

TEACHING TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
TOLERANCE.ORG

Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students

Avoiding conversations about race and racism can arise from our own fears of being vulnerable. As you prepare to engage students in difficult conversations, consider this question: What will a discussion about race and racism potentially expose about me?

Use this graphic organizer to list three vulnerabilities you worry could limit your effectiveness and three strengths you believe will help you to lead open and honest dialogues. Finally, list specific needs that, if met, would improve your ability to facilitate difficult conversations.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: A SELF-ASSESSMENT

VULNERABILITIES	STRENGTHS	NEEDS
<p>EXAMPLE: "My children are multiracial. Can I be objective?" "I don't know enough about the issues described here. Am I 'allowed' to lead a discussion while I also learn?"</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: "I have good rapport with my students." "I use community resources to support learning."</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: "I need to learn more information about sex, gender and gender expression." "I need clearer ground rules for class discussions."</p>