

Crucial Conversation Tips: Addressing Community Trauma in Response to the Killings and Mistreatment of Black and Brown Americans.

Scenario A: You have a stakeholder (*youth program participant, coach, parent, or caregiver*) who brings up the subject of rioting, or police killings, or mentions any of the common names of black and brown people seen in the media (i.e. George Floyd, Christian Cooper, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery).

Provider recommended talking points:

- Tell me how you feel about it? What you have seen or heard about the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or Ahmaud Arbery? Or the video of Christian Cooper and how he was treated?
- Does this bring up any feelings related to any racial or social injustice(s) you or a family member might have experienced here in Philadelphia?
- Do you have any family or friends who you are also able to talk to about this?
- Most individuals will have a range of emotions from anger, sadness, hopelessness, and fear. This is normal and completely expected. Have you had any of those emotions?
 - o How can I support you?
 - o What can we do?
- Offer available resources within your community or respective clinic. If available, you might say: “there is a group here dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing stressors related to what you have mentioned. Would you be interested in learning more about a referral to that group(s)?”

Scenario B: You are at practice with a youth program participant and they do not bring up the subject of the recent community traumas.

Provider recommended talking points:

- Before we leave practice today, I just wanted to see if there was anything else weighing on you that you would like to discuss? Some of the participants have been pretty upset by the recent shootings of unarmed African American men and women, and I wanted to give you the space to talk about that if you would like?
- Before we end practice today, I wanted to check in with you regarding reports in the news? Anything specific you would like to talk about? (*this is the more neutral opening*).

- I want to acknowledge the happenings in our country right now are impactful – yes, the pandemic, but more so the recent and horrific murder of George Floyd and ongoing police brutality against African Americans. Be authentic and vulnerable here. If you do not feel it, do not say it!

If available offer a referral to a group that focuses on race related stressors. Or organize a race for social justice group or event within your organization to begin the dialogue.

Things to be mindful of

Use words such as- killings or murders or death of an unarmed black person. To use words such as- incident, event, or misunderstanding, can come across as victim blaming and or minimizing the tragic outcome of these events.

It is okay if you have a different position than one of your stakeholders (*youth program participant, coach, parent, or caregiver*). Your goal is to build relationships and give them space to talk while we listen.

Educate Yourself of the facts of each case. You can find more information here:

Breonna Taylor, 26 year old, AA, female, shot in her home by 3 Louisville, Kentucky police officers <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/black-woman-shot-killed-after-kentucky-police-entered-her-home-n1205651>

Ahmaud Arbery, 25-year-old, AA, male, chased and killed by 3 white men while jogging in Brunswick, Georgia. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/video-appears-show-georgia-man-shot-while-jogging-lawyers-call-n1201301>

George Floyd, 46-year-old, AA, male, killed on camera while in restraints on 5/25/2020 by Minneapolis Police Officer. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/man-dies-after-pleading-i-can-t-breathe-during-arrest-n1214586>

Christian Cooper, 43-year-old, AA, male who was bird watching, when a white woman called police to say “an AA man was threatening her” because he asked her to leash her dog. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/white-woman-calls-nypd-after-black-man-asks-her-put-n1214531>