**FLIP the Script**

**RACE & ETHNICITY**

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<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>RESEARCH SAYS</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Ignoring differences can stifle trust, authentic communication, and your ability to connect with someone who is different from you in some way.</td>
<td>It is not racist to see a person's race or ethnicity—it is in fact a natural tendency. Avoiding conversations about race to maintain neutrality will not create an ideal work environment for all employees.</td>
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**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**
Ask your colleagues who have a different racial, ethnic, or cultural background than yours if they feel your workplace honors their identity and experiences.

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<td>Implies that you had lower expectations, possibly because of the person's race or ethnicity.</td>
<td>This reinforces the stereotype that people of color and ethnic minorities are less competent than their white counterparts, and that those who are successful are an “exception to the rule.”</td>
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**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**
Provide concrete examples of why and how you felt the individual excelled. For example, “Your presentation was very motivating, and it aligned with our business goals very well.”

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| Insinuates that racial or ethnic minorities are “outsiders” who can’t speak English and don’t really belong where they live or work. | People of all races and ethnicities can speak English well.

**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**
Unless the person has previously struggled with the English language and has made vast improvements, it is better to congratulate your peer on the content of their work.

Even with the best intentions, we can say or do things that are offensive and hurtful. Getting past these missteps means recognizing that our words matter. This means taking action by using words that create inclusive environments where people feel both that they are valued and that they belong.¹
Shutting down authentic conversations disempowers and shames people by diminishing their experiences, feelings, and sense of worth.

“YOU ARE OVERLY SENSITIVE.”

Minimizing another person’s experiences can raise tensions, lead to defensiveness, and reinforce exclusion.⁵

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Step into another person’s shoes and learn more about their experiences. For example, “I recognize that this is important to you; I’d like to understand more…”

Questioning the qualifications of other colleagues can make them feel that they must always “prove” themselves worthy to be in their role.

“So, how did you get this new position?”

Some people assume that people of color have benefitted from special treatment through affirmative action or quota systems and are therefore not qualified.⁶

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Congratulate your colleague on the new position. Ask questions such as, “What energizes you about your new role? How can I support your transition? How can we team up to advance our company’s mission?”

IMPACT

RESEARCH SAYS

FLIP THE SCRIPT

PAY ATTENTION
Are your words authentic, thoughtful, and carefully chosen, yet not so stilted as to stifle open discussion?

LEARN FROM OTHERS
Ask your colleagues if they have ever experienced or witnessed biased behavior. What did it look like? What was said?

BE ACCOUNTABLE
Ask a colleague: “Can I count on your help to give me honest, constructive feedback if I use words that are hurtful or offensive to you, in the moment or later?”

IMPACT

RESEARCH SAYS

SOURCES
1. Catalyst, Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace (Catalyst, 2016).
5. Catalyst, Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace (Catalyst, 2016); Jean Kantambu Latting and V. Jean Ramsey, Reframing Change: How to Deal with Workplace Dynamics, Influence Others, and Bring People Together to Initiate Positive Change (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2009).
7. Catalyst, Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace (Catalyst, 2016).