

Courageous Conversation

Courageous conversation is a strategy that utilizes agreements and conditions to engage, sustain, and deepen interracial dialogue about race in order to examine schooling, deinstitutionalize racism and improve student achievement.

Courageous Conversation uses the following four agreements to:

- ✓ **engage** those who may not usually talk
- ✓ **sustain** the conversation when it gets uncomfortable or diverted
- ✓ **deepen** the conversation to the point where authentic understanding and meaningful actions occur

Four Agreements of Courageous Conversation
Please be willing to:

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

1. Stay Engaged

- ✓ Make a personal commitment to stay emotionally, intellectually and socially involved in the dialogue.
- ✓ Try not to let your heart and mind 'check out' during the conversation.
- ✓ Try not to divert the conversation or remain silent rather than speaking your opinion.

2. Experience Discomfort

- ✓ It is natural for you (or your class as a whole) to feel emotion, fear and/or discomfort during the conversation.
- ✓ This discomfort may help with problem solving and the healing process
- ✓ When you become more comfortable with being 'uncomfortable', the better you will be able to address future conversations and challenges.

3. Speak your Truth

- ✓ Be willing to take risks and be as honest as possible about your thoughts, feelings and opinions. If the conversation is not honest, it will be limited.
- ✓ Your truth will vary from someone else's truth. You may or may not be ready to share your truth and this is fine.

4. Expect and Accept non-closure

- ✓ Expect that we will not reach closure or solutions for the issues discussed. We cannot expect 'quick fixes'.
- ✓ The 'solutions' are part of the dialogue, which is continuous and ongoing. You may leave with questions and concerns which will be addressed the next time.
- ✓ You must commit to ongoing dialogue as part of your action plan.

