

# Diversity Council

## Conversations that Matter: Race, Racism, Anti-Racism

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### Purpose

Conversations that Matter is a virtual discussion and learning group session to facilitate guided conversations on the theoretical foundations of racism and practical steps to promote anti-racism in all spheres of our daily lives. Completion of the 21-Day Anti-Racism Challenge is a pre-requisite for participation in this program. Each session will offer a space for learning, exchange of ideas and meaningful action regarding identity, power, privilege, race, racism, and the role of self-awareness in becoming an anti-racist and an effective ally to Black and other people of color. The Diversity Council considers these Conversations that Matter sessions to a first step toward equity and equality in the future. Dialogue is necessary to bring about greater empathy and to amplify the voices of those experiencing racism, both of which are critical to change. *“A mind that is stretched by new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.”* – U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

### Format

All who complete the 21-Day Anti-Racism Challenge will be given an opportunity to delve deeper into some of the key takeaways and personal reflections from the challenge to foster meaningful action and sustainable change. Trained co-facilitators will guide faculty, staff and students to engage in meaningful dialogue with each other on the organizational and individual commitment to combat racial injustice and to advance racial equity. Guided conversations will not only revolve around race and racism but also address bias, identity, intersectionality, privilege, power and oppression from a personal and lineage perspective. Participation is voluntary, and due to the sensitive nature of the topics, levels of engagement in the group may vary from silently listening, gently affirming to actively sharing, depending on the comfort level and readiness level of each participant. Trained scribes will be present at each session and the Diversity Council will curate ideas from the group participants.

The Conversations That Matter virtual group sessions will occur on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month starting on Sept. 23 for one hour each. There will be no session in the month of December. The monthly virtual groups will be offered twice on the same day at Noon and 8 p.m. for the convenience of medical center employees from the three shifts to participate. Registration will be limited to up to 50 participants with a maximum of 25 participants in each group so please register in advance to reserve your spot. Sessions will begin with an introductory concept and exercise with the whole group, followed by small breakout sessions for deep discussion in which four to five participants will

respond to guided prompts. Following the deep discussions, the larger group will reconvene. Participation is limited to only one session per person during the 2020 - 21 P3 period, and those who complete the group session will receive credit toward their annual P3.

### **Guidelines for Conversations**

What you share within the context of the conversation is confidential, honored, and respected.

1. Use “I” statements- avoid speaking for another or for an entire group.
2. Avoid analyzing others people’s experiences; focus on your own experiences.
3. Be honest and willing to share and be vulnerable.
4. “Step Up, Step Back” – if you tend to be quieter in groups, challenge yourself to share. If you tend to share, make sure there is space for others to share.
5. Be open to the perspectives and experiences of others. Listen with curiosity and the willingness to learn and change and resist the desire to interrupt. Suspend judgment. Be open to the wisdom in each person’s story.
6. Be brave and lean into discomfort.
7. Address differences intentionally.
8. Accept nonclosure.
9. Reflect on your emotions.

### **Questions?**

Please contact Wanda Dillard at [Wanda.Dillard@osumc.edu](mailto:Wanda.Dillard@osumc.edu) if you have any questions.