

# Racial Climate & Diversity on Campus

## Programming & Awareness Guide

Engage Students, Reduce Bias and Create an Inclusive Campus Culture

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## 10 Ways to Handle Campus “Hot Button” Issues

When difficult diversity-focused issues come to campus, it’s important to have some tools at the ready in order to handle the conversations, possible protests, actions and more that may accompany such issues. Here are some ways to be prepared to handle such “hot button” topics...

1. **Involve ALL staff in the effort to address student needs, including support staff.** When something is happening on campus, those on the frontlines are especially involved, due to their established connections with students. Keep them in mind, for sure.
2. **Hold an in-service for staff members on “how to meet the needs of others during volatile times.”** This can put them in the head space of focusing on others and the varied needs they’ll have.
3. **Watch out for your staff members’ emotions, as well as your students’.** We all know it: those in helping roles often don’t handle their own emotions effectively because they’re so other-focused. Help them do both.
4. **Ensure that all staff/students know emergency plans and procedures.** This proactive measure can include everything from guidelines for student protests to policies about free speech zones.
5. **Talk with staff about media contact.** Is there a specific protocol for staff members to follow on your campus? What should they do if contacted by the media?
6. **Help spread the word when other offices do programs.** In times of difficulty, it’s even more important to look for the collaborators and innovators. There are likely some very valuable events happening on campus – your group can participate and share instead of always re-inventing the wheel.
7. **Address biased comments and teach staff members how to do so, too.** Students may need some tips on how to do this respectfully, effectively and firmly, rather than simply letting their emotions get the better of them.
8. **Sponsor educational campaigns to learn the truth about the issue at hand.** Knowledge is a powerful tool for peace and understanding, while rumors and misinformation can lead to trouble. Help the truth get out there.
9. **Know what your department and supervisors expect during times like this.** This allows you to loop in the appropriate people, support departmental protocols, communicate effectively and best serve the needs of all involved.
10. **Focus on your own emotions and fears, too.** Instead of pushing your needs aside, think about your reactions to what’s going on. They inform your actions, plus, you’re entitled to feel and think your own personal thoughts while handling situations professionally.

# 10 Ways to Handle Campus “Hot Button” Issues: A Worksheet



**Be proactive so that you’re better prepared for various “hot button” issues that may arise.**

- ▶ If a student protest erupts, what immediate steps should you take?
  
- ▶ If a hate crime occurs, what immediate steps should you take?
  
- ▶ What is the best way to quickly gather and/or communicate with the students you work with to address a campus “hot button” issue?
  
- ▶ Do you have all pertinent campus phone numbers ready to go in your phone (e.g. campus police, Title IX coordinator, your supervisor, etc.)?
  
- ▶ What is the campus harassment policy?
  
- ▶ How does your campus handle free speech concerns without stepping on individuals’ rights?
  
- ▶ What is your departmental approach for handling media requests?

**If you don’t want to write these answers out, have the links to campus webpages ready to go in your phone so you can quickly access the answers.**



# Different Forms of Engagement: Handout



Conversation with others on controversial issues can take several different forms. Some circumstances may allow for a cordial exchange of contrasting viewpoints, while others may necessitate swift, unrelenting advocacy. Take time to consider which form of engagement will be most effective in light of your audience, forum and ultimate goal.

Form of Engagement	Structure	Description
Discussion	Often without a premeditated structure	An open and exploratory exchange of experiences and viewpoints without any particular agenda
Dialogue	May be structured or unstructured	An open exchange of perspectives on a given subject that deliberately leaves room to hear and consider all opinions for the purpose of learning more about the subject at hand
Deliberation	Typically structured	An exchange of ideas for the purpose of ultimately reaching a collaborative solution to a common problem
Debate	Heavily structured	A competitive exchange of ideas from individuals or groups who are assigned to promote the merits of a particular perspective for the purpose of exploring all sides of an issue
Argument	May be structured or unstructured	A competitive exchange of perspectives by individuals or groups with opposing viewpoints, for the purpose of advancing the interests of one party over all others
Dictation/Diatribe	May be structured or unstructured	A one-way communication of ideas or perspectives for the purpose of promoting the interests of one person/group over all others, leaving no room for the consideration of other perspectives or ideas

Developed by Eric Butler, J.D., for PaperClip Communications' *The Pocket Guide to Free Speech and Peaceful Assembly* Brochure, 2017



## My Beautiful Mosaic: Self-Awareness Activity

We often jump directly into “diversity discussions” without giving participants an opportunity to examine their own personal diversity. It’s easy for someone to say, “Oh, I’m not that interesting” because they don’t feel diverse.

Yet, this very feeling can lead to a closed off point of view, and maybe even envy, directed toward those they label as “diverse.” After all, if you don’t feel special, it can be tough to celebrate the special qualities in others.

So, consider using some or all of these simple activities to help participants focus on the mosaic of riches within as they tune in to the special characteristics they possess. As a result, this self-awareness will likely help them become more other-aware, too.

### Notes

- » This activity typically works best if the group has already spent some time together.
- » This can be an excellent retreat activity.

### Materials:

- Paper
- Pens or pencils

### To Do:

- Start off by explaining to the group that this activity is intended to be as high- or as low-risk as they want it to be. Encourage them to share if they feel comfortable but not to feel obligated.
- Begin by brainstorming a list of diverse groups on a white board or large piece of newsprint (i.e. Asian Americans, transgender people, overweight people, people from high socioeconomic backgrounds, etc.).
- Once your brainstorm is over, ask participants to jot down things they first learned about each of the groups on the list. They can share these observations with one another, if they like.
- Talk about how family and friends influence our early perceptions of different groups. Mention the role personal experience plays, too.
- Next, start participants talking more about themselves and their own personal riches.
- Have them select five words that best describe themselves and share these with the group. This helps identify personal values (i.e. is it more important to be described as a “sister” or a “biology major”?) while also letting other participants know a bit more about them.
- Go one step further by asking everyone to take some time describing themselves in terms of cultural background, gender, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, etc. – whatever they feel comfortable with.
- Once these components have been shared with the larger group, discuss the difficulties they experience coming from these backgrounds as well as how they are a source of strength for them.





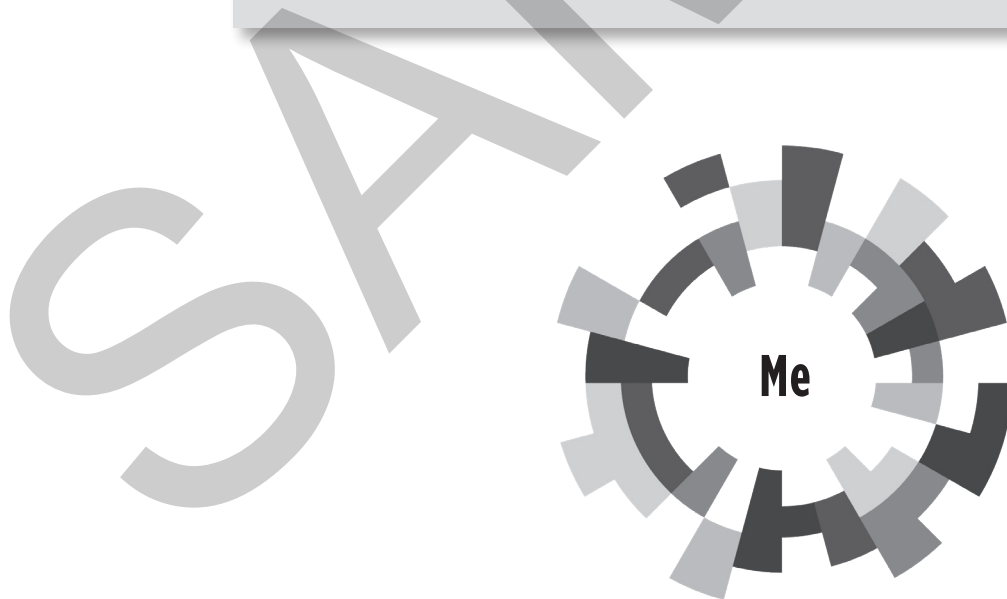
## **My Beautiful Mosaic: Self-Awareness Activity** (continued)

- Depending on what level your group is at, you may also want to explore how their background has impacted their “fit” at college so far. Have they felt an easy fit in some areas while others have been more challenging? Or how has culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender and more impacted their “fit” within your group?

This activity provides an opportunity for individuals to examine who they are and what pieces make up their whole, lovely mosaic. There is a wealth of diversity within each of us. And the sooner we recognize the beauty of our internal diversity, the sooner we’ll be better able to relish the diversity in others, too.

### **Follow-Up**

- A follow-up to this type of activity can involve providing participants with materials to make mosaics that represent them. That way, they can hang them in their rooms/ apartments as reminders of their own Beautiful Mosaics.
- Mosaic materials could include:
  - Colorful paper plates and little squares of tissue paper
  - Solid bases and square tiles
  - Photo frames, paper and colorful markers or paper squares
  - Clear, shallow dishes and flattened glass pieces



# Using Speech Effectively: A Worksheet



It's one thing to speak. It's quite another to speak *effectively*. Before launching a campus campaign to educate others, consider the following...

## What is Your Message?

Understanding *what* you are trying to achieve is essential to achieving it.

- Are you asking people to act? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you raising awareness of an issue? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is your message clear? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will people understand what you're trying to convey, or why it's relevant to them?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Think about a few action steps you can take to work on offering the most effective message:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Consider running your message by people who can provide solid feedback before launching it.

## How are You Getting the Word Out?

Consider your audience.

- Are you trying to get the message out to anyone who will listen, or focusing on a specific group? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will be the best way to reach that audience? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is holding up posters in between classes going to be an effective way of reaching the administration? \_\_\_\_\_
- Or should you try to set up a one-on-one meeting with a key administrator?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Think about a few action steps you can take to work on getting the word out most effectively:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Targeting a particular audience and determining your message distribution channels beforehand can help you be much more effective.

# Using Speech Effectively: A Worksheet (continued)



## Who are Your Allies?

Consider potential collaborators.

- Which groups of people share your same goal? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will it be effective for multiple groups to launch separate campaigns around the same message? Or might you end up competing for the same campus spaces, resources and attention of the same audience? \_\_\_\_\_

Think about a few action steps you can take to work on connecting with allies most effectively:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Strategize with those who share your goals to determine how to get the word out *together*.

## Create Space to Listen

***“Free speech carries with it some freedom to listen.”***

—Warren E. Burger

When you speak, people often speak back. Anticipate the responses that you might receive. Create space to hear others' messages to explore all sides of the issue and all possible solutions.

For instance, instead of sending your message in a one-sided communication (i.e. a campus email), consider sharing your message in an open forum where you can hear other perspectives in real time. Take the time to really listen to those perspectives so that your position on the issue can be fully informed.

Adapted from Information Developed by Eric Butler, J.D., for PaperClip Communications' *The Pocket Guide to Free Speech and Peaceful Assembly* Brochure, 2017



## 5 Key Characteristics of Implicit Bias

A full-color, print-ready version of this resource is available for download.

### 5 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPLICIT BIAS

Interested in working on your own biases surrounding race and gender?  
Try the Bias Cleanse at: [www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse](http://www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse).

Implicit bias is when deep-seeded attitudes and stereotypes impact our actions, our decisions and our understanding, without us being conscious that it's happening. This subconscious bias can impact how we feel about people based on race, ethnicity, appearance, age and other factors.

- "Implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges."
- "The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse."
- "Implicit and explicit biases are related but distinct mental constructs. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other."
- "We generally tend to hold implicit biases that favor our own ingroup, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup."
- "Implicit biases are malleable. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques."

Source: The Kiehl Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity: <https://www.kiehl.edu>  
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