Speak Out

**Impact:** the goal is for youth to have practice initiating their voice into a discussion regarding dynamics of racism with their peers. The activity is structured so that youth can engage in this risk taking behavior in the containment of adults who will remain present but silent.

**Risk:** Low - High

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Directions:**

- Arrange chairs so they are in a perfect circle and tightly formed (if people were sitting in desks, they would be touching). Faculty join the circle and should space themselves out.
- **Explain** that the group has exactly 10 minutes to talk with each other. The entire faculty is silent but is charged with holding space. They create a safe space for the participants by assuring them with their presence. One faculty member keeps time and will give a 5 minute warning, a 2 minute warning a 1 minute warning and count down the last 10 seconds. It is important to be extremely rigid about this formt to create a sense of urgency in the group.
- **Explain** that “Speak Out time“ is not a time to discuss current events, or other things that happens happened in school that day, such as new music etc. Speak Out is a time to process what is going on in the group, to create more accountability and address things that may not have been said, but were felt. The reason for the tight timeframe is to simulate the experience a person has when they have just a few minutes to enter a discussion around issues of race and racism in the world. We are asking youth to find their voice in those brief moments.
- **Explain** that all of the ground rules apply to this context, a participant can pass, but it is also Ok to ask anyone a direct question.
- **Explain** that this time belongs entirely to the group. If participants want to sit in silence for 10 minutes, that is their choice. If there is someone who is talking too much or not
speaking at all, it is up to the participants to regulate that dynamic.

- **Explain** that the group may lobby for more time, but it has to be done before the final 5 minutes and every single person must agree they want more time. The facilitator who is doing time management should make eye contact with each person and get verbal/visual agreement. If there is even one member who is not in agreement, the time will not be extended.

- After the final countdown, one faculty member should close out the activity. This is not a time to offer specific reflections on what was said, but to point out how able the group was to keep the conversation about the work of the group. For example: if it is clear that two or three people are struggling with each other, yet comments continue to stay generic, the closing faculty might say, “Good job today, interesting that folks are still not addressing each other directly. Remember this is your time, find your voice.”

**Facilitator’s Notes**

- It is our experience that when a Speak Out is really going well (*i.e. when participants actively take each other on*), participants do not usually lobby for more time. If it seems like Speak Outs are starting to drift off into current events or that participants continue to shy away from direct confrontation, one technique we have used is to write things people have said up on the dry erase board and leave them there during speak out to get people thinking. We have written things like, “I wear a lot of different masks I this group” or “It is not worth it to talk to my friends about racism/white supremacy” for the group to use as prompts.

“There's the conveying understanding to all of our youth that you will be in a safe space where we can see you, where we can recognize you, remember you, and respect you. Each time you will walk in here and you will be recognized and your essence will be remembered, and we respect that.”

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