



*The Mosaic Institute*

# BRAVE SPACES TOOLKIT

The Next Generation



**A GUIDE TO CREATING  
BRAVE SPACES**

# BRAVE SPACES CHECKLIST

IN THIS SPACE, WE AGREE TO PRACTISE:



## Controversy with Civility

Multiple perspectives, viewpoints and opinions are accepted



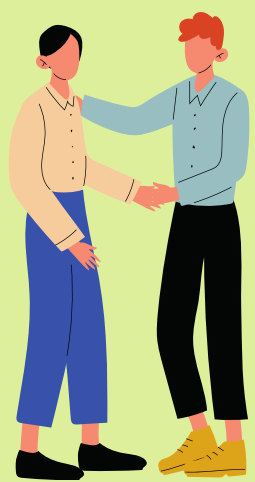
## Owning Intentions and Impacts

We are accountable for our words & actions



## Challenge by Choice

Option to 'pass' or step in and out of triggering (unsafe) conversation



## Respect

Understanding what respect looks like, sounds like and feels like is a requirement



## No attacks

We agree to not intentionally inflict harm on one another.

# Best Practices for Building Brave Spaces as Educators

By making equity & inclusion prominent priorities in our norms, routines and environment, students feel a greater sense of *belonging, safety, trust, and openness*.

This is the groundwork for building brave spaces within our classrooms.

## Lean into your own learning

Within your own context, assess your own comfort level with challenging topics, such as race and racism. As educators, we need to begin with our own reflection because how we approach these topics will determine how students approach them.



Please use our **Educator Worksheets** to help guide you through a self-assessment

## Critically reflect on your process or pedagogical approach in the classroom

**How can inquiry-based learning and other progressive learning models be used to address power dynamics between teacher and student, as well as value the lived experiences and perspectives of students in your classroom?**

Using **Trauma-Informed** approaches support students with necessary responses to help mitigate the effects of trauma.

## Re-imagining your classroom setting



**What messages are students receiving about this space and their role in it? Work with students to create community class agreements and together build a sense of safety.**

**Virtual Suggestion:**

Use Google Classroom/ Zoom virtual backgrounds to create a *Word Wall*. Key terms and sentence stems can be defined and students can use the language to engage in challenging conversations and build up social advocacy confidence.

## Incorporate content that represents a diverse set of perspectives and experiences

**Single stories can foster ideas of possibilities being limited to a privileged few. Do an 'inventory' on the content you choose to utilize in your lessons.**



*What norms do they portray?  
Do they provide a narrow, dominant view of the world or an expansive, multi-centric one?*

**Use differentiated instruction to support this inventory. Now that you have assessed the content in your lessons, what about assessing your process, products and classroom environment?**

**How can differentiated instruction and a universal design for learning help us create a more equitable and inclusive space for all?**

## Cultivate Care

**Brave spaces take work as they encourage uncomfortable conversations that move folks outside of their comfort zone, and build capacity to foster better or new understandings.**

Bringing **awareness, balance, and connection** to yourself and to your students means being intentional about providing care. Make time for check-ins with your students, colleagues and yourself!



# FOSTERING BRAVE SPACES

## Educator Worksheet

### Instructions:

Before initiating a classroom discussion on the topic of race and racial justice, do a simple self-assessment.

Consider the following statements and circle the response that best describes how you feel:

- |  |                 |       |           |                   |          |
|--|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------------------|----------|
| • I am very uncomfortable talking about race/racism.   | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
| • If a student or colleague makes a racist or problematic comment, I will ignore the comment to avoid conflict or because I don't know how to respond. | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
| • I feel ill-prepared to talk about race and racism with my students.  | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
| • I will reroute class discussions if I sense discomfort in the room.  | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
| • I feel isolated in my teaching about race and racism.  | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
| • I worry about my ability to answer students' questions about race and racism.  | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
| • I fear misspeaking or unintentionally doing harm in discussions about race or racism.  | Strongly Agree. | Agree | Undecided | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |

### Reflection Questions:

1. What is the hard part of talking about race/racism for me?
2. What is the beneficial part of talking about race/racism for me?



# FOSTERING BRAVE SPACES

## Educator Worksheet

**Call to Action:** After reflecting on your own comfort level, think about how you will challenge yourself to move from comfortable to courageous. Pick one of the following calls to action or come up with your own:

Do you feel ill-prepared to talk about race and racism? If so, how can you commit to learning more about the issues?

Do you reroute classroom discussions when you sense discomfort in the room or ignore problematic comments made by students or staff? If so, what strategies can you use to help guide the discussion next time? Can you use curiosity to create a teachable moment out of the discomfort?

Do you feel isolated in your teaching about race and racism? If so, can you identify a colleague with whom you can teach, plan or debrief with?

Do you worry about misspeaking or your ability to answer students' questions about race and racism? If so, how can you adjust the classroom expectation that you should have all the answers? How can you accept that you don't have all the answers and embrace the opportunity to learn with your students?

# SELF-MAPPING IDENTITIES

## Educator Worksheet

**Instructions:** Fill out the 3 columns below by listing:

1. social markers of identity (i.e. race),
2. how you identify (i.e. white), and
3. reflect on if this identity marker would be considered privileged or oppressed (i.e. privileged).

Column 1: Social Markers of Identity	Column 2: How You Identify	Column 3: Privilege or Oppression

**Reflections:** What does your chart look like? How do your markers of identity overlap or intersect? Where do privilege and oppression intersect in your life? How might the chart of someone who is different from you look? And how might this impact their life? Write your reflections down in the space provided.

## Additional Resources:

### Facilitating Critical Conversations With Students

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/lets-talk>

### How to Have a Respectful Conversation About Racial Justice

<https://www.aarp.org/home-family/friends-family/info-2020/having-racial-justice-conversations/>

### Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about>

### KNOWING AND RESPONDING TO LEARNERS – A DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION EDUCATOR’S GUIDE

[http://www.edugains.ca/resources/DI/EducatorsPackages/DIEducatorsPackage\\_2016/DI\\_EducatorsGuide\\_AODA.pdf](http://www.edugains.ca/resources/DI/EducatorsPackages/DIEducatorsPackage_2016/DI_EducatorsGuide_AODA.pdf)

## References

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Let's Talk! Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students (2020). Teaching Tolerance.  
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<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/social-research/institutes-centers/institute-on-trauma-and-trauma-informed-care/what-is-trauma-informed-care.html>.



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