

An Educator's Reflection on George Floyd's Tragic Death

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I am the Executive Director of Youth Policy Institute Charter Schools in the Los Angeles area. Last week, I sent the following message about George Floyd's tragic death to my schools' staff members.

As the mother of a 21-year-old son, I am stunned, angered, and not surprised, once again by the inhumane treatment of African-Americans. The images of today's events, along with memories of stories repeated and passed down from one generation to another in my family are so clearly seared in my mind. The events leading up to George Floyd's death and after have been extremely challenging for me to process as an adult. I am certain that it has been the same for many of our staff and children who have been living through the violence.

What We Can Do as Change Agents

Once, again, I am calling on all of you to be agents of change. Seek to understand, listen, learn, reflect,

discuss, and choose to take meaningful actions that make a difference. Remember silence can communicate agreement or indifference; have courageous conversations. Lastly, I am asking that you take a moment to slow down your lessons enough to address this important topic this week in your classes. Unfortunately, once again, this is not business as usual. Your students are in the middle of multiple crises and traumas.

People around the world, and especially in the United States right now, are experiencing anger, fear, sadness, stress, and trauma from a variety of sources, including the pandemic, racial injustice, and economic hardship. As educators, how can we help our students and their families during these difficult times?

Ten Resources

Below are ten resources for schools and educators regarding racism, riots, trauma, and other crises:

Why Teaching Black Lives Matter Matters and other resources for grades K-12 by Teaching Tolerance, <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2017/why-teaching-black-lives-matter-matters-part-i>, <https://www.tolerance.org/>

How to Make This Moment the Turning Point for Real Change by President Barack Obama

Lesson Plan on LA Race Riots for grades 9-12 in Education

World, <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity/social-justice/social-justice-lesson-plans/talking-about-race-and-privilege-lesson-plan-for-middle-and-high-school-students>

Talking About Race and Privilege: Lesson Plan for Middle and High School Students by the National Association of School

Psychologists, <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity/social-justice/social-justice-lesson-plans/talking-about-race-and-privilege-lesson-plan-for-middle-and-high-school-students>

First Encounters With Race and Racism: Teaching Ideas for Classroom Conversations in The New York

Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/learning/lesson-plans/first-encounters-with-race-and-racism-teaching-ideas-for-classroom-conversations.html>

Three Equity-Focused Tools to Use at Home by NewSchools Venture

Fund, <https://medium.com/newschools-venture-fund/sel-has-never-been-more-important-three-equity-focused-tools-to-use-at-home-c80002e486e9>

Emergency Lesson Plans for helping children cope with an emergent crisis by Pacific

University, <https://fg.ed.pacificu.edu/bailey/resources/papers/trauma/lessons.html>

Race and Equity Resources by the American School

Counselor

Association, <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/professional-development/learn-more/race-and-equity-resources>

Trauma Sensitive Schools by the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, <https://traumasensitiveschools.org/>

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement which leads the Coalition to Support Grieving Students, <https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/> and <https://grievingstudents.org/>

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