



**AIR FORCE  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

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**RESPECT INCLUSION CIVILITY DIGNITY**

## **The Power of Facilitation: *Talking about Race***

Facilitator's Guide

**OPR:** *86th Airlift Wing Equal Opportunity Office*

*Ramstein Air Base, Germany*

*DSN 489-8534*

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*<https://portal.usafe.af.mil/sites/86AW/EO/default.aspx>*

## **Facilitator Role and Things to Know**

The *role* of the facilitator is simply to facilitate, show empathy, and guide the group to a deeper understanding of individual experiences. Creating a safe space for this discussion is essential to meaningful dialogue.

Be genuine. Don't facilitate with an attitude that appears that you are "check-boxing" the issue. Show you really care. It's better to familiarize yourself with this guide and issues surrounding the discussion. Do not use this guide, prepared questions, or notes as a crutch.

Listen. Listening is more important than speaking as a facilitator. Active listening means that you are being present in mind and listening intently to what the speaker is saying. Minimize distractions in the room and others interrupting another person while speaking.

Remain neutral. This is achieved by not appearing to take sides on an issue. Avoid making someone feel that their concerns or views are wrong. Acknowledging someone experiences and asking them, "Why do you think that?" or "What makes you feel that way?" is appropriate.

Keep your bag closed. It is important to understand your own personal biases on Race issues. As a facilitator, avoid argumentative statements based on your personal beliefs and/or values in effort to persuade other's from their beliefs.

Ground Rules. Facilitators should begin difficult discussions, whether it's with an individual or in a small group, by first establishing a safe environment. This is achieved by laying out ground rules before starting the conversation. See Attachment 1 for a print out of Ground Rules.

## **Facilitation Techniques**

Share. Open the conversation with a story/telling your own experience. If you do not have an experience, you can share what you are feeling about current race relations.

Lean in. Lean in more by pulling more out of the conversation. Ask follow up questions that explores a person's thoughts or feelings. Get to the heart of the issue. Explore needs, feelings, views, etc.

Never leave a question unanswered. One of the worst things a facilitator can do is ignore or not acknowledge a person's question no matter how complicated it may be. It gives the impression that the discussion is just "check-boxing". It is okay to say, "I don't have an answer," or "we do not have all the answers now," "...this is the beginning of the conversation. We have a long way to still go." You take their question and get back to them.

Disagree. In a panel setting, it is okay to disagree with a panel member's view. As long as it is tactful and you explain the reason why. For example, a panel member says, "Racism doesn't exist in the Air Force." An appropriate response may be, "I don't quite see it the same way. Here is why..."

Acknowledge. Do not let someone's story go over your head (fall on deaf ears), by not giving them the feedback they deserve. Provide a response that you heard them. For example, say, "Thank your story," or "I can see it took a lot for you share."

Non-verbal cues. Pay attention to member's non-verbal language to keep them engaged. For example, someone rolls their eyes, ask, "How do you feel about this..."

Feedback. Ask questions that would explore individual's taking personal responsibility and commitment to change within their sphere of control. For example, say, "We know this will not change overnight, but what can we/you do to effect change?"

Finally, prepare yourself for raw emotion and feelings to be displayed.

## **Ground Rules**

1. This is a safe place.
2. My story is my story.
3. Be Respectful.
4. Speak in first person. (“In my experience...”)
5. Clarify by asking question.
6. When hearing opinions, seek first to understand, than to be understood.
7. When responding to others, paraphrase their statements before communicating you point. (For example, “What I hear you saying is...”)
8. Thank your teammates for sharing.
9. Excuse yourself if you need too.
10. Helping agencies are standing by for assistance.



## *The Power of Facilitation: Talking about Race*

**Course Format:** *face-to-face facilitated discussion*

### **INSTRUCTOR(S) INFORMATION**

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**Instructors:** *Ms. Heather Bradley, SMSgt Carlos Cervantes, MSgt Jeannette Warr, MSgt Janay Stokes, TSgt Lakeisha Jones, TSgt Steven James, TSgt Marcus Bias*

**Office:** *86th Airlift Wing Equal Opportunity Office  
Ramstein Air Base, Germany*

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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#### **Description:**

*This training is designed for leaders, at every level, (and designated unit resiliency trainers) to learn how to facilitate a difficult dialogue about race in a product manner. It is the responsibility of every leader to break down barriers on an institutional, social, and individual level. These efforts begin with first having the difficult conversation and actively listening to the concerns and experiences of Airmen. This course will provide leaders with the necessary tools and skills to create a safe environment to host and guide these discussions.*

#### **Course Agenda:**

- 1. Introduction*
- 2. The Experience*
- 3. Facilitator Role & Things to know*
- 4. Scenario Based Questions*
- 5. Reality Check*
- 6. Q&A*

**Intended Outcomes:**

*To immediately respond to Airmen of all ranks who may be struggling with emotional thoughts and feelings surrounding race issues.*

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

Future facilitators will:

- First, experience a small discussion led by an EO Advisor, to explore their own thoughts and feelings.
- Become familiar with the process of interpersonal dynamics that form as a result from sharing personal experiences.
- Understand their role as neutrals, as well as, creating a safe and non-retaliatory environment.
- Navigate through difficult situations with active listening, empathy and guidance.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

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**Methods of Evaluation:** Facilitators must demonstrate their cognitive understanding listening, keeping neutrality and showing empathy in a scenario-based exercise. EO Advisors will provide candid feedback.

**Length:**

*2 hours*

**Capacity:**

*8 per class*

**Location:**

*Equal Opportunity Training  
Classroom Ramstein Air Base  
Building 404, Door 2*

**Class Availability and Sign-up:**

*Visit the Ramstein Equal Opportunity  
SharePoint:*

*<https://portal.usafe.af.mil/sites/86AW/EO/default.aspx>*

*Click on Human Relations Education and Development*

## Outline for Power of Facilitation

SharePoint location: 31 FW>31 FW/EO> (left hand tab - Power of Facilitation Course

<https://portal.usafe.af.mil/sites/Aviano/31FW/EO/Power%20of%20Facilitation%20Course/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2Fsites%2FAviano%2F31FW%2FEO%2FPower%20of%20Facilitation%20Course%2FTrained%20Facilitator%20Folder&FolderCTID=0x012000919384254216A242AA4407B601CD18D5&View=%7BFEDA5E57%2D4088%2D4519%2D963F%2D03BA6B7DD14F%7D>

### I) Prepare Yourself

1. Explore your own potential bias to remain neutral throughout the facilitation. *Look on the resource tab and review.*
2. Sit-in and participate in other facilitators own group discussions to prevent from going into the event blindly.
3. Explore your resources on the topic at hand. *TAB 4 – Topic Resources* provides a list by the EO office and other facilitators surrounding specific topics. Take note of resources utilized outside of TAB 4 to pass on to other facilitators.
4. Have some discussion points prepared for when there is a lull in conversation. Also prepare yourself with possible common reactions and responses to discussion topics. Also, prepare yourself with prompts and follow-up responses to moderate the discussion. Review *TAB 4 – Topic Resources* for discussion point ideas.
5. Review *TAB 2 - Lessons learned* to discover other facilitator’s tips and pointers from their experiences facilitating small groups.

### II) Prepare the Environment : to display the environment as an small group discussion and facilitation of conversation versus a lesson or lecture follow these few pointers:

1. Keep participants of the group to 8-15 max personnel
2. Place seating in a circle and have the facilitator positioned in the circle not outside or in the center.
3. location (try to choose a location with less foot traffic)
4. Don’t facilitate alone- Have either another trained facilitator or a knowledgeable person to assist that is well versed in helping agency programs. This person can be available to step outside with an individual that is at an emotional point where they feel that they can no longer sit in for the moment. The helper can be there to step out with them and assist as the lead facilitator keeps the rest of the group’s attention and conversation going.
5. Establish an effective time: Typically facilitations last 1 hr-2hrs. Do not try to rush through it to reach personal objectives. However try not to make it too long and distract the focus on the topic or draw it out. Doing so may prevent the desire for future attendance in similar small group discussions. If your group feels the need to keep the conversation going this allows an opportunity offer other upcoming small group discussions that you have available. As a facilitator prepare to stand by at minimum 30 minutes after to facilitate questions and feedback.
6. Look for other opportunities to amplify the environment’s comfort. Some examples are proper lighting, water, tissues, temperature adjustment or etc.

### III) Prepare the group

1. Identify yourself as the facilitator for the group.

2. Describe the purpose of the discussion and topic of small group.
3. Identify the small group as a space for open dialog not instruction. Also you can equip your personnel with strategies that they can use to preserve during difficult conversations in the group forum.

Example: As the group is walking in and sitting down, hand them a print out of the [Public Affairs Guidance \(1 June 20\)](#), *How to have difficult conversations*.

Strategy one being: Reiterate-Pause-Contemplate-Communicate.

4. Review the Ground rules.
5. Acknowledge that there is an additional person in the room for assistance if a circumstance arrives that a person will need to step out of the room and that the current discussion will continue amongst the group.

#### IV) **Execute the Facilitation**

1. Frame the conversation: Start the conversation with your first Discussion point Related to the topic. Examples on [TAB 4 – Topic Resources](#)
2. Throughout the discussions self-regulate your role as a facilitator that you learned in the Power of Facilitation Course.
  - a) Be genuine
  - b) Active listening
  - c) remain neutral
  - d) Keep your bag closed
  - e) ensure you are enforcing your ground rules placed.
3. Facilitate your techniques learned in your Power of Facilitation Course and review the Guide.
  - a) Share
  - b) Lean in
  - c) Don't leave a question unanswered
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Acknowledge
  - f) Non-verbal cues
  - g) feedback
  - h) Prepare for raw emotion and feelings to be displayed.

#### V) **Closing and Feedback**

1. Acknowledge the progress made in the room and thank those that have opened up throughout the discussion. Possibly identify a learning point given by a participant and take-away you gained from those conversations that had taken place.
2. Explain the Feedback method to express their experience 1) The Facilitation execution feedback form 2) AF wide EO suggestion form to up-channel ideas and suggestions. Also, ask them to identify on the form if they would like to have their information associated with the suggestion to be later contacted on the current response. Please still write down suggestions that came up during the “Execute the facilitation phase and detail them on the spreadsheet.
3. Provide your contact information as well as relative helping agencies that could assist in the topic's contact information as well. (SAPR, IG, EO, MENTAL HEALTH, CHAPLIN, or even the Chain of Command information if done within the unit)
4. Reiterate that you can stand by for 30 minutes after the group discussion for any last words or questions.

#### VI) **After Action and Documenting Pertinent Information**

1. Update TAB 1 – Quantifying Data for facilitations taking place
  - A) Fill in when conducted, how many participants, and time allotted.

2. Update TAB 2 – Lessons Learned Tab
  - B) Fill in feedback you may have received about small group discussions to help yourself as well as other facilitators grow to be great facilitators. Also, a place to provide tips and pointers that have worked for you.
3. Update TAB 3 – AF EO Suggestions - Fill out suggestions given by the participants to help better the Air Force as well as the individuals contact information if provided. (Transcribe the suggestion form into the excel spread sheet)
4. Update TAB 4 – Topic Resources - Please provide the details resources you used and links *if applicable* that helped you prepare of specific topics. This is a great hub that allows others to go back to

## **FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS**

### **(1) Awareness, Dialogue, Compassion, Education and Support**

- How do you think your own background, experiences, etc. impact the way you interpret social injustices?
- How has racial injustices or disparities affected you personally? (Spouse, Children, and Extended Family)
- How have you experienced any racism/discrimination in the military? (Directly or Indirectly)
- If you have never personally or indirectly experienced racism or discrimination, what would you do if you did?
- Can someone give an example of a Micro-aggression or of the glass-ceiling concept?

### **(2) Building unity and reconciling trust**

- How do you perceive diversity and inclusion in the military? (Your current unit, past units, big Air Force)
- If possible, what changes would you like to see concerning race relations in the local military area? (Policies, training, outreach, programs, clubs)
- What are some things your leadership can do to show you that they have zero tolerance for racial injustices and disparities? How can they help?
- How many people feel like if they reported a perceived racist or discrimination instance to their chain of command, that it would be handled properly?
- Do you feel anything has stopped you in the past from engaging in topics about racism or discrimination?

### **(3) Promoting progress and hope**

- If you have those feelings of anger and frustration, how can you use those feelings to affect positive change? (Community and within household)
- How can we continue to promote long-term progress?
- Can anyone share something that we can all be hopeful about?

**(IF PEOPLE ARE NOT TALKING)**

\*\*Talking Points have GRIT tie-in

- What are you thinking about and how can we make a difference together?
- If you feel this topic does not necessarily affect you, are there questions you would like to ask your teammates that are affected?

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# The Power of Facilitation: Talking About Race



31 FW Equal Opportunity Office  
Area F, Bldg 1467  
DSN 632-5934

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*“Return With Honor”*



# Overview

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- **Introduction**
- **Facilitator Role and Things to Know**
- **Facilitator Techniques**
- **Step by Step Outline**
- **Scenario Based Questions**
- **The Experience**
- **Unity Day Updates**



# Introduction

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## ■ Purpose

- *To immediately respond to Airmen of all ranks who may be struggling with emotional thoughts and feelings surrounding race issues.*

## ■ Outcomes

- *Experience a small group discussion*
- *Become familiar with the process of interpersonal dynamics*
- *Understand your role as a neutral*
- *Navigate through difficult situations*



# *Welcome to your new neighborhood!*



*“Return with Honor”*



# Who would you want as your neighbor?

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1. Homosexual Couple
  2. Jewish Couple
  3. Doctor and Nurse
  4. Single, Never Married Mother with 5 Children
  5. Lawyer and Business Executive
  6. Pop Rock Band
  7. Minister and Family
  8. Deaf and Blind Couple
  9. Racially Mixed Couple with 2 Children
  10. A Handsome, Rich, Single, Muscular Man
  11. Family of Gypsies
  12. Unmarried Couple with a Child
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*“Return with Honor”*



# Homosexual Couple

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Jewish Couple

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Doctor and Nurse

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Single, Never Married Mother with 5 Children

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Lawyer and Business Executive

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Pop Rock Band

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Minister and Family

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Deaf and Blind Couple

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Racially Mixed Couple with 2 Children

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Handsome, Rich, Single, Muscular Man

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*“Return with Honor”*



# Family of Gypsies



*“Return with Honor”*



# Unmarried Couple With a Child

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*“Return with Honor”*



# *Facilitator Role & Things to Know*

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- **Be genuine**
- **Listen**
- **Remain Neutral**
- **Keep Your Bag Closed**
- **Ground Rules**



# ***GROUND RULES***

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- This is a safe place.
- My story is my story.
- Be Respectful.
- Speak in first person. (“In my experience...”)
- Clarify by asking question.
- When hearing opinions, seek first to understand, than to be understood.
- When responding to others, paraphrase their statements before communicating you point. (For example, “What I hear you saying is...”)
- Thank your teammates for sharing.
- Excuse yourself if you need too.
- Helping agencies are standing by for assistance



# *Facilitator Techniques*

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- **Share**
- **Lean in**
- **Never leave a question unanswered**
- **Disagree**
- **Acknowledge**
- **Non-Verbal cues**
- **Feedback**
- **Prepare for raw emotion and feelings**



# ***Step by Step – Prepare yourself***

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- **Explore your own potential bias to remain neutral throughout the facilitation. *Look on the resource tab and review.***
- **Sit-in and participate in other facilitators own group discussions to prevent from going into the event blindly.**
- **Explore your resources on the topic at hand. TAB 4 – *Topic Resources* provides a list by the EO office and other facilitators surrounding specific topics. Take note of resources utilized outside of TAB 4 to pass on to other facilitators.**



# ***Step by Step – Prepare yourself***

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- **Have some discussion points prepared for when there is a lull in conversation. Also prepare yourself with possible common reactions and responses to discussion topics. Also, prepare yourself with prompts and follow-up responses to moderate the discussion. Review TAB 4 – *Topic Resources* for discussion point ideas.**
- **Review TAB 2 - *Lessons learned* to discover other facilitator’s tips and pointers from their experiences facilitating small groups.**



# ***Step by Step – Prepare the Environment***

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- **Prepare the Environment** : to display the environment as an small group discussion and facilitation of conversation versus a lesson or lecture follow these few pointers:
- **Keep participants of the group to 8-15 max personnel**
- **Place seating in a circle and have the facilitator positioned in the circle not outside or in the center.**
- **Location (try to choose a location with less foot traffic).**
- **Look for other opportunities to amplify the environment’s comfort. Some examples are proper lighting, water, tissues, temperature adjustment or etc.**



# ***Step by Step – Prepare the Environment***

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- **Don't facilitate alone-** Have either another trained facilitator or a knowledgeable person to assist that is well versed in helping agency programs. This person can be available to step outside with an individual that is at an emotional point where they feel that they can no longer sit in for the moment. The helper can be there to step out with them and assist as the lead facilitator keeps the rest of the group's attention and conversation going.
- **Establish an effective time: 1 hr-2hrs.** As a facilitator prepare to stand by at minimum 30 minutes after to facilitate questions and feedback.



# ***Step by Step – Prepare the Group***

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- **Identify yourself as the facilitator for the group.**
- **Describe the purpose of the discussion and topic of small group.**
- **Identify the small group as a space for open dialog not instruction. Also you can equip your personnel with strategies that they can use to preserve during difficult conversations in the group forum.**
- **Review the Ground rules.**
- **Acknowledge that there is an additional person in the room for assistance if a circumstance arrives that a person will need to step out of the room and that the current discussion will continue amongst the group.**



# ***Step by Step – Execute the Facilitation***

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- **Frame the conversation: Start the conversation with your first Discussion point**
- **Related to the topic. Examples on TAB 4 – *Topic Resources***
- **Throughout the discussions self-regulate your role as a facilitator that you learned in the Power of Facilitation Course.**
  - a) Be genuine b) Active listening c) remain neutral d) Keep your bag closed e) ensure you are enforcing your ground rules placed.
- **Exercise your techniques learned in your Power of Facilitation Course and review the Guide.**
  - a) Share b) Lean in c) Don't leave a question unanswered d)Disagree e)Acknowledge f) Non-verbal cues g) feedback h) Prepare for raw emotion/feelings to be displayed.



# ***Step by Step – Closing & Feedback***

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- **Acknowledge the progress made in the room and thank those that have opened up throughout the discussion. Possibly identify a learning point given by a participant and take-away you gained from those conversations that had taken place.**
- **Explain the Feedback method to express their experience 1) AF wide EO suggestion form to up-channel ideas and suggestions. Also, ask them to identify on the form if they would like to have their information associated with the suggestion to be later contacted on the current response. Please still write down suggestions that came up during the “Execute the facilitation phase and detail them on the spreadsheet.**



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# ***Step by Step – Closing & Feedback***

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- **Provide your contact information as well as relative helping agencies that could assist in the topic's contact information as well. (SAPR, IG, EO, MENTAL HEALTH, CHAPLIN, or even the Chain of Command information if done within the unit)**
- **Reiterate that you can stand by for 30 minutes after the group discussion for any last words or questions.**



# ***Step by Step – Closing & Feedback***

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- **Update TAB 1 – Quantifying Data for facilitations taking place**
  - A) Fill in when conducted, how many participants, and time allotted.**
  
- **Update TAB 2 – Lessons Learned Tab**
  - B) Fill in feedback you may have received about small group discussions to help yourself as well as other facilitators grow to be great facilitators. Also, a place to provide tips and pointers that have worked for you.**



# ***Step by Step – Closing & Feedback***

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- **Update TAB 3 – AF EO Suggestions Hand-Out information - Fill out suggestions given by the participants to help better the Air Force as well as the individuals contact information if provided. (Transcribe the suggestion form into the excel spread sheet)**
  
- **Update TAB 4 – Topic Resources - Please provide the details resources you used and links *if applicable* that helped you prepare of specific topics. This is a great hub that allows others to go back to**



# ***Scenario Based Questions***

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- **“It doesn’t pertain to me, why should I care?”**
- **“I’ve never seen or experienced any racism, I don’t think this really happens in our Air Force”**
- **“I don’t think that leadership and EO really cares. You all are just trying to shut us up and check a box.”**

**When a question or a response is given by a member that you may not agree with remember that you are in a facilitator role.**

**In the podcast, “How To Talk to People About Racism” by People I Love and You Should Too with Matt Bishop**



# ***Staying neutral, giving value, displaying empathy.***

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**In the podcast, “*How To Talk to People About Racism*” by People I Love and You Should Too with Matt Bishop. The guest speaker Hanna Venizelos, a program manager at the National Conflict Resolution Center, talks about a effective way to responding to difficult responses in a way that you can remain neutral, display empathy, and give value to all questions and responses.**

- 1. Respond by RECAPING what the person is saying – without passing judgement.**
- 2. ACKNOWLEDGING the impact of what is being said – The emotions/feelings that are expressed in the statement**
- 3. Look for what their underlining NEED in the statement.**



# ***Staying neutral, giving value, displaying empathy***

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***“How To Talk to People About Racism”*** by People I Love  
and You Should Too with Matt Bishop.

**Podcast Example starting at 28:04 – 30:14**



# *The Experience*

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*“Return with Honor”*



# *Summary*

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- **Introduction**
- **Facilitator Role and Things to Know**
- **Facilitator Techniques**
- **Step by Step Outline**
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# Questions?

