

DON'T RESCUE WHITE PEOPLE FROM THEIR DISCOMFORT

It is common in conversations about racism for white people to become emotional or defensive as they come to terms with their privilege and the impact of racism. Many well-meaning people, including facilitators, may want to comfort them in a difficult moment. It's important we allow whites to wrestle with their dis-ease so they can work through feelings of guilt or blame. Reassuring someone that it's "okay" or they are "still a good person" robs them of the opportunity to go deeper. Here are suggestions for what you can do as a facilitator to encourage deeper reflection:

- *What do you hear Ray saying? How is this different from the way you thought or wanted to believe things were?*
- *What are you feeling right now? Talk to us about why you are crying.*
- *What's going on for you?*
- *It seems like this activity really impacted you. Would you like to talk about it?*
- *I can see this is difficult for you to hear. I encourage you to stay with the discomfort and talk about it.*
- *It's easy to move to an intellectual place. You seem to be feeling a lot of emotions. Stay with your feelings, and see if you can get in touch with them and process out loud what's going on for you.*
- *What you are experiencing as a result of this activity is a common experience that people of color have. I appreciate you engaging, despite how difficult it is. When people are silent about racism, it's often at the expense of people of color.*
- *How has what your peers shared influenced your perspective?*

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