

2. Provide guidance and support to line managers

People managers play a critical role in ensuring that colleagues feel safe and supported at work. We understand that these conversations can be difficult to navigate, and we have listed some points for line managers to consider when having conversations with their teams.

Tips for line managers checking in with their teams

Acknowledge the situation – Discuss the unrest that is occurring/has occurred and acknowledge the racist nature of the incidents. Ignoring this fact will feel disingenuous and colleagues may feel unseen or unheard.

Offer support – Ensure that colleagues know that line managers are there for them to talk and signpost any internal and external support that is available, such as employee resource groups, colleague forums, wellbeing resources and employee assistance programmes etc.

Be flexible – Everyone's circumstances will be different. Talk to your colleagues to identify what support they may need e.g. Do they need to avoid the commute and work from home in order to feel safe? Do they need to work flexibly in order to support a family member who has been impacted?

Ongoing support – Continue to check in with colleagues to see how they are doing. The external environment is volatile, the tension and division seen in media and across social channels is high and will undoubtedly be impacting their mental wellbeing.

Additional Reading

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/conversations-race-work/>

Things to avoid

Rushing the conversation – Build in sufficient time to have the conversation and provide a safe space for colleagues to open up and share their feelings and experiences.

Centring the conversation around your perspectives – Whilst many of us are impacted by the unrest that is occurring, it is important to avoid centring the conversation around your feelings and perspectives. The purpose of the check in is to give colleagues the space to process what is happening and share the impact that this is having on them.

Expressing surprise – Don't communicate your surprise at what is happening. The communities impacted may be shocked and frightened, but many have had to contend with racial abuse for some time.

Making assumptions – Don't make assumptions about who will be impacted. Consider wider connections such as friends, families, community groups colleagues may be connected to, the impact could be broader than you think.

Dealing with racism at work

Outline your organisational procedure for people managers to follow if they witness or receive reports of racism within their teams. Ensure all colleagues know where they can go for support and advice from HR/People team and EDI leads.

Additional Reading

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/act-against-racism/tackling-racism-in-the-workplace/avoid>