



PEREGRINUM beyond one's own

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The following 10 dos and don'ts are on how to respond to youth on immigration and Muslim ban. These recommendations are for teachers/educators working directly with students. Please note that school leaders should provide collective responses to support teachers and students' emotional needs on these issues.

- 1) Do not bring up this conversation for students or delve too deeply for them to share how they feel or the impact of these issues on them emotionally. Sometimes as teachers we feel the need to plan and teach specific issues that are important but often are very sensitive.
- 2) Do consider escapism and denial as a real stage of grief. Sometimes, students appear like they don't care but in actuality they do. However, they just want to feel like this isn't their problem, they want to feel a sense of "normalcy". They want to laugh, have fun and just enjoy being a kid.
- 3) Do not make the students unpack America's problems with race and identity and how it directly affects them. Sometimes, we want the personal connection but for some this isn't their place of security or empowering. No one wants to feel like a victim as much as they want to feel like perpetrator.
- 4) Do offer an open platform as a routine, preferably in a circle where you can create a safe space for students to share what comes up for them. Let them lead the conversations from an authentic place and find their voice in the process. Some may want to opt out of this and that should be fine too.
- 5) Don't point out that Muslim students are being attacked by media, people and the President's actions. The truth is it reinforces from an authority figure that in fact this is true which is an unintended consequence. It also further perpetuates the ideas from those who believe this is justified.
- 6) Do allow for students to hold cross-cultural discussions on cultural and religious norms and how we are perceived differently or the same. This allows the opportunity for students to all identify their experiences from their own relative point. Teachers should serve as facilitators and listeners.
- 7) Don't assume that because you discussed these issues that it will change students' feelings or behaviors. Students are hurting but that hurt manifests in a variety of ways. It doesn't mean that students trust the adults to console them. It also means that students may not be in the physical/emotional state to absorb anything more, including academics.
- 8) Do find the private time lunch or other in the day that you have an invite for students to come and discuss any of these issues. You'll be surprised that some of what you learn has nothing to do with the current events.
- 9) Don't be surprised that you are having difficult conversations that lead to your own emotional breakdown. Take care of yourself, talk to a colleague, take a break, a day off, ask for support and lean on others when needed.
- 10) Do think about how systems affect people of marginalized communities. We have to create the time and space that parents/families trust us and come to us not just at a time of uncertainty.

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