



## How to have courageous conversations about race and racism with other teachers

Finding critical colleagues can help teachers begin and sustain conversations about race and racism, but such conversations require courage and support. Glenn E. Singleton's (2015) work on courageous conversations about race can offer valuable structure for this work. Start here and then explore Singleton's work through his website [courageousconversation.com](http://courageousconversation.com) and his books.

### Conversation 1: Reflecting on racial and critical consciousness and the fears of not being “woke”.

Spend time talking with colleagues about your own racial and critical consciousness and the fears and discomfort of talking about what you do not yet know or understand about race and racism. Use the following questions to anchor reflection and honest discussion with colleagues:

- What does it mean to admit that “I don’t know that I don’t know” or understand something about race and racism? What’s uncomfortable about admitting that you don’t know something in this case?
- What happens when people express a stance of “I actually don’t know or understand this, but I think I do”? What makes this stance particularly troublesome among teachers?
- How can admitting “I know that I don’t know or understand this” impact learning and growth among teachers?
- What kind of will or commitment is needed to move yourself from “I know that I don’t know or understand this” to “I know that I know and understand this” and be able to take action to disrupt racism and work toward racial justice?

### Conversation 2: Committing to and sustaining the Four Agreements for courageous conversations.

Use Conversation 1 to anchor a second conversation about how you and your colleagues can work to uphold the Four Agreements for courageous conversations about race and racism:

1. Stay engaged.
2. Experience discomfort.
3. Speak your truth.
4. Expect and accept non-closure.

Use the following questions to sustain a deeper dialogue about the Four Agreements:

- During conversations about race, how have you experienced disengagement from the dialogue? How did it impact the conversation?
- How have you experienced discomfort during a conversation about race or racism? How did you work through that discomfort? Or, if you did not work through it, how did discomfort shape the conversation?
- What emotions prevent you from speaking your truth during conversations about race or racism? What makes it possible for you to speak your truth about race and racism?
- Why is it necessary to expect and accept non-closure when talking about race and racism?