



WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF OUR CONCERN

A GUIDE FOR STUDENT DISCUSSIONS: A COMPANION TO THE REPORT BY THE PHILADELPHIA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

1. In the report, the commissioners write, “schools are responsible for providing Philadelphia’s young people with an education that will equip them to thrive and prosper in a multicultural, globalized world.” What does this mean to you?
2. The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations defines intergroup conflict as any disagreement between two or more individuals or groups that may differ based on their race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability or income. These conflicts can result in discrimination, disharmony, unlawful harassment, confrontational clashes, or even violence. In what ways, if any, have you been able to prevent or resolve an intergroup conflict?
3. In the past year, what have you learned about someone or groups of people who differ from you by race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability or income?
4. What is your understanding of what you are supposed to do if you witness or experience an incident of intergroup conflict while at school?
5. In your mind, what’s the difference between a zero-tolerance policy that imposes automatic out-of-school suspensions and a policy that supports restorative justice?
6. How many different languages do you think are spoken by students who go to Philadelphia public schools? In how many different languages do you think the School District of Philadelphia consistently provides policy information?
7. As the report states, “students are agents for change in reducing intergroup conflicts and promoting intergroup harmony.” Tell us about student-led efforts to reduce intergroup conflicts and promote intergroup harmony.
8. What do you think adults (parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, etc.) can do to help resolve, prevent and track intergroup conflicts?

THE ROLE OF THE PHILADELPHIA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations is available to students and their parents to assist if complaints of harassment and intergroup conflicts are not investigated, or if they are denied access to language interpretation or translation.

The Commission is also available to the District and schools to conduct conferencing and informal mediations and we stand ready to meet with the District on a quarterly basis to assess its progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this report.

Finally, all Philadelphians should know of their right to file a formal complaint with the Commission if they feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status or source of income in the context of their employment, public accommodations or housing.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Find the following educational resources on our website:

www.wideningthecircle.org

ARTICLES/REPORTS

- Bias-Based Harassment in New York City Public Schools: A Report Card on the Department of Education's Implementation of Chancellor's Regulation (The Sikh Coalition)
- Can't We All Just Get Along? Dealing with Hate and Bias (National Education Association Health Information Network)
- Legal Protections Against Bullying in New Jersey Schools (Education Law Center)
- Little Book of Restorative Justice (Howard Zehr)
- The Nature, Scope, and Utility of Formal Laws and Regulations that Prohibit School-Based Bullying and Harassment (Michael B. Greene and Randy Ross)
- Preventing Bias-Based Bullying (New Jersey Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations' Bias-Based Bullying Project)
- Restorative Practices and the Transformation at West Philadelphia High School (Laura Mirsky)
- School District of Philadelphia Policy Section 248: Unlawful Harassment
- School District of Philadelphia Policy Section 249: Bullying/Cyberbullying
- School-Based Harassment: A Resource Guide for K-12 Educators, Revised Edition (Northwest Regional Laboratory Equity Center)
- Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution (Ron Fisher, Ph.D.)

WEBSITES

- The Good Shepherd Mediation Program
- The National Coalition of Advocates for Students: Dealing with Intergroup Conflict in School
- National Education Association Health Information Network: School and Community Safety
- Restorative Justice Online
- School District of Philadelphia Policy Section 102: Mutiracial-Multicultural-Gender Education
- Southern Poverty Law Center: The Teaching Diverse Students Initiative

CONTACT

For conflict resolution and mediation services, or to file a discrimination complaint, call the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations at 215-686-4670, email FAQPCHR@phila.gov, or go to www.phila.gov/humanrelations.

An ADA alternate format and different language versions of the report are available at: www.wideningthecircle.org.