

THE FIRST STEPS



A GUIDE FOR ELEVATING VOICES, CHALLENGING
PERSPECTIVES and TRANSFORMING CULTURES



O'NEILL
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

"Faith is taking **the first step** even when you don't see the whole staircase."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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Ask Yourself:



Have you ever heard someone say something disrespectful, but you did not know how to respond?

Are you concerned about social justice, but you are not sure how to make an impact?

YOU CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH **ACCOUNTABILITY**



From private conversations to public spaces - keeping yourself and others accountable can transform social norms and create positive change on a massive scale!

Understanding Why

Not everyone is offered the same opportunities based on factors such as:

- Race
- Sex
- Gender-Identity
- Sexuality
- Ability/Disability
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Socioeconomic-status

Inappropriate words and phrases normalize and encourage the mistreatment and oppression of others.

KEEPING PEOPLE
ACCOUNTABLE FOR
THEIR WORDS AND
ACTIONS CAN
POSITIVELY IMPACT
THE OUTCOMES OF
INDIVIDUALS' LIVES,
LIBERTIES and
PURSUITS OF
HAPPINESS

Learning More

Keep yourself and others accountable by learning about under-represented cultures, histories and perspectives. The categories listed below are created by the focus of each resource, but they are all intersectional. Each resource lists authors or directors.

Content Warning: some resources may contain themes that trigger anxiety or depression.

Disclaimer: Students for Change did not choose the following resources based on sponsorships, but based on excellent reviews and praise among activists. Some resources may promote certain political actions. The mission of Students for Change is to empower young people to become civic and community leaders. The initiatives of Students for Change is non-partisan and does not promote any particular party. Viewers and readers are encouraged to understand the resources' primary message and use the context to guide in personal research, discussion and action.

Disability Focused

- [Book:](#) *A Disability History of the United States* - Kim E. Nielsen
- [Documentary:](#) *Crip Camp* - James Lebrecht and Nicole Newnham

Gender Focused

- [Book:](#) *Feminism is for Everyone: Passionate Politics* - Bell Hooks
- [Documentary:](#) *Miss Representation* - Jennifer Siebel

LGBTQ+ Focused

- [Book:](#) *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* - Lillian Faderman
- [Documentary:](#) *Disclosure* - Sam Feder

Religious Identity Focused

- [Book:](#) *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror* - Moustafa Bayoumi
- [Documentary:](#) *Hate Among Us* - David McKenzie

Racial Focused

- **Book:** *So you want to talk about race?* - Ijeoma Oluo
- **TED Talk:** *How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them* - Vernā Myers
- **Documentary:** *Race: The Power of an Illusion* - Christine Herbes-Sommers, Tracy Heather Strain, Llewellyn Smith

Asian and Pacific Islander Focused

- **Book:** *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* - Ellen D. Wu
- **Documentary:** *Out of State* - Ciara Lopez

Black/African American Focused

- **Book:** *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race* - Beverly Daniel Tatum
- **Documentary:** *13th* - Ava DuVernay

Indigenous/Native American Focused

- **Book:** *Legacy: Trauma, Story, and Indigenous Healing* - Susan Methot
- **Documentary:** *Tribal Justice* - Anne Makepeace

Latinx and Hispanic Focused

- **Book:** *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican-Americans, Assimilation, and Race* - Edward Telles and Vilma Ortiz
- **Documentary:** *Harvest of Empire: a History of Latinos in America* - Eduardo Lopez and Peter Getzels

Educating Others:

KEEP IN MIND:

1

A single confrontation may not completely change a behavior, but **every attempt makes an impact** and normalizes the culturally appropriate things to say and do.

2

While it may be frustrating to hear people speak inappropriately, it is critical to **be patient and respectful.**

3

Most of the time, people are not trying to be intentionally hurtful. Not everyone has been educated, and social norms are different across time and space. **Approach these situations with compassion.**

Impactful Intervention Phrases:

- “Because of the historic and current ways members of that group have been oppressed, that should not be said.”
- “I understand that used to be okay to say, but it is not anymore”
- “I would appreciate a civil conversation about how what you said is problematic. Without offense to your character, I think this is a good opportunity to learn about how small things like that can encourage social issues.”
- “You cannot be sure that issue is not incredibly personal to someone in the room. That issue creates obstacles for many people and it is not respectful to joke about it.”
- “That compliment was serving a stereotype. How would you feel if you received that compliment? If you do not think it should apply to you based on your identity, then it is inappropriate for others”

The Next Steps:

Continue Education

- **Attend** culturally relevant events and diversity trainings hosted by school-wide offices, professional organizations, and community groups
- **Research** more history, current events and human bias through books, documentaries, and journals from reliable sources



Expand Circles

- **Seek** out new perspectives from diverse authors, musicians, artists, journalists, celebrities and influencers
- **Foster** new connections within your professional industry as well as social spaces



Lead with Compassion

- **Share** resources for educational opportunities and sanctuary spaces in person, on organization documents, and syllabi
- **Be cautious** when leading discussions on sensitive issues by providing appropriate trigger warnings and thinking holistically about how the topic may impact participants



Give Back

- **Donate** time, money and resources to organizations that empower those in need and strives to make positive social change
- **Advocate** for effective policy change from your school, organization and government



Sources

Ferris, Kerry, and Jill Stein. *The Real World: an Introduction to Sociology*. W. W. Norton and Company, 2020.

Myers, Vernā. *What If I Say the Wrong Thing?: 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People*. ABA Publishing, 2013.



Students for Change is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering the youth to lead in positive effective change. We equip students with the tools to learn effective advocacy techniques, create important connections, and establish local projects.

Visit us on social or at studentsforchange.org



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