Engaging Employers as Allies:
Normalizing honest, open and transparent conversations

Sentence Starters for Meaningful Conversations
Adapted from “Respect Differences? Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education,” Robin DiAngelo and Özlem Sensoy

I'm really nervous/scared/uncomfortable to say [X], but . . .
From my experience/perspective as [identity], . . .
I'm afraid I may offend someone, and please let me know if I do, but . . .
It feels risky to say [X], but . . .
I'm not sure if this will make any sense, but . . .
I just felt something shift in the room. I'm wondering if anyone else did . . .
It seems like some people may have had a reaction to that. Can you help me understand why?
Can you help me understand whether what I'm thinking right now might be problematic?
This is what I understand you to be saying: . . . Is that accurate?
I've been wondering about how we are using [term] in this discussion . . .
I have always heard that [X]. What are your thoughts on that?
The author is arguing that only [e.g., men can be sexist]. Can you help me understand that?
Is [X] a good example of what the author was saying?
How would you respond to [X] from a social justice framework?
I am having a "yeah, but" moment. Can you help me work through it?
Given the reality of inequitable power, would it be better if . . .?
How does [X] effect relationships between [Y] and [Z]?
What is another example of [X]?

Additional sentence starters can be found here:
https://eleducation.org/resources/sentence-starters-for-courageous-conversations