



The BRAVE Model

The BRAVE framework helps us think through our approach to conversations about race. Holding space for these conversations within the workplace can be daunting, but they're necessary to ensure your team members feel seen, heard and understood. Talking openly about race and other intersections of identity also provides a starting point for addressing systemic inequities within your organisation.

The BRAVE model was developed by two US professors, Enrica N. Ruggs and Derek R. Avery. Their work focuses on inclusive leadership.

The framework was developed in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement and the increased demand for organisations to engage in conversations about race, identity and allyship - both on a team and individual level.

The framework is expressed differently depending on the type of conversation leaders are engaging in. Here, we're going to focus on individual conversations.

Breaking down the BRAVE framework

B - Behave intentionally

Consider your relationship with the person you're planning on talking to and what specifically you want to talk about. It's also a good idea to give the person you're planning on talking to an opportunity to 'opt in' to the conversation and space to mentally and emotionally prepare.

R - Recognise the stakes involved

Conversations about race can be fraught for everyone involved. If you're a member of a majority group, you might be afraid of saying the wrong thing. However, it's important to realise that for those who are minoritised, the stakes are much higher - they may feel exposed and emotionally drained talking about their experiences. There might also be a fear of being misunderstood or suffering career-related consequences.

A - Anchor the conversation in sincerity and understanding

A crucial starting point is acknowledging - that your team members will all have a different experience of the world - and of your organisation - based on their background, identity and culture. Building awareness of your own identity and privilege can help.

V - Vulnerability is important

Avoid defensiveness and take responsibility for missteps. It's ok to still be learning - we all are. But demonstrating openness to growth is important. It's also good to note that talking about injustice can be emotional - and that's normal and natural.

E - Empathy is key

Listening to understand each others' experiences is the first step to reducing prejudice and moving us towards a position of allyship and positive action.

When's the best time to use this tool?

- Checking in with team members in the midst of events which may have a heavy emotional impact on certain groups, like the recent UK riots
- Gathering feedback on your team members specific experience of your organisation and how that intersects with their identity

You can use the BRAVE model to approach conversations about race in the workplace with purpose and intention. For more information on the importance of these conversations and tips for approaching them, you might also want to check out our blog on race and identity [here](#).



Key Takeaway

The BRAVE framework is an excellent tool to help you prepare for curious and courageous conversations around race and identity.