

# Courageous Conversation

**Courageous conversation** is a strategy that utilizes agreements and conditions to engage, sustain, and deepen interracial dialogue about race in order to examine schooling, deinstitutionalize racism and improve student achievement.

**Courageous Conversation** uses the following four agreements to:

- ✓ **engage** those who may not usually talk
- ✓ **sustain** the conversation when it gets uncomfortable or diverted
- ✓ **deepen** the conversation to the point where authentic understanding and meaningful actions occur

**Four Agreements of Courageous Conversation**  
**Please be willing to:**

- 1. Stay engaged**
- 2. Speak your truth**
- 3. Experience discomfort**
- 4. Expect and accept non-closure**

## **1. Stay Engaged**

- ✓ Make a personal commitment to stay emotionally, intellectually and socially involved in the dialogue.
- ✓ Try not to let your heart and mind 'check out' during the conversation.
- ✓ Try not to divert the conversation or remain silent rather than speaking your opinion.

## **2. Experience Discomfort**

- ✓ It is natural for you (or your class as a whole) to feel emotion, fear and/or discomfort during the conversation.
- ✓ This discomfort may help with problem solving and the healing process
- ✓ When you become more comfortable with being 'uncomfortable', the better you will be able to address future conversations and challenges.

## **3. Speak your Truth**

- ✓ Be willing to take risks and be as honest as possible about your thoughts, feelings and opinions. If the conversation is not honest, it will be limited.
- ✓ Your truth will vary from someone else's truth. You may or may not be ready to share your truth and this is fine.

## **4. Expect and Accept non-closure**

- ✓ Expect that we will not reach closure or solutions for the issues discussed. We cannot expect 'quick fixes'.
- ✓ The 'solutions' are part of the dialogue, which is continuous and ongoing. You may leave with questions and concerns which will be addressed the next time.
- ✓ You must commit to ongoing dialogue as part of your action plan.

