



**ACC Diversity & Inclusion  
Resource Toolkit  
For  
Facilitating Courageous Conversations**

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**Air Force Diversity & Inclusion | <https://www.af.mil/Diversity.aspx>**

## Difficult Conversations: Racial & Ethnic Diversity

*Race remains one of the most difficult topics to discuss in the workplace. But the need to have candid, respectful dialogue with colleagues on the topic has never been more crucial. Tensions have heightened over the past few years, in part fueled by national events and media coverage. We recognize each person may perceive and react to these and other situations differently, depending on their backgrounds, experiences and understanding. This is why open dialogue is critical to helping our people understand and support each other. When individuals reach out to each other and engage around challenges, whether professional or personal, it helps everyone know they are valued as an individual in the organization, and this inclusion supports them being fully-focused on the mission.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Instill confidence among Airmen and Space Professionals in the Department of the Air Force leadership's support of a diverse and inclusive workforce. This guidance should help facilitate discussion about race and other difficult topics.

### TALKING POINTS – Why These Conversations Matter

- Department of the Air Force leaders and commanders are charged with the physiological, safety and belonging needs of their people. A leader's premiere task is the development of the character and emotional well-being of their Airmen and Space professionals.
- Leaders should always encourage honest and respectful reflection, internally and externally, fostering a culture of inclusion and understanding.
- Individuals contribute their highest levels of creativity when they are cared for and feel a sense of belonging. A leader must be able to sense and understand the viewpoints of those around them.
- In an environment where our people feel truly safe and genuinely belong as a valued member of their organization, they will be inspired to innovate. They take more responsibility and work harder. They have the courage to come forward when they know something isn't right.
- Open mindedness overcomes any artificial barriers to innovation and embodies the culture we aspire to promote.
- It's okay to be open and acknowledge how these conversations make you feel. If done correctly, with respect and civility, these conversations can build empathy and trust, strengthening your units.
- The idea behind these conversations is to help Airmen and Space Professionals develop *empathy* for other viewpoints by actively listening to understand from another's perspective, getting clarification where there is confusion or misunderstanding, and discovering points of connection with those who think or believe differently about an important issue.
- Empathy means thoughtfully considering feelings – along with other factors – in the process of making decisions.

### TIPS FOR FACILITATING SMALL GROUP CONVERSATIONS

#### BUILD SELF AWARENESS – Assess Your Comfort Level

Many leaders avoid talking about race and racism. It's uncomfortable, may lead to conflict, and calls for skills few of us practice regularly. Often, this avoidance comes down to a fear of misspeaking, sounding racially insensitive or unintentionally impacting someone in a harmful manner. Preparing our people to talk about race and racism requires us to first deal with our own fears. Leaders must have a deep understanding of their emotional perspectives, biases, strengths, weaknesses, needs and drives – they must be honest and authentic with themselves and others. Before initiating a workspace discussion, do a simple self-assessment.

Consider the following statements and select the one that best describes how you feel.

*I would rather not talk about race/racism.*

*I am very uncomfortable talking about race/racism.*

*I am usually uncomfortable talking about race/racism.*

*I am sometimes uncomfortable talking about race/racism.*

*I am usually comfortable talking about race/racism.*

*I am very comfortable talking about race/racism.*

Then use a sentence-stem activity to self-reflect. *Why do I feel this way about discussing race/racism?*

*The hard part of talking about race/racism is...*      *The beneficial part of talking about race/racism is ...*

#### PLAN AHEAD – Develop a Safe and Courageous Space

Planning ahead and establishing a safe and courageous environment within your workplace should minimize discomfort. It's important to note, however, that for some Airmen and Space Professionals—particularly members of marginalized, non-majority or targeted identity groups—you may not be able to provide complete safety. Once a safe and courageous environment is established for your people, openness to participate in authentic, genuine and respectful conversations can help to create a space of vulnerability where others will be more willing to take on these difficult conversations.

### **MODERATING THE DISCUSSION – Ask the Tough Questions**

To facilitate difficult conversations with your people, equip them with strategies they can use to persevere during difficult conversations.

#### **Questions and prompts:**

- What's interesting or helpful about this view?
- What are some intriguing features that others might not have noticed?
- What would be different if you believed this view, if you accepted it as true?
- What are you curious to know more about? And why?
- What has stopped you from engaging in conversations about race?
- Think about a time you've been part of an effective team... what made you all effective? Did you feel included? Why?
- How do you think your own background, experiences, etc. impact the way you interpret certain events?

### **STRATEGY ONE: REITERATE•PAUSE AND CONTEMPLATE• COMMUNICATE**

Explain these steps as a way to communicate while experiencing complex emotions. These steps won't prevent or change the emotions people may feel, but they can help them and you self-regulate.

**Step 1: Reiterate.** Restate what you heard. This step enables individuals to reflect on what they have heard as opposed to what they think they may have heard. Repeating what they have heard limits miscommunication and misinformation.

**Step 2: Pause and Contemplate.** Count to 10 before responding. People can think about their responses and use the time to compose what they want to say. Taking time to think about their responses helps move individuals away from immediate emotional responses that can potentially derail the conversation. Also, take a breath to check in with yourself. Suggesting individuals take a few breaths before responding may help them settle their thoughts and emotions during difficult conversations.

**Step 3: Communicate.** Speak with compassion and thoughtfulness. Individuals should do their best to speak as they want to be spoken to, assuming good intentions and seeking understanding. Explain that when they disagree with something someone has said, they should focus on challenging the statement rather than the person who said it.

### **STRATEGY TWO: CHECK IN WITH AIRMEN AND SPACE PROFESSIONALS DURING AND AFTER THE SESSION**

Stay on top of the emotional temperature in the room and check in with your people during and after the session about how they feel. This will let you know when to take a break and address strong emotions.

### **CLOSING – Thank Everyone for the Feedback**

Provide members the opportunity to come to you with concerns later, one-on-one. Furthermore, provide them with resources to reach out to if needed – first sergeants, chaplains, lawyers, equal opportunity, etc.



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TOOL

*Topic: Racial Disparity*

## MISSION OBJECTIVE

*The purpose of the Small Group Discussion Tool is to begin purposeful conversations and build stronger community.*

## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- *Comply with local HPCON level*
- *F2F or Virtual Meetings as Permitted*
- *Video capability is preferred*
- *1 hour maximum length*
- *Everyone is encouraged to participate*
- *Participants are free to share about personal examples/experiences*
- *In and out of group time, Airmen must respect others whose viewpoints differ from their own*

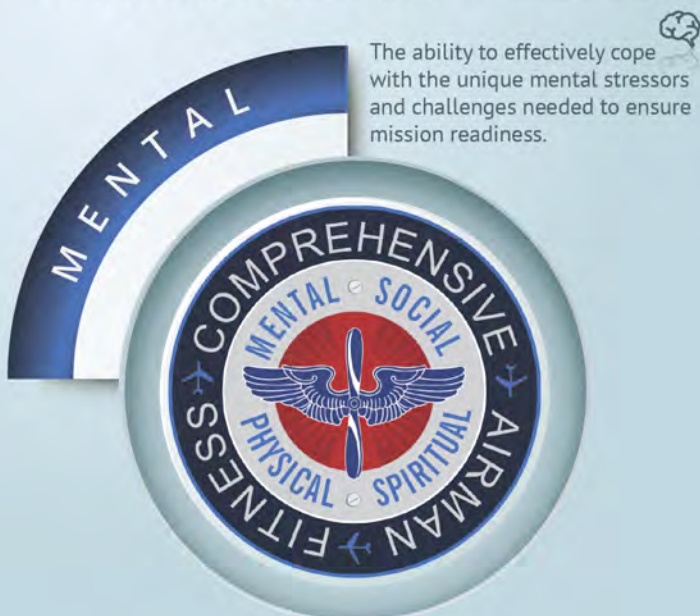
## POSSIBLE TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. How can leaders at every level provide a safe and educational space for members to share their experiences?
2. How can you communicate to your leadership the importance of continuing the conversations about race within the workplace?
3. Do you know the resources available to you with regards to having discussions or communicating about race or racial disparity?

Some Things To Remember:

- **The Equal Opportunity Professionals on your installation are available to assist in facilitating these conversations as they are critical to the human relations climate and organizational effectiveness of the unit.**
- Be aware people have had different experiences, stressors and emotions in regards to the topic due to current events.
- Promote and foster an inclusive and respectful environment.
- Remain flexible and understanding as we navigate this discussion together.

## DISCUSSION CAF FOCUS



The ability to effectively cope with the unique mental stressors and challenges needed to ensure mission readiness.

Military Crisis Line 800-273-8255

DoD Safe Helpline 877-995-5247

Military One Source 800-342-9647

AF Employee Assistance Program 866-580-9078

AF Discrimination & Sexual Harassment Hot-line  
888-231-4058





# Inclusive Warrior

## GOAL

Airmen who embody respect — a commitment to excellence through diversity, building a legacy and heritage that will continue to shape our force.

## FACILITATOR'S NOTES

### HOW TO PREPARE

1. **Watch:** "A Conversation with Gen Goldfein and CMSAF Wright" <https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819/SiteAssets/A%20Conversation%20-%20CSAF%20Gen%20Goldfein.mp4>
2. **Create the Environment:** See Page 2. Ensure a safe and trusted space for your courageous conversations.
3. **Read and Share:** Page 3—Seven Steps Towards Open Conversations Around Race and Diversity. Open-minded conversations create a trusting environment.

## THE EXTRA MILE

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Contact your installation Equal Opportunity office for training opportunities in facilitation techniques for effectively managing courageous conversations.
2. Learning from the Flesh Colored Band Aid - General Goldfein, CSAF: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/755083/learning-flesh-colored-band-aid>

## MISSION PLAN

### HOW TO EXECUTE

#### Framing the Conversation

**Play video:** "What I'm Thinking About" Commander of Pacific Air Forces, Gen. CQ Brown, Jr. <https://www.facebook.com/PACAF/videos/649436842308086/>

We acknowledge that having conversations about race, inequality, and social injustice require personal courage. The ability to engage in bold, inclusive discussions around polarizing topics requires a safe, trusted space. It is normal to feel some level of discomfort—expect it and embrace it. Lean forward with your "ears wide open" and respect that others' perspectives may differ from your own. The cost of avoidance is too high for our Air Force family—we must be "all in" as we work together to seek clarity, understanding and acceptance.

#### Suggested Discussion Points

- 1) Gen CQ Brown, Jr. asks, what are you thinking about and how can we make a difference together?
- 2) How do you think your own background, experiences, etc. impact the way you interpret social injustices?
- 3) When you hear people in your circles making biased comments, do you speak up? Why or why not?
- 4) What are your hopes and concerns for your community, the Air Force and/or our nation?
- 5) What new understanding or common ground did you find from this conversation?

## MISSION CHALLENGE—The "Trusted 10" Activity

If you want to establish robust and dynamic teams in your organization, you have to start by addressing blind spots. Try this activity with your team to help identify potential bias and discuss ways to improve diversity on your team.

**Read the activity instructions here first:**

<https://icbe.ie/skillnets/business-excellence/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Trusted-10-Lunchtime-Bite-12th-December-2018.pdf>

**Download blank handout here:**

<https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819/Check%206%20Worksheets/06.%20JUN%202020%20Empathetic%20Warrior/My%20Trusted%2010%20Activity%20Sheet.pdf>



# *Ultimate* TALK GUIDE

1

## BE GENUINE

- What does the Check 6 topic mean to you and your team?
- Where do you find your motivation/inspiration?
- Be present in the moment.
- Walk the talk.

2

## CONVERSE, NOT DEBATE

- Adopt a forward thinking mentality.
- No need to have a conclusion for every conversation.
- Allow things to be left open if a common point can't be achieved...agree to disagree.

3

## EMBRACE DIFFERENCES

- Don't impose, criticize, or judge.
- Respect each other's choices/inputs.
- Seek commonalities.
- Build on the common links.

4

## BE AUTHENTIC

- Share your thoughts, personal beliefs and values.
- Be true to yourself while you walk the talk.

5

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Ask questions that cause reflection.
- What was it like to...?
- How did you know...?
- In what way is that similar/different from...?
- What was the best part of...?

6

## GIVE AND TAKE

- As people share, learn more by asking questions.
- Ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

EMPOWERED  
LIVING

# THE WELCOMING TABLE

*7 Steps Towards Open  
Conversations Around  
Race and Diversity*

*"The welcoming table is not just  
about breaking bread together,  
it's also about baking bread  
TOGETHER."*

— GLORIA BURGESS

STEP  
7

## OPEN YOUR HANDS

Offer your help and support. Start where you are and do what you can.

STEP  
6

## OPEN YOUR MOUTH

Be a voice for change. Not saying something is still saying something.

STEP  
5

## OPEN YOUR EARS

Start with the discomfort of not knowing. People can't hear until they've been heard.

STEP  
4

## OPEN YOUR DOOR

Invite people in to your home, around your table, to have an open conversation.

STEP  
3

## OPEN YOUR HEART

Tough conversations begin with love. Open your heart to other people's feelings.

STEP  
2

## OPEN YOUR MIND

With an open mind, you can understand the need for change. Seek to first understand, then to be understood.

STEP  
1

## OPEN YOUR EYES

Ignorance is not bliss. Start by not turning a blind eye to racial tensions. Recognize you may unknowingly be biased. Be willing to see what is going on.

We are all responsible to provide a culture of trust where Airmen can rise to their highest potential, dependent only on individual merit and capabilities.

What can you do today to contribute?

We think we see the world  
as it is, when in fact we  
see the world as we are.

Stephen R. Covey






# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION RESOURCE LIST

The following are among the many resources available for Air and Space professionals intending to learn about how diversity and inclusion supports the Air Force mission.

These resources can help provide leaders with social context as well as tools for facilitating an inclusive environment where Air and Space professionals can thrive. This list is not exclusive and no endorsement by the Air Force Diversity & Inclusion Office of any item listed is intended.

## AIR FORCE VIDEOS

-  **Message from General Goldfein**  
Gen. David L. Goldfein  
Air Force Chief of Staff
-  **Message from General Brown**  
Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr.  
Air Force Chief of Staff (confirmed)
-  **I am an Airman**  
Gen. Arnold W. Bunch Jr.  
Commander, AFMC

## OTHER VIDEOS

-  **The "Trusted 10" Activity**
-  **Google – Making the Unconscious Conscious**
-  **Proctor & Gamble – The Look**

## BOOKS

### Leadership/Courageous Conversations

**Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts**  
› By Brené Brown

**We Can't Talk About That at Work: How to Talk about Race, Religion, Politics, and Other Polarizing Topics**  
› By Mary-Frances Winters

**What If I Say the Wrong Thing? 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People**  
› By Vernā Myers

### Race-Specific Learning

**The Racial Healing Handbook**  
› By Anneliese A. Singh

**Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?**  
› By Beverly Daniel Tatum

**Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race**  
› By Derald Wing Sue

**White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide**  
› By Carol Anderson

### Unconscious Bias

**Talking to Strangers**  
› By Malcolm Gladwell

**Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People**  
› By Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald

**Filter Shift**  
› By Sara Taylor

### Diversity & Cross Cultural Knowledge in Global Environment

**The Post-American World: Release 2.0**  
› By Fareed Zakaria

**Radical Inclusion**  
› By Martin Dempsey & Ori Brafman

### Cognitive Diversity/Teaming

**Rebel Ideas: The Power of Diverse Thinking**  
› Matthew Syed

**Team of Teams**  
› Stanley McChrystal

**Extreme Teaming: Lessons in Complex Cross-Sector Leadership**  
› Amy C. Edmondson & Jean-Francois Harvey

**The Diversity Bonus: How Great Teams Pay Off in the Knowledge Economy**  
› By Scott Page, Earl Lewis, Nancy Cantor, Katherine Phillips

### General Diversity & Inclusion

**Inclusion Dividend: Why Investing in Diversity & Inclusion Pays Off**  
› By Mark Kaplan & Mason Donovan

**Inclusion: Diversity, the New Workplace & the Will to Change**  
› By Jennifer Brown

**What If? Short Stories to Spark Diversity Dialogue**  
› By Steve L. Robbins

### Stereotype Threat

**Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do**  
› By Claude M. Steele

### Belonging

**Our Search for Belonging: How our Need to Connect is Tearing Us Apart**  
› By Howard Ross

### Generational Differences

**Sticking Points: How to Get 4 Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart**  
› Haydn Shaw

### Culture

**Outliers**  
› By Malcolm Gladwell

### Change Management

**Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World**  
› John Kotter

**Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard**  
› By Chip & Dan Heath

## TED TALKS

 **50 Years of Racism Why Silence Isn't the Answer**  
› James A. White, Sr.

 **How to Deconstruct Racism, One Headline at a Time**  
› Baratunde Thurston

 **How our Friendship Survives our Opposing Politics**  
› Caitlin Quattromani & Lauran Arledge

Disclaimer of Endorsement: This suggested media list and links to other websites are not intended as an express or implied endorsement by the Department of the Air Force of any products, authors or non-Federal entities. This list was selected to inform those inclined to learn more about the importance of diversity and inclusion and how they support the Air Force mission. There are no mandatory items to be reviewed. Many are available online for free or at your installation or local community libraries.





**(For Official Use Only)**

## **How to Have Difficult Conversations - Race Public Affairs Guidance**

1 June 2020

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**1. PURPOSE:** The purpose of this guidance is to provide tools for leaders to have tough conversations with their people in the midst of heightened tensions around the prevalence of racial bias in the United States. Additionally it is meant to help instill confidence among Air and Space Professionals that Department of the Air Force leadership is aware of the concerns and supports efforts to foster a diverse and inclusive workforce.

**2. POSTURE:** Active with internal audience. Leaders at all levels are encouraged to reach out to their people to have tough conversations about what is on their minds and listen to and learn about their people's experiences. An open dialogue is critical to helping our people understand and support each other.

### **3. TALKING POINTS:**

#### **Tough Conversations**

- Race remains one of the most difficult topics to discuss in the workplace. But the need to have candid, respectful dialogue with colleagues on the topic has never been more crucial.
- Tensions have heightened over the past few years, in part fueled by national events and media coverage.
- We recognize each person may perceive and react to these and other situations differently, depending on their backgrounds, experiences and understanding.
- This is why open dialogue is critical to helping our people understand and support each other.
- When individuals reach out to each other and engage around challenges, whether professional or personal, it helps everyone know they are valued as an individual in the organization, and this inclusion supports them being fully focused on the mission.

#### **A Diverse and Inclusive Culture**

- Individuals contribute their highest levels of creativity when they are cared for and feel a sense of belonging.
- In an environment where Airmen and Space Professionals feel truly safe and genuinely belong as valued members of their organization, they will be inspired to innovate. They take more responsibility and contribute more. They will have the courage to come forward when they know something isn't right.
- Open mindedness overcomes any artificial barriers to innovation and embodies the culture we aspire to promote.
- Leaders should always encourage honest and respectful reflection, internally and externally, fostering a culture of inclusion and understanding.

#### **Racial Disparity**

- While we have taken steps to elevate unconscious bias training at all levels of our command structure, we recognize that we still have much more work to do to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of our people's success.

#### **4. ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS:**

**Q. With the recent events in Minneapolis exploding and the resulting focus on racism, what is the Department of the Air Force doing to reassure Airmen and Space Professionals that the Department of the Air Force is doing what it can to address the issue of institutional racism and unconscious bias within the Air and Space Forces?**

**A.** As tensions rise, it is extremely important that leaders continue to promote a diverse and inclusive culture while reaching out to listen to the experiences and recommendations of their unit personnel. Open dialogue is critical to helping our people understand and support each other. When individuals reach out to each other and engage around challenges, whether professional or personal, it helps everyone know they are valued as an individual in the organization, and this inclusion supports them being fully focused on the mission.

**Q. In a recent USA Today article the advocacy group Protect Our Defenders takes the stance that DAF leadership doesn't take the issue of racial disparity in military justice actions seriously. What does the Air Force have to say about that?**

**A.** Part of what makes our Airmen and Space Professionals great is who they are – their diversity. While we have taken steps to elevate unconscious bias training at all levels of our command structure, we have more work to do to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of our people's success.

**Q. Does the Air Force have a problem with race disparity in military justice?**

**A.** Yes. We clearly have more work to do to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of our people's success. While we've tried a variety of efforts, we recognize that we don't have all the answers and have not achieved the fully inclusive culture we desire. We will continue to explore ways to improve and encourage leaders at every level to listen more to their personnel to better understand individual experiences and potential barriers that exist. We must work tirelessly to make our Air and Space Forces a place where all feel included and where all can maximize their talents. A diverse military is critical to national security and the national defense of a diverse America.

**Q. What actions have you taken to institute unconscious bias training?**

**A.** The Air Force has enacted a range of initiatives, to include training to elevate unconscious bias awareness and mitigate its impacts. Those initiatives have been integrated into various commander, first sergeant, and leadership forums across multiple touchpoints. Some examples are venues such as squadron commander courses, the USAF First Sergeant Academy, and officer and enlisted professional military education. In 2019, the Air Force conducted additional analysis and directed unconscious bias training for first line supervisors as well additional efforts like mentorship programs to assist young Airmen adapt to the military culture. While these initiatives represent a good start, we recognize that we still have much more work to do to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of our people's success. .

#### **5. POINTS OF CONTACT: SAF/PAO - 703 695-0640**

**Attachment: How to Have Difficult Conversations - Race**

# A GUIDE FOR BOLD, INCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS<sup>©</sup>

Prepared by: The Winters Group, Inc.

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## INTRODUCTION:

Organizations do not exist within a vacuum. A polarizing social and political climate, coupled with global, traumatic events that directly and indirectly impact employees, have created an imperative for organizational leaders to create internal spaces for bold conversations. As leaders take strides towards organizational cultures that encourage employees to bring their whole selves to work, they will need to ensure they are fostering the skills and competencies conducive to creating these environments. This guide provides an overview of how individuals can begin to engage in bold, inclusive conversations around polarizing topics.

## 1. PRE-REQUISITE: FOCUS ON SELF AND 'OTHER' UNDERSTANDING

The ability to engage in bold, inclusive conversations is a journey that requires fostering cultural self-understanding, addressing our biases, and understanding the role of power and privilege.

### CONSIDER:

- ☐ **WHO AM I CULTURALLY?** Where did I grow up? What was the culture of my community? What did I learn about right/wrong or good/bad?
  - o What are my values and beliefs, and how have they changed over time?
- ☐ **WHAT IS MY CULTURAL IDENTITY?** (e.g. race/ethnicity, generation, religion, education, socio-economic status)
  - o How does my cultural identity shape who I am and how I think?
- ☐ **WHAT IS MY ORIENTATION TOWARDS DIFFERENCE?**
  - o "Us/Them:" People are different, but I think my cultural group's norms are better.
  - o "Color-Blind:" We are all the same as humans. We are more alike than different.
  - o "Differences Make a Difference:" Differences are normal, inevitable, and something to learn about.

### ASK YOURSELF:

- ☐ **WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE OTHER GROUP—FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE?**
  - o Expand your understanding by engaging in experiences or new learning (e.g. books, research, biopics, etc.) that reflect the perspectives of your 'others.'
- ☐ **WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT THE VALUES AND BELIEFS OF OTHER GROUPS, AND HOW THEY WERE SHAPED?**
- ☐ **DO I UNDERSTAND POWER & PRIVILEGE?**
  - o Do I belong to cultural identity groups that have traditionally held power/privilege or been historically marginalized?
- ☐ **WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING SYSTEMS THAT IMPACT OUTCOMES FOR THE GROUP(S)?**
  - o Challenge inclinations or biases that position inequities as result of 'cultural flaws' of the group. Dig deeper.
- ☐ **WHAT DO I KNOW IN GENERAL ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES?**
  - o Consider differences that may exist in communication styles, cultural norms, individualistic vs. group-oriented cultures, etc.

## 2. ASSESS READINESS – THE WINTERS GROUP READINESS ASSESSMENT <sup>©</sup>

	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Not at all
1. I am culturally self-aware.			
2. I have explored my unconscious biases.			
3. I am comfortable talking about difficult subjects.			
4. I believe that treating everyone the same is not the solution to polarization.			
5. I have studied my own and other culture's norms and beliefs.			
6. I have a high degree of emotional intelligence.			
7. I readily acknowledge that I don't know what I don't know.			
8. I recognize that there are differences that make a difference and I try not to minimize them.			
9. I have regular exposure to difference.			
10. I have meaningful relationships with diverse individuals and groups.			
11. I can separate the person from their position.			
12. My organizational culture is ready to have bold, inclusive conversations.			
13. There is a high level of trust in the organization.			
14. There is a high level of trust within my team.			
15. I am aware of my power and privilege.			
16. I already have a lot of experience with bold, inclusive conversations.			



### 3. PREPARE & PLAN FOR THE CONVERSATION – WHY? WHO? WHAT? HOW? WHERE? WHEN?

<b>WHY ARE WE HAVING THIS CONVERSATION?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ What is the main reason for this conversation?</li> <li>□ Why is this important to do?</li> <li>□ Is there shared understanding of the purpose?</li> </ul>	<b>WHO SHOULD BE PART OF THE DIALOGUE?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Who will facilitate?</li> <li>□ Who from within the organization will be part of the conversation?</li> </ul>	<b>WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ What do we want to achieve during this dialogue?</li> <li>□ What will be the next steps?</li> </ul>
<b>HOW SHOULD THE CONVERSATION BE CONDUCTED?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ What are the pros and cons of a virtual or in-person conversation?</li> </ul>	<b>WHERE SHOULD THE CONVERSATION BE HELD?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ In or outside the office?</li> <li>□ Room size?</li> <li>□ Room configuration?</li> <li>□ Is the space accessible?</li> <li>□ Any environmental concerns?</li> </ul>	<b>WHEN WILL THE CONVERSATION TAKE PLACE?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ During or after work hours?</li> </ul>

### 4. ENGAGE IN BOLD, INCLUSIVE CONVERSATION – GUIDANCE

- **CREATE A BRAVE ZONE**
  - Give permission to say things that may be courageous, taboo
- **AGREE ON CONFIDENTIALITY PARAMETERS**
- **LISTEN FOR UNDERSTANDING**
  - Make mental notes of disagreement. Resist the urge to interrupt.
  - Only ask clarifying questions: *Could you tell me more about that? I did not understand your last point—could you elaborate?*
- **EXPECT NON-CLOSURE**
- **REFLECT & LEARN AFTER THE FIRST MEETING**
- **CUT EACH OTHER SOME SLACK & ASSUME POSITIVE INTENT**
- **IDENTIFY COMMONALITIES & SHARED MEANING**
  - *We all want to be safe.*
  - *Stress can impact employee engagement and productivity.*
  - *We want everyone to feel included.*
- **GIVE TIME FOR REFLECTION BEFORE EXPLORING DIFFERENCES**
- **PRACTICE EMPATHY**

### BEHAVIORS FOR BOLD, INCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS

- **Acknowledging:** You don't know everything; there is always something to learn.
- **Legitimizing:** Other perspectives are just as valid as yours and should be listened to for understanding, not necessarily agreement.
- **Listening:** Listen to understand. Listen for your own cultural assumptions, perceptions and expectations.
- **Reflecting:** Spend more time reflecting on your own values and beliefs.
- **Describing:** Learn to describe the behavior before providing your interpretation and expand the number of interpretations you consider.

- **Contextualizing:** Consider the circumstances, conditions and history of the topic for which you are having a bold, inclusive conversation.
- **Pausing:** Take a deep breath. Think about what you are going to say. Pause to be more patient as well. Be patient of mistakes.
- **Accepting:** Accepting does not mean agreeing. You are accepting that there are myriad worldviews and it is important to learn more about them.
- **Questioning:** Be curious, not judgmental about differences.

- **Respecting:** Respect the dignity of every person even when you don't agree with them.
- **Apologizing:** If you say something that offends someone else, genuinely apologize.
- **Connecting:** Making meaningful connections across difference is one sure way of breaking down barriers and enhancing our capacity for empathy and shared understanding.
- **Empathizing:** Sympathy leads to patronization and pity. Empathy allows you to see the situation from the perspective of the other person.