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# COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE

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EDUK session 30 July 2024



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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UK  
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# **EDUK Courageous Conversation Session Report: 30.7.2024**

## **Session Overview**

On 30th July 2024, EDUK conducted a "Courageous Conversations About Race" session aimed at fostering open dialogue about race and racism.

The session began with introductions and an explanation of the importance of such conversations. The facilitator checked in with delegates, acknowledging recent news events that might have triggered emotions or a need to discuss racial issues.

## **The session covered several key areas:**

1. Proactive Anti-Racism Strategies
2. Dealing with Microaggressions
3. Developing an Inclusive Language Pocketbook
4. Running Courageous Conversations Sessions
5. Creating Terms of Reference (TOR) for Groups
6. Educating Staff Through Blogs and Poetry

## **Proactive Anti-Racism Strategies**

Embedding anti-racism into an organisation's framework requires a multifaceted approach. This involves reviewing and updating policies, ensuring inclusive practices, and fostering an environment that values diversity. Key strategies discussed during the session included:

## **Reviewing Policies and Procedures:**

Organisations must critically assess their current policies and procedures to ensure they promote inclusivity and fairness. This involves revising outdated practices that may inadvertently perpetuate discrimination and ensuring that all employees are aware of and understand these policies.

## **Training and Development:**

Regular anti-racism training is crucial. Such training helps staff understand the nuances of racism and equips them with the tools to address and combat it effectively. It also encourages ongoing learning and personal development in recognising and challenging bias.

## **Diverse Recruitment:**

Implementing fair recruitment practices is essential to enhance diversity within the workforce. This includes using diverse interview panels, standardising interview questions to avoid bias, and actively seeking to recruit from underrepresented groups.

# Dealing with Microaggressions

## Understanding Microaggressions:

Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional, actions or comments that can be discriminatory or offensive. While the term "micro" suggests that these are small or insignificant, their cumulative impact can be profound, contributing to a hostile environment for those on the receiving end.

## Examples of Racist Microaggressions:

Common examples include:

- Asking ethnically diverse people, "Where are you really from?" implying they are perpetual foreigners.
- Praising an ethnically diverse person for being "articulate," as if it is unexpected.
- Assuming an ethnically diverse person is in a subordinate role, such as a service worker, without basis.

## Impact of Microaggressions:

The psychological toll of microaggressions includes increased stress, decreased mental well-being, and a sense of alienation. Over time, these experiences can erode trust and safety in the workplace, leading to reduced job satisfaction and productivity.

## Steps to Challenge Microaggressions:

1. **Recognise:** It is essential to understand and identify what constitutes a microaggression.
2. **Interrupt:** Politely intervene when witnessing a microaggression, bringing attention to the behaviour.
3. **Educate:** Explain why the comment or action is harmful, promoting understanding and awareness.
4. **Support:** Offer support to the individual affected, reinforcing that the behaviour is unacceptable and that they are valued.

## Developing an Inclusive Language Pocketbook

### Creating the Pocketbook:

An inclusive language pocketbook is a valuable resource for promoting respectful and supportive communication. Here are the steps to develop one:

1. **Research:** Start by gathering comprehensive information on inclusive language and the concept of intersectionality. This ensures that the pocketbook covers the diverse needs and experiences of all employees.
2. **Examples:** Provide practical examples for each section, illustrating how to use inclusive language in various contexts.
3. **Protected Characteristics:** Ensure the pocketbook addresses all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, and more.
4. **Feedback:** Involve diverse groups within the organisation to review and provide feedback on the content, ensuring it is comprehensive and effective.

### Benefits of Inclusive Language:

Inclusive language fosters a respectful and supportive environment, enhances communication and understanding, and reduces misunderstandings and conflicts. It helps create a workplace where everyone feels valued and included.

### Handling Mistakes:

When mistakes are made, it is crucial to manage them with grace. Acknowledge the mistake without being defensive, apologise sincerely, and use it as an opportunity to learn and do better in the future.

# Running Courageous Conversations Sessions

## Creating a Safe Space:

To ensure that courageous conversations are effective, it is essential to create a safe space where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives. Here are some strategies:

- **Set Ground Rules:** Establish rules that promote respect, confidentiality, and active listening. This helps create an environment where everyone feels safe to speak openly.
- **Facilitate Open Dialogue:** Encourage participants to share their stories and experiences. Use open-ended questions to foster deeper discussions and ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute.
- **Supportive Environment:** Provide emotional support and resources to participants. This might include access to counselling services or additional training on handling difficult conversations.

## **Creating Terms of Reference (TOR) for Groups**

### **Purpose:**

Define the group's objectives and goals clearly. This ensures that all members understand the group's mission and work towards common aims.

### **Membership:**

Outline who will be involved in the group and their roles. This includes specifying any particular skills or perspectives needed within the group.

### **Meetings:**

Set the frequency and structure of meetings. This ensures that the group has regular, structured opportunities to discuss issues and make progress.

### **Decision-Making:**

Describe how decisions will be made within the group. This might include voting procedures, consensus-building techniques, or other methods.

### **Review:**

Establish a process for regular review and updates of the TOR. This ensures that the group remains relevant and effective over time.

## **Educating Staff**

### **Anti-Racism Blogs and Poetry:**

Regularly publishing blogs and poetry can be a powerful way to educate staff and foster a deeper understanding of anti-racism. These writings can address current issues, share personal stories, and provide insights into the experiences of those affected by racism. Encouraging staff to contribute their own writings can also help build a more inclusive and engaged community.



## Resources

### Inclusive Language:

- **Inclusive Language Guidelines:**

Access comprehensive guidelines on inclusive language to help you communicate respectfully and effectively. These guidelines provide detailed explanations and examples of how to use language that promotes inclusion and avoids marginalisation.

- [Inclusive Language Guidelines](#)

- **Words Matter: Language Guide:**

This guide explores the importance of language in shaping our perceptions and interactions. It offers practical advice on how to use inclusive language in everyday communication.

- [Words Matter: Language Guide](#)

### Challenging Inappropriate Language:

- **How to Challenge Inappropriate Language:**

Learn effective strategies for challenging inappropriate language in the workplace. This resource provides practical tips on how to address and correct discriminatory language in a constructive and respectful manner.

- [How to Challenge Inappropriate Language](#)

### Responding to Racial Discrimination:

- **Guide on Responding to Racism:**

This guide offers comprehensive advice on how to respond to incidents of racial discrimination. It covers legal rights, reporting procedures, and practical steps for addressing and preventing racism.

- [Guide on Responding to Racism](#)

## Microaggression Videos and Human Library Stories:

- **Microaggressions in the Workplace:**

Watch informative videos that explore the impact of microaggressions in the workplace and offer strategies for addressing them. These videos provide real-life examples and expert insights into how to create a more inclusive environment.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh8Gf18eNzw>

- **The Human Library:**

Explore the Human Library project, which allows people to "borrow" individuals with unique experiences to share their stories. This initiative promotes understanding and empathy by providing a platform for people to discuss their experiences with racism and other forms of discrimination.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6ojQcH3WxA>

This report summarises the key elements of the Courageous Conversations session held by EDUK.

The session was a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive and anti-racist organisational culture.



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