

1

When your students are having a hard time, take an extra breath. Before jumping in to help in ways that confirm your own wisdom, take the time to ask about theirs. Gather your students together to ask, “Does anyone want to share something they might find difficult about this task?” or “What are some similar experiences you’ve had that might be helpful to draw on as we work through this?” or “Does anyone have any ideas for strategies or approaches?”

2

Cultivate genuine curiosity and humility. Wonder, what wisdom might my students have on this topic? What ways might they have to manage this challenge? What could I learn from and about my students today?

3

Encourage curiosity and humility in your students. Remind them: “Your classmates might have important ideas about this, so ask questions, pay attention, and learn from one another.”

Six Ways to be Culturally Responsive Right Now

4

Teach your students that it takes courage to share who you are, and to be respectful when they come across something unfamiliar or surprising.

5

Get ready to simply validate feelings and experiences when students share challenges you can’t solve. This sounds like, “That sounds hard,” and “I can see why that was so difficult,” and “It makes sense for you to be frustrated right now.” It doesn’t sound like, “Try to keep a positive attitude,” or “That’s not true, look on the bright side,” or “I know exactly how to fix that.”

6

Know that your own overwhelmed feelings are valid too. We need to raise awareness about entrenched prejudice and bias, systemic racism, historical inequity, and unfair systems because these ills will harm some of our students every single day. It is terribly discouraging, but we have to resist avoiding or denying it because those frustrated feelings are necessary to drive motivation and action.