

SHINE FACT SHEET - POSITIVE DIALOGUE IS OUR SAVING GRACE



INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet is developed to provide relevant information to the public in respect of the importance of dialogue and the sharing of lived experiences through our own narratives.

There is a need to celebrate the freedom that we fought for in South Africa. One way of honouring our freedom is by having conversations that focuses on racism, inequality, and the dignity of all.

Present day racism often takes subtle forms and micro-aggressions which although covert, still exert a feeling of inequality and discrimination against individuals and communities. People can openly share their lived experiences of racism, segregation, and inequality through the lens of dialogue.

Dialogue provides an opportunity for people to, share their different perspectives and be able to move forward or find solutions to problems. Through talking about an issue, different sides of the story can be communicated.

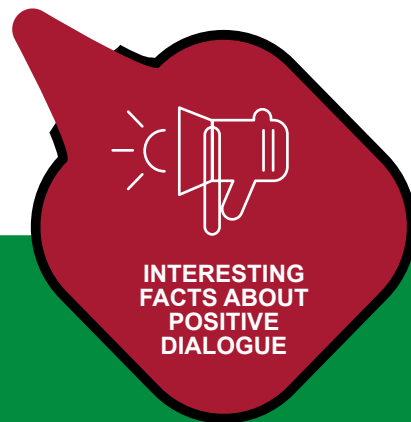
¹ <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/south-african-culture/south-african-culture-communication>. Accessed on 11 May 2023.

² <https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/na-approves-south-african-sign-language-12th-official-language>. Accessed on 11 May 2023.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2006/sep/29/features11.g2>. Accessed on 11 May 2023.

⁴ <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf>. Accessed on 11 May 2023.

⁵ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-trc-0>.



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT POSITIVE DIALOGUE

- There are different ways to communicate and enter into dialogue, which include: raised voices, silence, physical contact, body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and gestures. A person can clearly carry over his or her intention, thoughts, and emotions in a single gesture.¹
- South Africa has 12 official languages, South African sign language being a language that has recently been added to the official language list.²
- South Africans believe in the concept of “Ubuntu” which translates to “I am because we are”. This concept suggests that people treat each other with humanity, dignity, and respect. This concept is applicable to positive dialogue and the way in which South Africans engage with one another.³
- Every person has the right to freedom of expression in accordance with section 16 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996.⁴ This right means that every person has the right to express themselves in any manner in which they see fit, as long as it does not violate another person’s constitutional rights.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a court-like body assembled in South Africa after the end of Apartheid. Anybody who felt they had been a victim of violence could come forward and be heard at the TRC. Perpetrators of violence could also give testimony and request amnesty from prosecution.⁵ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission serves as a powerful example of positive dialogue and the advantages it offers.



IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE DIALOGUE TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL HARMONY

There are several ways in which positive dialogue can be implemented at home and in the workplace. These include, for example:

- Family meetings – encouraging families to schedule time for family meetings every last week of the month.
- Sharing of “my story” in the workplace – encouraging organisations to allow and schedule time for employees to share their stories with one another. Organisations can decide on the manner in which this can be done and how often.
- Engaging in thematic/ topical dialogues in the workplace on a monthly basis on social issues as a way of bringing awareness and starting a conversation towards finding solutions by focusing on personal and/or collective contribution.
- Engaging in regular workshops at a workplace or organisation where people learn more about different cultures, heritage, races, etc. and how that fits in with positive dialogue.



CONCLUSION

Positive dialogue is a powerful tool in promoting social harmony. It's a mechanism in which many of South Africa's current challenges can be resolved. The South African Human Rights Commission endeavors to implement positive dialogue in the workplace and encourage other organisations to do the same.

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