

Have You Been *Wondering?*

HOW TO MOVE FROM LEARNING TO PRACTICE

Overview: What is it?

Conversations and initiatives focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are foundational to supporting students in an ever-changing and complex world. By centering dialogue about our differences and how to navigate through them, we equip students with skills to become problem solvers, address conflict, and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways. Students often look to their parents/caregivers, teachers, and other friends and family members as role models for how to engage in these conversations with others. In addition to ongoing learning about topics and issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is also important for us to practice engaging in dialogue. Though often labeled difficult, challenging, or uncomfortable, conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion can get easier with practice. In fact, many scholars encourage us to think about these conversations not as difficult but as unpracticed, helping to reframe how we can enter into and move through dialogue with others across our differences. Often, however, we are not sure where to start, what to say, or how to navigate conflict in these conversations. This resource offers some strategies as well as further resources for you to use to have these conversations with peers, family, friends, and community members.

How to Start

- **Assess your own starting point**
 - What do you think you know? What do you not know? What more are you hoping to learn about? Who are people in your community you can learn with?
- **Start where you are**
 - Don't wait for the perfect moment or for when you think you know everything you will need to know to have the conversation. Practice and progress requires starting where you are now.
- **Establish goals and some agreements with those you are in conversation with**
 - Example: "I am curious to learn more about this topic so that I can better understand it. Would it be ok if we create a shared space to have a conversation share feedback with each other?"

TOOL & RESOURCES

Personal DEI Action Plan

([Worksheet](#))

Part of moving from learning to practice involves reflecting on what knowledge and skills we already have and where we might need to dig deeper and practice more. This worksheet will help you identify where you are in your journey so that you can identify concrete action steps to move from learning to ongoing practice. After clicking the worksheet link, make your own copy to draft your action plan.

Personal DEI Inventory Tools

The following tools guide individuals through the process of self-assessment when it comes to different competencies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Consider using these tools in combination with the worksheet above to flesh out your action plan.

- [Cultural competency self-assessment](#)
- [DEI Competencies](#)
- [Diversity Self-Assessment](#)



How to Start (con't)

- **Don't be afraid of saying the wrong thing**
 - Everyone makes mistakes, and we are all on this learning journey together. Ask those you are in conversation with to help you with more inclusive language or framing along the way. Name your own hesitation about not wanting to get it wrong.
- **Lean into discomfort**
 - Ask a question or offer your concern in these conversations. Leaning into our own discomfort is part of the process of unlearning things that are getting in the way of being in community with others unlike us.
- **Thank your conversation partners**
 - Express gratitude for those you are learning with for offering the space and time for you to learn together.

What To Do When...

- **You are not ready to enter into a conversation or not sure how to**
 - Take some time to process and prepare. Start with a question: “I am having a hard time knowing where to start. Can you help me by posing a question?”
- **You encounter disagreement or discomfort**
 - Name the discomfort. “This conversation is bringing up some uncomfortable feelings for me. Can I take a minute to process?”
 - Name the disagreement. “I am not sure I agree with that claim. Can I offer my perspective?”
- **You encounter conflict**
 - Clarify before interacting:
 - “I heard you suggest _____. Did I understand that correctly?”
 - Explain the potential impact of statements:
 - “The word X is a label that’s often objected to by those it’s used to describe because...” or “I could imagine that your use of that metaphor would feel harmful to people who...”
 - “I know this may not have been your intent, but can I explain how what you said impacted me?”
 - Make the invisible visible by naming it
 - “I think that was just an example of bias. Can we discuss why?”
- **You are curious to learn about someone who is unlike you**
 - Acknowledge your intent. “Your life experience is very different from mine. Would you be willing to help me learn more about your perspective?”

READ WATCH LISTEN

The following are suggested resources for you to engage with over the summer to continue learning about and practicing skills related to DEI.

COURSES

- [Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) (21 days)
- [Do The Work](#) (30 day course)
- [YWCA Stand Against Racism Challenge](#) (21 days)

READ

- [Five Ways to Have Better Conversations Across Difference](#)
- [Fierce Conversations](#)

WATCH

- [University of Utah Reframing the Conversation series](#)
- [The Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations](#)

LISTEN

- [Inclusion Begins With Me: Conversations That Matter](#)
- [Do the Work Podcast](#)

