A Conversation with My Black Son
Student Handout A: Viewing Notes

STUDENT NAME

Instructions: Watch the film clips and make notes in response to the following questions. In the box, record at least two follow-up questions that you would like to discuss further after watching the film.

1. How do the parents describe the police force? What words, phrases and quotes illustrate their perceptions of police? (Record as many examples as you can.)

2. What personal encounters have the parents had with the police? (Record as many examples as you can.)

3. What advice do the parents give their sons? (Record as many examples as you can.)

Follow-up questions:

1.

2.
Instructions: Use the following questions to guide a group discussion about A Conversation with My Black Son.

1. Why do the parents in the film believe it's necessary to have “The Conversation” with their sons?

2. In the film, one parent states, “If you’re Caucasian, when something goes wrong, your first line of defense is to go to the police.” Do you agree? Why do these parents feel that their black children don't have the same option?

3. Parents in the film explain their perspectives:
   “There's an unspoken code of racism and white supremacy [in the police force] that says that my life does not matter.”
   “It doesn't mean that every police officer is inherently a bad person, but what it does mean is that the police force, that institution, does not look out for your best interest.”
   • What evidence do the parents cite to illustrate the fact that their sons are at greater risk when they interact with the police?
   • What stories have you encountered in the news, around school, in books or in the media that relate to this issue? What events/stories/evidence have you encountered that reflect the parents' perspective?
   • Have you heard arguments that conflict with the parents’ opinions? How would you summarize the opposing positions?

4. What concerns do the parents have about how the “The Conversation” will influence their sons’ self-esteem and how they see the world? How do the parents frame the conversation about racial profiling to address these concerns?

5. There are rules in the form of laws and constitutional rights that define what citizens and police can and cannot do when they encounter each other, yet the parents have conflicting opinions about how to behave during a police encounter. Why do you think that is?

6. One of the parents explains, “You can put your hands up and cooperate and say that 'I'm choking' and still be killed... then there’s no repercussions.” How does this illustrate the difficulty the parents face when defining the “right way” for black children to engage with police?

7. Have adults in your life had conversations with you about how to behave if you have an encounter with the police? If so, what advice were you given? How did it compare to the parents’ suggestions in the film?