Chauvin Trial Verdict Week Discussion Guide

As we enter this week, we are anticipating a verdict in the case against Derek Chauvin. We are also in the midst of continuing unrest and distress due to the killing of Daunte Wright, the death of Adam Toledo in Chicago, and multiple mass shootings across the country (all in addition to the ongoing pandemic). Students and other members of our school community will undoubtedly be feeling layers of complex emotions this week, and we urge you to create space and time for them to do some processing. Below are some questions to guide the conversation.

Before you begin

Start with being clear about your goals and expectations for the conversation. These guidelines should help keep participants on track and respectful, as well as let them know why you are using class or meeting time on this subject. You may want to establish a time limit, and perhaps sum up the events that you are referring to, since some people may not be up to date. Determine your comfort level with this conversation and each individual question. Gauge the class or meeting group to see whether this conversation would be helpful or harmful for individuals or the group as a whole. Give people the opportunity to choose their own level of participation with this conversation. Some of the questions may also translate into discussion boards.

Sample discussion questions

The following questions can be used to facilitate deeper understanding and conversation. They can be customized or used as they are written.

- What are some things you have learned over the last year that you didn’t know before? In what ways do you think you have changed?
- In what ways have you noticed your body responding to recent events? What strategies have you found to manage these reactions?
- How have you felt empowered or disempowered by the Chauvin trial and/or recent violent events?
- Dr. Anthony Fauci has said that gun violence is a public health issue and the CDC director called racism a public health threat. How do you see these statements having an impact on your own understanding and your future career?
What are some ways public health professionals can be agents for change in situations such as these?

What are you doing or what can you do to support yourself and your community right now?

What are you doing or what can you do to support those in other affected communities right now?

What support do you need?

Additional resources

- Chauvin Trial Resources website (UMN)
- Teaching through National Upheaval (UMN)
- Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (SPH)
- Teaching in Turbulent Times Toolkit (University of Oregon)
- In the Wake of Community Trauma and Beyond (MDH)
- Operation Safety Net (Minnesota)
- Trial Support and Safety (City of Minneapolis)
- Mental Health Resources
  - For Students:
    - To access confidential online cognitive behavioral therapy, visit the Learn to Live website (enter code “UMN”).
    - The University crisis line is available 24 hours a day: 612-301-4673 or text “UMN” to 61222
    - Office of Student Affairs
    - Student Counseling Services
    - Boynton Mental Health Clinic
  - For Employees:
    - Employee Assistance Program (for UMN faculty, staff, and their family members)

About this discussion guide

The SPH Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion created this discussion guide for all SPH faculty, staff, students, and community members.