5 BARRIERS TO ENGAGING IN BRAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE, AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

1 **THOSE ENTERING THE DIALOGUE DEFINE "RACISM" DIFFERENTLY.** One way to address this is to have a dialogue about the meaning and a impact of racism before digging in.

2 Sometimes, we go into race conversations with an unrealistic expectation: **EVERYONE REMAINS COMFORTABLE AND HARMONIOUS.** The truth is, that's just not always going to be the case. That is why we call them brave conversations. Brave implies that it's going to be uncomfortable, and that it's not always going to feel "safe". A solution to this is to consider addressing group norms, that encourage participants to both embrace and reframe conflict, before moving forward in race dialogue.

3 Another common barrier is when **PARTICIPANTS ENTER RACE CONVERSATIONS WITH A COLORBLIND MENTALITY.** For example, "I don't see color." This can do more harm than good. One way to avoid this, is early in the dialogue, agree to focus on people's experiences of being Black and being White and the differences between these experiences. At 1619 consulting, we facilitate what we call affinity groups, which provides a separate brace space where White people can talk without fear of offending BIPOC, and BIPOC can talk without the burden of rationalizing and providing the validity of their experience to White people. Participating in affinity groups before bringing people together is a great way to begin race dialogue.

4 Another common barrier is participants **SPEAKING FROM DIFFERENT LEVELS OF RACE AND RACISM ANALYSIS.** It's important when entering conversations about race, that there is clarity on which level is being spoken. We recommend one way to do that, is to ground the group on a common understanding of language and terminology.

5 And finally, another common barrier is **FEAR.** We often fear what we don't fully understand. Entering these conversations with empathy, and an openness to grow is so important. Leave space for that. Rather than attempting to be right...attempt to learn. Or unlearn!

BRYANA CLOVER