

Daring Conversations About Identity

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Remember that nothing is black and white, good or bad is a false binary and we have to stay grey

Understanding someone's identity is much more than demographics

There needs to be an environment of psychological safety created in order to talk about identity

We need to understand ourselves and our privilege in order to understand clients

Do your own work, there are many options for that. Recommended books:

- So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo
- My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem
- The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
- The Body is Not an Apology by Sonya Renee Taylor
- Me and white supremacy by Layla F. Saad
- Decolonizing trans/gender 101 by b. binaohan

Daring Way (Brown, 2012) sentence stems to open conversations about identity:

"I don't want to be seen as..."

"I don't want people to think I'm..."

"I would die if people thought I was..."

"I couldn't stand people thinking I'm..."

Then based on those "unwanted identities" you can follow with:

"What does that perception mean to you?"

"Why is it so unwanted?"

"Where did the messages that fuel that identity come from?"

Or try "what box have you been put into that you never asked to be put in?"

To ask about someone's "ideal identity":

"I want to be perceived as..."

"If you label me and reduce me to this list of unwanted identities, you will miss out on the opportunity to know that I'm complex and have many strengths including..."

Magic question- "If you could walk in and I would immediately see and know all of the best, most meaningful parts of your identity, what would I know?"

References

Brown, B. (2012). Daring Greatly. Random House NY.