

STOP HESITATING: A quick, highly directive guide to initiating conversation with your black clients about George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, other lives lost, Minnesota, Louisville, and Racial trauma:

1. Not sure how to start? Pick a phrase, any phrase, and tailor to your liking:
 - a. **“I’ve been thinking about you lately with everything that has been going on in Minnesota and the racial trauma you might be experiencing. Would you like some space to process?”** They may tell you no! Own your discomfort. Sit with it. Move on.
 - b. **“We don’t usually talk about race in our sessions, but I’ve been wondering how the news has been impacting you lately.”** Sidenote - if you’re a white therapist and you’ve never brought up race in your sessions, you cannot possibly be doing enough of your own work. Period. I’m not talking about if you brought it up once and they responded by closing the door, I mean if you’ve never once acknowledged your white privilege in your sessions. It’s in the room whether you have the gumption to bring it up or not. Believe me, your black clients noticed.
 - c. **“I feel a little nervous bringing this up. I want to give you the space to talk about race and everything that has been happening in the news lately, and outside of our sessions, I’m committed to learning how. I’m not going to do this perfectly, but I don’t want to pretend this isn’t happening.”**
 - d. **“I know that I am white/not of your race and can’t possibly understand what you might be going through. I want you to know that I am open to hearing anything you need to process right now.”**
 - e. **“Would you like to talk about the protests in Minnesota? Please feel free to say no.”** This might feel shocking for your client if you’ve never talked about race before. They might feel flustered. You might feel flustered. I promise you, if you’ve never talked about race with your client before, it is far more damaging to not talk about it than it is to stumble through a few awkward moments. I promise you.

2. NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU DISAGREE WITH WHAT THEY SAY TO YOU, SAY THESE THINGS and be careful not to talk too much because you feel awkward:
 - a. “I hear you.” ; “I see you.” ; “I’m so sorry.”
 - b. “I can’t begin to understand what this must be like for you.”
 - c. “Would you like for me to bring this up again in future sessions? I won’t be hurt if you say no.”
 - d. “Here are some options for how I can show up for you/support you, let’s brainstorm together for what that might look like, and add to that list.”

AND THEN VALIDATE, VALIDATE, VALIDATE. DO NOT TALK ABOUT YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH RACISM UNLESS INVITED OR UNLESS YOU HAVE ASKED PERMISSION.

You’re welcome. Also, check on your black colleagues.