today.com/parents/allison-holker-twitch-boss-post-white-privilege-tiktok-t183210?icid=canonical_related

White privilege is a difficult subject and it's one that evokes strong feelings from white folks in particular. It's hard for people to think about the work they've done or the challenges in their lives and hear that they are privileged. What we know is that many things can be true about the difficulty of a person's life and they can still have privilege. Amanda Taylor of American University says, “White privilege doesn't mean you don't have a hard life. What white privilege means is that your race is not one of the reasons that you have a hard life.”

Being able to have open, honest conversations about privilege will allow your student-athletes to actively confront the foundations of institutional and structural racism.