



The Lexington Group, Inc.

Your Employee Assistance Program

Talking about Discrimination and Making a Change

Starting a conversation about racism is not easy, it can be uncomfortable and emotional. If you have the opportunity, plan ahead before engaging in conversation. With the current state of civil unrest, specifically regarding the Black Lives Matter Movement, it is important to have these conversations now more than ever. Acknowledge people maybe feeling anger, stress, and fear.

Emotions can run high; however, the goal of every dialogue is to build a foundation for change. It is our mutual responsibility to listen, learn, take action, and motivate others to do the same.

Intolerance has many faces: bigotry against race, sex, age, gender, financial standing, nation origin, access to education, as well as physical and mental disabilities. Discrimination and oppression in any form and for any reason should not be tolerated. As a response to racial discrimination and global protest, we must all speak out.

- Do some homework and invest in your knowledge. Educate yourself on the topic of racism and strive to grasp its deep-rooted history. If you find a particular resource that articulates how you feel- share it. Someone with limited interest or understanding may be resistant; however, sharing an article or a short video may aid your ongoing discussion.
- Know your audience- Come to the dialogue aware of your “audience”. Identify their interest level, degree of understanding, attitude and beliefs. Taking an “audience-centered” approach can increase your effectiveness when sharing important information.
- Think ahead to address issues that may help someone see a different point of view. For example: minority representation, cultural appropriation, Eurocentric beauty-standards, as well as the cultural significance of natural hair and identity are excellent subjects to shift someone’s existing logic.

- Come to the table with examples of incidents and behaviors that support your point of view. Think of instances where aspects of appearance overtly or covertly, positively or negatively, that have affected a situation or circumstance. Understand why these instances of intolerance are problematic and how they could have been rectified.

Accept that even though you may take the time to plan, the other party may still confront you with a topic you are unsure about. That is okay, you don’t have to have all the answers. Agree to come back to the conversation again after researching the issue.

When beginning your conversation, let the other party know it’s okay to ask questions. It may be difficult to deal with someone questioning others rights; however, sometimes constructive cross-examination is an expression of interest. Know that you too can question another’s opinion. Remain openminded and express views in a straightforward and calm manner.

Make a conscious effort to listen to what the other person is questioning. Patience, attentiveness, acknowledgement, and responsiveness will encourage the conversation to continue.

Recognize the conversation may continue beyond your initial discussion. Don’t be discouraged, meaningful change does not happen quickly.

There are a multitude of means to support change. Start by having a discussion. You can also sign an online petition, donate your time and money generously, educate yourself, speak up for others, support small, black, and minority owned businesses. Express your right to protest, petition your government and civic leaders to advocate for change. Voting for your local politicians is an important step. Two important actions you can take right now are talking and listening.

We have the opportunity for change, you may even be the proof.

How The Lexington Group Can Help

The Lexington Group can help set up confidential Online or Face-to-Face Counseling. Caring and personalized help is at your fingertips. Request service and find out additional information at: [The-Lexington-Group.com](https://www.The-Lexington-Group.com)

For 24/7 support call:

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