

Communicating with Empathy



The horrific and wrongful death of George Floyd has brought the reality of racial injustice to the forefront of American mind's and dialogue, leaving many to feel unsure how to enter these necessary and important conversations that can positively impact the situation. There are a variety of ways for individuals to get involved, whether participating in a peaceful protest, donating to social justice causes, or being a vocal advocate for reform. How we engage with one another to make a positive difference is just as important as what we choose to do. In these moments, empathy can make our communication and actions more authentic and impactful.

- Empathy is active, not passive. Be supportive by actively reaching out to people who may need someone to listen.
- Ask questions to learn what people are feeling and why they feel that way. The priority is understanding their experiences and emotions, not sharing your own.
- Don't try to fix other people's emotions. Let them feel what they feel. Empathy doesn't judge.
- Empathy is about feeling with another person, not trying to find a bright side. Empathy doesn't say "at least."
- Find and tap into shared human values. While you may not share the same life experiences, values like love and loss are universal.

Try being empathetic in your upcoming conversations and take notice of how it affects the tone and outcome of your interactions. As we practice empathy together, we can begin to work through the issues that divide us. Most importantly, we must have these conversations – in our homes, our schools, our workplaces, and our communities.

Learn more about character education.