



LEADERSHIP RESOURCE

Disrupting Inequity: Having Brave Conversations About Bias

A toolkit for facilitated conversations about race, bias and prejudice so we can listen, lead and teach towards equity.

INTRODUCTION

We Need to Have These Conversations

“In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right that must be made available on equal terms.”

-Chief Justice Earl Warren, Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

The landmark Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education shifted the educational terrain for all students across the United States. This historical ruling not only named the pervasive weed of inequity that had grown throughout the school houses in towns, cities and states, it brought to light the injustices that the U.S. suffered due to the systematic racism that weaved throughout our laws, town-halls, and societal practices. It forced individuals to, at the very least, adjust the blatant biases that were the norm of the day. Some may even say it placed the burden of acquainting communities to children and their families whom had never had the opportunity of knowing individuals outside of their neighborhoods.

While Brown v. Board of Education placed the technical burden of ensuring that all children received an equal opportunity to education, it did not solve for the adaptive work of recognizing the micro and macro practices of biases that are intertwined in individual educators and the systems that they serve. In fact, the national data of school achievement by race indicates that these practices have not ceased over time; a closer look at school data trends, national assessment stats, and discipline data gives us an even greater sense that it has increased.

UnboundEd’s core value of **Equity** calls us to action on the commitment to disrupting patterns of implicit bias, privilege, and racism in ourselves, our organization, and in the education field to contribute to equitable outcomes for all students. We recognize that without an intentional study of biases we as educators will continue, even if unintentionally, to create the barriers to learning despite our belief about educational equity. We hope this toolkit leads to brave conversations in school communities all over the country so we can listen, lead, and teach towards equity.

OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS

What These Sessions Cover

This is a high-level overview of each facilitated conversation. The PowerPoint presentations contain more detailed notes, resources, and activities that will help you move through each part of the conversation. We encourage you to modify these presentations so they work for your school community.

Session 1

Introducing Bias

90 - 120 Minutes

Session Outcomes

- Strengthened group norms and ground rules to have conversations about bias and prejudice
- Enhanced understanding of bias with a group activity
- Developed a shared definition of bias and an understanding of how it manifests inside and outside of school
- Unpacked participant's bias assessment results
- Experienced a shared reading and discussion of biases
- Reflected on bias and how it lives in our school community

Session 2

Historical Perspective
About Race in
America

90 - 120 Minutes

Session Outcomes

- Strengthened group norms and ground rules to have conversations about bias and prejudice
- Enhanced consciousness of bias with a group activity
- Deepened understanding of bias by watching and discussing "Race - the Power of an Illusion"
- Discussed how historical implications of race have influenced your school culture

Session 3

How Does Bias
Manifest in Our
School?

90 - 120 Minutes

Session Outcomes

- Strengthened group norms and ground rules to have conversations about bias and prejudice
- Enhanced understanding of bias with a group activity
- Understand the lenses with which we view others
- Discussed what participants have learned throughout the three sessions
- Worked to identify actionable steps that participants can take to improve your school's environment

SESSION 1

Introducing Bias

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| Pework 25 mins | Send out the “social attitudes” bias test one week before the session and ask participants to complete the “race” portion. Have participants record their results and bring them to the session. All members of the group will have a chance to discuss and share their results in small groups. Link: http://www.tolerance.org/Hidden-bias |
| Introduction 5-10 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lay the group norms with the group to have conversations about race and bias• Set the context (this may be a moment to discuss the urgency or reason why your group should have this discussion)• Introduce the case study & discuss using the case study protocol |
| Community Builder 10 mins | Set up and facilitate the Inside/Outside activity and discuss |
| Opening 25 mins | Introduce and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What unconscious bias is and why we have it• How it manifests in different sectors• How bias shows up in education• Watch “A Girl Like Me” (start at 3:21 – 4:56) to show how bias can be developed at an early age. |
| Narrowing 20 mins | Unpack the bias test results in small groups |
| Closing 10 mins | Explore the most relevant questions on the “Questions to Explore” slide. There are additional questions included in the notes section that can be used here. |
| Next steps | Conclude the conversation with a positive wrap up including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive reinforcement for being vulnerable and participating• Positive reinforcement for taking action and addressing this problem• Next steps |

SESSION 2

Historical Perspective About Race in America



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| Pework 10 mins | Read the Tatum article, “How to Have Conversations About Race” |
| Introduction 5-10 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lay the group norms with the group to have courageous conversations about race and bias• Set the context (this may be a moment to discuss the urgency or reason why your group should have this discussion)• Case study |
| Community Builder 10 mins | Set up and facilitate “Our Racial Consciousness Partner A + B” and debrief |
| Opening 25 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watch episode 3 of “The House We Live In: Race - The Power of an Illusion” as a group• Discuss questions in groups of four• If time allows, consider using this resource as additional support |
| Narrowing 20 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the movie and compare to the Tatum article• Use the worksheet to record reflection questions |
| Closing 10 mins | As a group, discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What historical implication of race have influenced our school culture?• How do those historical implications of race appear in our school today? |
| Next steps | Conclude the conversation with a positive wrap up including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive reinforcement for being vulnerable and participating• Positive reinforcement for taking action and having this brave conversation• Next steps |

SESSION 3

How Does Bias Manifest in Our School?



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| For the facilitator | Prior to this session, see notes in the PPT slide #4 about creating a case study that is a real incident or moment from your school |
| Pework 10 mins | Read " Equity: Literacy for All " |
| Introduction 5-10 mins | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lay the group norms with the group to have courageous conversations about race and bias• Set the context (this may be a moment to discuss the urgency or reason why your group should have this discussion)• Build and bring your own case study |
| Community Builder 10 mins | Set up and facilitate the "Who Am I?" activity and debrief |
| Opening 25 mins | <p>Introduce and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Equity: Literacy for All" article• The Factors of Diversity• Patterns of Aspects and Assumptions in Mainstream U.S. Culture• 100 People: A World Portrait• The iceberg analogy• How we develop lenses and the three types of lenses |
| Narrowing 20 mins | Talk with your group and ask them what they have learned by reading the article and case study in this session. |
| Debriefing and Next Steps | <p>Work with the group to determine next steps for your school. Consider guiding the group by asking what your school needs to pull apart and analyze as well as actionable steps that you can take to improve the school's environment.</p> <p>Conclude the conversation with a positive wrap up including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive reinforcement for being vulnerable and participating• Positive reinforcement for taking action and having this brave conversation |

Additional Recommended Watching

- [Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible](#)
- [Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity](#)
- [Bias in American Schools](#)
- [Racial Equity Film List](#)
- 13th on Netflix

Additional Recommended Reading

- [Supreme Court History, Expanding Civil Rights: Brown v Board of Education](#)
- [We won't break the status quo until we admit our own biases](#)
- [5 Ways to Create a Culturally Responsive Classroom](#)
- [Why We Should Talk to Children About Race](#)
- [U.N. Experts Seem Horrified by How American Schools Treat Black Children](#)
- [Accentuate the Positive: The Transformative Power of Small Encouragements And Welcoming Interactions](#)
- [Racism Got You Stressed? That May Be Holding Kids Back At School, Too](#)
- [We're All a Little Biased, Even if We Don't Know It](#)
- [How Teachers Learn to Discuss Racism](#)
- [Facilitator's Guide to Courageous Conversations About Race](#) by Glenn Eric Singleton
- [Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap](#) by Paul C. Gorski
- [Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education](#) by Paul C. Gorski and Seema G. Pothini
- [Equity 101 - The Equity Framework](#) by Curtis Linton
- [Voices for Diversity and Social Justice](#) by Julie Landsman, Rosanna M. Salcedo, and Paul C. Gorski