



# A Guide to Planning & Facilitating Difficult Race Discussions

## Overview

The following guide is intended to provide tips and suggestions for hosting discussions surrounding race (small group dialogue, classroom discussions, listening sessions, town halls, etc.)



## The Pre-Work

*This section will give an overview of the logistics and considerations to discuss with stakeholder populations prior to scheduling and planning the event. Should include input from Diversity leadership and learners.*

### Online Format Considerations:

Have a decision about the platform. Due to COVID-19, a Zoom meeting may be used as the platform. Using Zoom will allow all participants to speak and use chat room [see instructions below]

- Decide if you want the event to be conducted via a [Zoom Meeting vs. Webinar](#).
  - If webinar:
    - Better if the meeting has a didactic portion
  - If using the [Chat](#) feature:
    - Important to delineate how to use chat/how not to use
    - Potential for side conversations
    - Potential for distraction
    - If you have a large audience, using this feature will allow individuals to share their thoughts without "unmuting" themselves.
  - If using the [Poll](#) feature:
    - due to the multiple-choice options being preselected, this feature may not cover all views.
  - Deciding when/how to speak:
    - Using the "Raise hand" feature, the moderator calls on the participant to unmute
    - Unmute when want to speak
    - Consideration of breakout rooms for larger groups
  - How to protect against "zoom bombing":
    - Refer to IT handout on [zoom security](#)
    - Registration and Waiting room using a pre-verified email address.
      - Pros more secure
      - Cons less inviting for busy professionals

## **Audience make-up:**

- Discuss power dynamics in the set-up.
  - Is it one department or program or multiple?
- Consider the racial make-up of the group.
  - If there are only a few URMs (learners who are racially underrepresented in medicine), you must manage the conversation to not burden URMs with displaying trauma/feeling pressure
- Stakeholder group needs to be clearly defined:
  - If learners are the primary audience, then faculty and staff must be directed to serve in an observation role.

## **Content of Session:**

Identify primary focus and time spent (if any) on each:

- Format (may include one or more of following):
  - Listening session about current events
    - Process feelings/emotions about current event(s)
  - Training/didactic portion
    - May include a prompt or video, intro to issue(s)
  - Demand for action and expression of program/department/school DEI concerns/issues
- Create Goals
- Discussion of Time Allotted:
  - Things to consider:
    - How long will the session be?
    - Consider everyone's time.
    - Make time to close the session formally.
- Deliverables/Call to Action
  - Resources provided for:
    - Training of faculty, staff, and/or learners
    - Civic participation
    - Counseling and Psychological Services
- Program response and/or initiative development
- Follow-up/Accountability: Plan and personnel involved

## **Facilitation structure:**

The facilitator structure is depending on the number of participants and goals.

- Lead facilitator/trainer/moderator
  - Leading conversation/teaching
    - Best for training purposes
- Co-facilitation
  - Guiding conversation, limited participation
    - Best for a listening session and support goals
- Panel discussion
  - Used to represent different stakeholders/points of view
    - Best for larger audiences where there will be less audience participation (e.g., Fish Bowl)
- [Breakout rooms](#)
  - With multiple facilitators
    - Best for larger groups where high audience participation is desired
- Combination

## **Personnel and/or volunteers needed:**

- Lead facilitator/trainer/moderator
  - Internal or external expert
- Co-facilitation
  - Decide which departments or programs need to be involved
- Panel discussion
  - What perspectives are needed?
  - Representation from faculty, staff, learners, patients
  - Decide how many panelists you will have
  - Have a Moderator.
- [Breakout rooms](#) with multiple facilitators.
- Facilitators may include any of the following:
  - OMA Staff members trained in facilitation
  - FAALI staff members/leadership trained in facilitation [particularly if the primary audience is staff/faculty]
  - FSAP or CAPS professionals
  - Program and/or department leadership
  - Program or department faculty or staff members (particularly diversity committee members)
  - Learners [leadership in diversity or affinity group]

- Support staff (administrative staff, other volunteers)
  - Monitor chat room
  - Monitor who wants to speak ("raise hand" feature)
  - Timekeeper
  - Private communication to facilitators in chat (re: any issues)



## During the Discussion

*This section will give an overview of the structured facilitation for all group discussions based on decisions and goals from pre-work.*

### Facilitator Script during the Event:

- Introductions [of co-facilitators and their respective roles/offices]
- Statement of Purpose [this is to be scripted as much as possible, informed by conversations with the program leadership/group requesting the session on what end goal is]. Always include the following:
  - Unequivocal statement of support for URM students and denouncement of violence
    - Use preapproved language from Emory School of Medicine leadership and Communications Office
  - Summary of why we are gathered and the main goal of the session
- Rules of Engagement
  - No one is required to speak: can also use the chat feature
    - Statement re: URM if applicable
  - Safe/brave space: People's emotions are raw, and we want this to be a safe space for people to get emotional and express themselves without fear of judgment
  - Please give people space to speak without interruption
  - Refrain from telling people or a group how they should feel and focus on their feelings and questions
- Go over logistics:
  - Stay muted until you want to speak
    - Most of the time there is no calling on people, but may need to add a rule about that, if applicable
  - Turn off video if you leave the room or are multitasking
  - If you want to say something to the facilitator privately, use the "private chat" feature
  - The end time of the event

## **Didactic or prompt for conversation (optional)**

- Prompts may include tweets, pictures, video (re: experience with police brutality, etc.)
- Training snippet [if applicable]
- Provision of definitions [if applicable]

## **Open discussion**

Invite the learners to react/or solicit feelings about the general issue.

- The following topics may potentially arise during the event. Be prepared to address these issues potentially. Also, you may probe on these topics as needed:
  - How to support cause [resources for action: protest, donations, organizations]
  - How to be an ally [for White and non-BIPOC]
  - Health impacts of racism
  - How racism affects the provision of healthcare/their role
  - Racism in the workplace/clinical setting [by a patient, by peers, by superiors]
  - What can Emory/your department/program do to support
- Final Questions (re: wellness)
  - What are you doing to take care of yourself during this time?
  - What can you do?
  - A reminder of resources at Emory

## **Final Statements:**

- Summarizing statement about wellness and normalizing any feelings:
  - Validation of their resilience and existing work
  - Ways to get involved beyond protesting donating, activism, political voice, and own self-care
- Potential next steps/reminder of resources:
  - Upcoming or potential trainings [dates]
  - Counseling (FSAP, CAPS): provide a phone number, email, hours
  - Office of Multicultural Affairs: provide primary contact for learner population
  - Departmental resources
- Plan of Action (depending on goals):
  - Next steps
  - Responsible parties
  - Deadlines