

***Together Lexington***  
***Courageous Conversations***  
***Race Relations***  
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***FUNNELING IDEAS INTO ACTION***

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## Purpose and Outcomes

**Overall Purpose:** To encourage meaningful discussion and awareness among all members of our community.

**Meeting Purpose:** To identify community concerns regarding race relations in Lexington and share ideas on how to address them.

**Outcomes:**

- Prioritized list of key race relations in Lexington
- List of ideas for how the community might address these issues
- Recommendations for next steps

## Introductory Activity and Opening Conversation

*Participants were given postcards and asked to select an image that spoke to them regarding race relations in Lexington. Participants then introduced themselves and shared their postcards at their tables. The following questions and comments were captured after the introductory activity.*

### What stood out to you from the postcards that were shared?

- Depends on where we're starting; different views
- Foreground and background
- Inclusion/Diversity
- It's easier not to talk about it

### What did you hear that encourages you? What discourages you?

**ENCOURAGES:**

- Hearing people
- It depends on where you are, as to how you see things
- It's not as bad as other places
- Want to move forward

**DISCOURAGES:**

- Hesitant to address issues
- Looking at one piece instead of looking at the big picture
- Range in issues
- We're not where we need to be

## What makes the difference between encouraging and discouraging conversations?

- An ending
- Being willing to deal with discouragement so that we can get to encouragement
- Having conversations in a safe space
- Hearing different perspectives
- Try not to “judge”

## What are the key race relation issues in Lexington?

*Participants were asked to answer the key question within their small groups and encouraged to think broadly, including multiple community aspects. Once all of their issues and concerns were listed, each small group was asked to identify the two most critical issues for the community to address. Their prioritized responses are presented below.*

### Critical Issues and Concerns

- Bias, prejudice, ignorance, racism in media and systems
- Don't rush to judge
- Events/Social activities are segregated (e.g., churches, festivals, gyms)
- Fear of “other”
- Geographic segregation
- Lack of education around race relations
- Lack of equal opportunity
- Lack of representation in employment/leadership
- Lack of understanding
- Misperceptions
- Segregation – cultural and social
- Shame (thinking of past)
- Silos
- Stereotype – profession and race
- Sustained authentic efforts

## Additional Issues and Concerns

- Achievement gap
- Affordable housing education
- Alienation
- Current political climate
- Equity
- Fear – differing opinion of being offensive
- Lack of compassion
- Lack of trust by youth of authority
- Minimal exposure
- More inter-racial dating (visible) needed
- Perceived injustice in criminal justice system
- Resources

## How can the community address this challenge?

*Using their prioritized critical issues and concerns, each small group was asked to answer the key question. Listed beneath each critical issue or concern are their ideas on how they can be addressed.*

### Bias, Prejudice, Racism

- Billboard campaign – highlight successful people of all types
- Modify the narrative, make it positive
- Non-traditional cultural celebrations

### Cultural Segregation

- Consistency/Collaboration
- Create opportunities for interaction
- Resources and communication
- Transportation

## **Geographic Segregation**

- Affordable housing assistance
- Financial literacy – bank accounts
- Health/Wellness care: reduce costs for families; increase wellness to build wealth and stability
- Improved education
- Intentionality: teach about programs within neighborhoods
- Legislate via zoning: minimum standards for affordable housing
- More workforce opportunities: higher wages
- Public transportation

## **Lack of Awareness**

- Challenge community partners (churches, community leaders, law enforcement, schools) to host similar conversations
- FRC conversation and expand to encourage community members

## **Lack of Education around Race Relations & Shame (Thinking of Past)**

- Community projects (e.g., cemetery projects)
- Creating educational opportunities (e.g., Cheapside Park)
  - Small group studies/discussions
- Multi-media campaign
- Sustain investment in youth

## **Lack of Equal Opportunity**

- Keep conversations about equality in the discussions – backsliding
- People measure what they inspect
- Proactive leadership

## **Lack of Representation in Leadership & Employment Opportunities**

- Build connections
  - Mentoring programs where leaders (board members, business owners, community leaders, companies, government leaders) mentor across ethnic, racial and gender lines
- Build job networking opportunities and targeted recruiting
- Co-leadership opportunities

- More awareness of unconscious bias – training
- Training for leadership or for job skills with path to more money and advancement

### **Lack of Understanding**

- Be more caring
- “Judgement Free” zones to respectfully share what you feel
- Listen more
- More conversations in different areas and with all ages
- More exposure and knowledge
- Starts at home, around the dinner table

### **Resources**

- Redistribution of resources, resulting in more equity
- Solicit funds from city Chamber, Knight Foundation

### **Rush to Judgement**

- Don’t do it!
- Have honest, courageous conversations
- Make friends
- Stop and listen

### **Silos**

- Start a “One Lexington” campaign
  - No silos – together, breaking down racial, social and economic barriers

### **Sustained Efforts**

- Foster relationships
- Find new and many leaders (diverse and young) to engage groups
- Church joint services – expand comfort zone
- Intentionality – cross generational
- Implicit bias testing (privacy)
- Measure and monitor progress, quantifiable benchmarks

## Key Next Steps

*Participants were asked to provide recommendations for next steps based on the conversations.*

- All-in rally
- Collaborate with like groups
- Consider change management process for city-wide awareness
- Involve youth
- Make effort to attend more of these conversations
- Participate in other conversations
- Participate in implicit-bias testing
- Share this information with groups you're involved with and stay in touch with organizers
- Strategize a plan for activities

## Meeting Debrief

*To bring the session to a close, participants were asked to answer a series of debriefing questions. Duplicate responses are denoted with an asterisk.*

### 1. What worked for you during tonight's session?

- A beginning
- Beginning the discussion on race
- Communication\*
- Dialogue was honest
- Diverse groups
- Don't know
- Enjoyed hearing opinions from different members of our community
- Everybody participated and nobody said anything offensive
- Flow/Schedule
- Good group of participants
- Good mix of people – people ready to discuss the topic of race relations
- Good racial representation; Good facilitation; Appreciate timeliness; Good methods for sharing information
- Great start
- Nice agenda and format
- Open conversations
- Opportunity
- Short bursts of topics
- Small groups; Good to have concrete agenda
- Snacks and food; Organization of the session and facilitation skills and method; Seating; Pens, pencils and papers; Good questions
- Structure of meeting/discussions; Good conversation at my table
- The break up in tables helped dive deeper in issues
- The setup with tables and diversity at the tables/attendees
- Very open minded group – trust and concern for our community
- We were together and talking; Swift facilitation
- Willingness to share by group members; Clear facilitation

## 2. What would have made tonight's session better?

- Baseline – examples of what works and what isn't in Lexington right now
- Being able to walk around after the discussion and talk individually with attendees
- Better acoustics
- Continued conversation
- Having questions in advance (introvert here)
- Having younger participants be a part of the session
- I figured this group would be a little more diverse, but I enjoyed it
- Individual group facilitation
- Information about existing initiatives
- Invite those affected
- Invite those who are not successful
- It was hard to hear speakers not near my group
- Knowing where the process will go – we don't know how this will have any impact, or if it will
- Maybe smaller scope for discussion
- Maybe some better conclusions
- More attendees
- More city leaders
- More diversity (e.g., youth/age, socioeconomic, educational, language, religious, etc.) – mostly missing youth\*
- More participants with additional diversity
- More time\*\*\*\*\*
  - More time to get a little deeper into the conversations
  - Think specific and not broad so we can find solutions
  - This is such a critical issue that one session barely scratches the surface
  - Too serious of a discussion for 1.5 hours
- Socioeconomic/Geographic diversity
- This event needs an icebreaker to get people loose and thinking about topics
- What are the next steps? Please communicate with us as participants
- Would want more general discussions

**3. Do you have any lingering comments and/or questions?**

- Continued and sustained efforts to bring people together
- Good conversations
- Great meeting new people and discussing important issues
- I'm not sure it's long enough to really dialogue – we never felt complete
- Increased awareness in the city of Lexington
- Keep it up!
- More diversity
- Pick a general topic or current event tied to race relations and debate it
- Please don't launch new initiatives without researching/understanding/engaging existing initiatives
- Race relations is excellent conversation that is needed
- Talk about youth invitations, outside forces into our community
- Thank you for having the courage to sponsor Courageous Conversations!
- Thank you. This was excellent.
- Thanks for honoring that we still have a problem
- We must discuss racism, white privilege and inclusion/exclusion open, freely, and frankly
- Youth, Youth, Youth