

DISCUSSING RACIAL TENSIONS WITH YOUR GROUP

With the recent killing of George Floyd, the ensuing national and local protests and unrest, and the corresponding attention on race and racism in our country, we know you each are having your own personal experiences with and reactions to what is happening.

We want you to know we are here for you. We invite those of you who may want to process feelings with someone or simply pray to reach out to your Groups Director.

We expect that you may have group members that will want to discuss their feelings about these recent events, and others that may be looking for you, as the group's leader, to raise a group discussion. Certainly, these can be difficult conversations.

In light of that, here are a few suggestions as you navigate your upcoming meetings:

- **Pray before your next meeting for discernment and wisdom, for your group members and about future discussions.**
- **Proactively start a dialogue at the beginning of your next meeting. Being proactive will help you prepare and will give you more control.**

Example: “Before we get started, I want to acknowledge the very difficult recent events in our communities and country and take a few minutes to talk about it as a group.”

- **State the purpose of the talk.**

Example: “Our purpose is to give ourselves an opportunity to air our feelings in a safe space.”

- **Establish the “ground rules” for the discussion.**

Example: “Before we talk, I ask that we are gentle and respectful with one another, since we may not all have the same experiences or see things the same way. It's also ok if you do not want to share.”



- **Demonstrate empathy for each person's point of view, acknowledging that theirs may be different than your own or others in the group.**
- **Relieve yourself of thinking that you, as the leader, have to have all the answers. Your empathy, active listening and presence are enough.**
- **Feel permission to redirect or speak into the conversation, if necessary.**
- **Give your group members permission to express any dissatisfaction with the conversation privately with you.**

Thank you for your courage to have honest conversations with your group about this difficult topic. If you would like to prepare by talking with us, please reach out to your Groups Director.

