

## Protocol for Reflecting on Recent Racial Events and Articles

This protocol is designed to support central office staff and school leaders in facilitating a conversation regarding the recent racial events and is recommended for a 60-90 minute session.

**Recommended articles for reflection and processing can be found [here](#).**

**Small groups:** In order to ensure equity of voice and a safe space, aim for small virtual **groups of 10-15 in affinity** if possible. If your school’s ALT, SEL team, school culture and climate specialists or equity committee are in a space to lead small groups, they can also be facilitators. However, do not force this. Staff should have the choice to opt in or out of facilitating. They too may need space to process and reflect with peers rather than lead a discussion and that is okay.

If small groups are not possible, you can proceed in a large virtual group setting while trying to promote equity of voice as much as possible by utilizing the chat function, in addition to whole group share-outs.

**Addressing Trauma:** We need to acknowledge that many people, especially Black people, are experiencing vicarious trauma, which is traumatic response to something that has happened to someone else. More simply: the impact of something that happens to one person that impacts others. The symptoms that may present as a result of vicarious trauma are similar to that of PTSD: depression, intrusive thoughts about what happened, sleep disturbances, anger, apathy, and emotional numbing (avoidance).

Most Black people are also experiencing race-based stress, or the pervasive experience of uneasiness that results existing in the world as a Black person. This may include a major racial event and/or the accumulation of microaggressions over time.

We want people to know this information AND know that this event may serve as a reminder of other events. They must listen to their mind/body to determine if they need to step away or completely disengage.

**Share your why:** If you are facilitating this conversation or having another staff member lead, start by sharing your personal “why” for this discussion. Why is this important to you? Why now? How do you feel?

**SEL Connection:** Lead a mindful minute or moment of silence. Here’s [a video](#) to use if you’d prefer a visual. Reach out to the SEL Team for more information and tips: [DCPS.Sel@dc.gov](mailto:DCPS.Sel@dc.gov)

**Norms:** Source: [Courageous Conversation Protocol](#)

State the following before the conversation.

1. Stay engaged
2. Experience Discomfort

Encourage staff to lean into the following conditions:

**Keep it personal, local, and immediate:**

*Use “I” statements. Focus on your journey rather than the journey of others. Speak from your personal experience and your own narrative rather than making generalized statements.*

**3. Speak your truth**

**4. Expect and accept non-closure**

**Isolate race**

*Have people speak from their experience and encourage them to isolate race when speaking from that experience. For example, "As a Black teacher, I feel..."*

*If staff are struggling to identify themselves racially, ask them to think about how they would fill out their 2020 Census. Or, [show them this video](#) explaining the difference between race, ethnicity, and nationality which can often be conflated.*

**Check in on the Compass**

Ask staff to check in on the compass. Where are they entering today's conversation?



- **Believing:** What do you believe based on what's happened?
- **Thinking:** What questions do you have? What thoughts come up?
- **Feeling:** How do you feel? What emotions are coming up for you?
- **Doing:** What do you to do next? What action have you already taken?

**Additional Questions to Continue the Conversation:**

Oftentimes, the compass can suffice as a launching point for a full conversation with staff. However, if there is space for more discussion you can use the following additional questions as appropriate. Model vulnerability by sharing your perspective before asking staff to do the same. Questions can include, but are not limited to, the following. Share them in your own voice. Align them to your school's values where appropriate.

1. What else is coming up for you from the article?  
*Remember to speak your truth from your personal, local, and immediate and to isolate race.*
2. **Equity:** How do you currently engage students when they have questions or reflections about race?  
*How can we continue to hold ourselves accountable for engaging in discourse around race?*
3. **Students First:** How does this article make you think about the relationship you have with your students? Isolate race. Think about the impact specifically on our Black students.
4. **Courage:** How have you spoken up in light of recent events? How could you do more to speak up?
5. **Joy:** What is one thing you've done for self-care during these times?
6. **Teamwork:** What support, if any, would you like from us at this time?  
*What support could you offer to other team members?*
7. **Excellence:** What other resources have you come across to deepen your learning and understanding about race and anti-racism during this time? *Share these with staff as a follow-up.*