

Navigating Difficult Situations and Triggering Events: Responding to Bullying and Microaggressions on Campus

Facilitated by:

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Overall Purpose of Session ~ Deepen your capacity to:

- Identify the types of bullying and microaggressive comments and actions on campus
- Learn how to use the Triggering Event Cycle as a tool to respond more effectively in the moment
- Explore the various intrapersonal roots that fuel your triggered, unproductive reactions
- Identify and practice strategies to respond effectively to microaggressions, bullying, and other forms of incivility
- Deepen your own capacity to be a resource for colleagues who want to learn more tools and skills

“Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.”

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/>

“Bullying is a distinctive pattern of harming and humiliating others, specifically those who are in some way smaller, weaker, younger or in any way more vulnerable than the bully. Bullying is not garden-variety aggression; it is a deliberate and repeated attempt to cause harm to others of lesser power. It's a very durable behavioral style, largely because bullies get what they want—at least at first.” <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/bullying>

“Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions.

The bullied individual typically has trouble defending him or herself and does nothing to ‘cause’ the bullying.” <http://www.apa.org/topics/bullying/>

“Bullying involves an individual or a group repeatedly harming another person—physically (e.g. punching or pushing), verbally (e.g. teasing or name-calling), or socially (e.g. ostracizing or spreading hurtful rumors).

Sometimes these harmful actions are plainly visible, but other times, such as when gossip and rumors are used to ostracize the target, the actions are covert.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, bullying behavior might include assault, tripping, intimidation, rumor spreading and isolation, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, destruction of another’s work, and name-calling.

With the advent of the Internet, bullies are able to maintain a more persistent presence in the lives of their victims through cyber- electronic devices.

Bullying often does not happen in an isolated context with a single tormentor and victim. There may be multiple bullies or multiple victims, and there are almost always peers, adults, and other community members who know about the bullying taking place.

Often, the victims of bullying are socially vulnerable because they have some characteristic that makes them different from the majority. A person might be singled out because of his or Young people who have physical or learning disabilities are also targeted more frequently, as well as students who are on the autism spectrum. Other times, there are no apparent characteristics that cause the target of bullying to be singled out by the tormentor. Regardless, the person being bullied does not know how or does not have the power to make it stop.

Recent research suggests that bullying is a common occurrence in United States schools. A 2011 nationwide study found that 40% of teachers and school staff consider bullying a moderate or major problem in their schools and that 32% of students between ages 12-18 report experiencing bullying.”

<http://www.thebullyproject.com>

“a blustering, browbeating person; *especially*: one who is habitually cruel, insulting, or threatening to others who are weaker, smaller, or in some way vulnerable”

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bully>

“a blustering, quarrelsome, overbearing person who habitually badgers and intimidates smaller or weaker people.”

<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/bully>

Learning Guidelines

1. ENGAGE IN OPEN AND HONEST DIALOGUE
2. PARTICIPATE FULLY (@ COMFORT LEVEL +1)
3. SPEAK FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
4. LISTEN RESPECTFULLY; SEEK TO UNDERSTAND; LISTEN HARDER WHEN YOU INITIALLY DISAGREE
5. MOVE IN, MOVE OUT; ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE
6. BE FULLY PRESENT
7. BE OPEN TO NEW AND DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES
8. ASSUME GOOD INTENT; EXPLORE THE UNINTENDED IMPACT OF COMMENTS AND BEHAVIORS
9. TAKE RISKS: LEAN INTO DISCOMFORT; BE BRAVE
10. RESPECT AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY
11. NOTICE AND SHARE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE GROUP, IN YOU
12. RECOGNIZE YOUR TRIGGERS; SHARE IF YOU FEEL TRIGGERED
13. TRUST THAT THROUGH DIALOGUE WE WILL REACH DEEPER LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING
14. ENGAGE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

Classroom & Meeting Guidelines ~ Your Intentions

*To create a meeting environment where all members feel heard, involved, supported, and respected

*To create a productive and engaging meeting environment for the open and respectful exchange of ideas, perspectives, and opinions

*To promote respectful dialogue, fair discussion of issues, and mutually respectful conversations

- Create a positive, collegial atmosphere
- Engage in respectful discourse
- Demonstrate mutual respect for the comments and views of all
- Consider and explore new ideas and perspectives
- Express opposing ideas in a respectful manner
- Consider the potential impact of your comments and actions
- Accept responsibility for the overall welfare of the entire group
- Engage in respectful disagreement: Argue passionately about issues without personalizing it to the person
- Respectfully address unproductive and exclusionary behaviors from other group members

Common Unproductive Reactions During Difficult, Triggering Situations

Fight Responses

- Aggressively argues and debates
- Raises their voice, yells
- Tries to silence others
- Tries to compete, win at any cost
- Interrupts
- Self-righteous, arrogant, or condescending behaviors
- Controlling, manipulative behaviors
- Intimidating, threatening behaviors
- Forces change
- Aggressively attacks and berates
- Dismisses or minimizes the comments of others
- Explodes and directs their feelings onto others
- Sarcastic or off-handed remarks
- Belittling comments
- Intentionally tries to embarrass others
- Criticizes or accuses with the intent to humiliate and shame
- Bullies others into submission
- Turns their words against them

Flight responses

- Gets defensive
- Becomes overly guarded
- Withdraws
- Ignores or avoids issues
- Tries to smooth over conflict
- Placating to keep things under control
- Minimizes, downplays the issues or conflict
- Shuts down
- Disengages
- Uses humor and jokes to distract and smooth things over
- Quickly changes the subject
- Pretends to agree to avoid conflict
- Uses crying to distract and not engage

Freeze responses

- Blanks out, forget what wanted to say or do
- Zones out
- Feels frozen, like they can't move
- Doesn't respond or interrupt exclusionary comments and actions
- Overly anxious and scared

Flounder Responses

- Giving contradictory comments/examples
- Stream of consciousness, blabbering
- Off on tangents; way off topic
- Can't decide: maybe this or maybe that
- Out of your body, still talking

Increase your awareness of what is happening inside of you and around you by using the skill:

PANNING

Just as a movie camera “pans” the environment to see the whole picture, we need to continuously **PAN** all around us and inside of us as we increase our ability to notice the patterns of treatment and experiences of members of both privileged and marginalized groups.

Some guidelines for using the skill of PANNING:

PAN:

PAY

ATTENTION

Now

- Intentionally observe and notice behaviors, comments, feelings, patterns of treatment...
- Wonder: Is this an isolated incident or a possible pattern of experience?

*****AVOID falling into the trap of making a *SNAP JUDGMENT* ~ creating a “story” about what you see.**

- **PAN** the specific details and facts of what you see, feel, hear...
- Describe what you **PAN** without any assumptions, interpretations, conclusions, or prejudgments
- Notice the group memberships of people involved as you **PAN**, and describe the group memberships ***if this information is useful to the discussion...***

Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates, Inc. 1994 Delyte Frost, et al. Tracking™

Observing/Panning Group Dynamics with an Inclusion Lens

Observers ~ Use the following prompts as you use an Inclusion Lens to observe and track/pan group dynamics:

1. What differences are present in the group? Which group memberships? and how many from various groups?
2. Who is talking?
3. Who initiates the topics?
4. Whose ideas get discussed in-depth? Whose ideas don't get much discussion and/or are discounted?
5. Who is quiet? Doesn't speak as often as others?
6. Who interrupts others? Who gets interrupted?
7. How much air-time do people take?
8. Who do people look at when they are talking?
9. Who has eye contact with whom while others are talking?
10. Who engages in side conversations?
11. How do decisions get made?
12. Who brings up issues of inclusion and diversity?
13. How do people respond when different issues of inclusion are raised?
14. As you notice interpersonal dynamics that are not inclusive, wonder: Is this an isolated incident or a possible pattern of experience?
15. What issues of inclusion are not being discussed?
- 16.
- 17.

Privileged and Marginalized Group Patterns

Privileged Groups

- Greater access to power and resources
- Make the Rules
- Define what is normal, “right,” the “Truth”
- Assumed to be leader, smarter, competent...
- Given the benefit of the doubt
- Often unaware of privileged group membership and privilege
- Less aware about uninclusive and discriminatory treatment of marginalized group
- Are more comfortable with members of marginalized groups who share similar behaviors, appearance, and values to them
- Hold to privileged group cultural beliefs, often without examination
- Collude, and if challenge, risk being ostracized/punished
- Focus on “how far we’ve come”

Marginalized Groups

- Less access to power and resources
- Often seen as less than, inferior, deficient...
- Often assimilate, collude, abide by the rules, try to fit in...
- Track the daily indignities they experience; very aware of oppression
- Punished if challenge the status quo
- Have their truth and experiences questioned and often invalidated
- Know more about members of privileged groups than privileged group members know about them
- Often struggle with finding a balance between who they are and who they are told they need to be to be “acceptable”
- Often struggle with finding their voice and speaking up to challenge
- Focus on “how far we need to go”

Key Concepts of Privileged/Marginalized Group Dynamics

- Not always about numbers
- Visible and Invisible; Innate and Chosen
- Multiple Group Memberships
- Not always about individual behaviors or feelings
- You didn’t ask for it and you can’t give it back

PRIVILEGED GROUP		MARGINALIZED GROUP
Late 30's to 50's	1. Age	Younger; Older
White	2. Race	Person of Color; People who identify as Biracial/Multiracial
Male	3. Sex Assigned at Birth	Female; Intersex
Cisgender	4. Gender Identity	Transgender; Gender Nonconforming; Gender Queer; Androgynous
President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, Faculty, Supervisors	5. Hierarchical Level	Students, Graduate Assistants, direct service staff
Heterosexual	6. Sexual Orientation	Gay; Lesbian; Bisexual; Queer; Questioning
Upper class; Upper middle class; Middle class	7. Social Class	Working class; Living in poverty
Graduate or 4-year degree; highly valued school; private school	8. Educational Level; Credential; Certificate	High school degree; 1 st generation to college; less valued school; public school
Christian (Protestant; Catholic)	9. Religion/Spirituality	Muslim, Jewish, Agnostic, Hindu, Atheist, Buddhist, Spiritual, LDS, Jehovah Witness, Pagan, ...
U.S. born	10. National Origin	"Foreign born;" Born in a country other than the U.S.
Not disabled	11. Disability Status	People with a physical, mental, emotional and/or learning disability; People living with AIDS/HIV+
"American;" Western European heritage	12. Ethnicity/Culture	Puerto Rican; Navajo; Mexican; Nigerian; Chinese; Iranian; Russian; Jewish...
Fit society's image of attractive, beautiful, handsome, athletic...	13. Size, Appearance, Athleticism	Perceived by others as too fat, tall, short, unattractive, not athletic...
Proficient in the use of "Standard" English	14. English Literacy	Use of "non-standard" English dialects; have an "accent"
Legally married in a heterosexual relationship	15. Marital Status	Single; divorced; widowed; same sex partnership; unmarried heterosexual partnership...
Parent of children born within a 2-parent heterosexual marriage	16. Parental Status	Unmarried parent; do not have children; non-residential parent; LGBTQ parents...
More years on campus	17. Years of experience	New; little experience on campus
U.S. citizen	18. Immigration Status	People who do not have U.S. citizenship, are undocumented
Suburban; valued region of U.S.	19. Geographic region	Rural; some urban areas...less valued region
Light skin; European/Caucasian features	20. Skin color; phenotype	Darker skin; African, Asian, Aboriginal features...
Nuclear family with 2 parents in a heterosexual relationship	21. Family Status	Blended family; single-parent household; grandparents raising grandchildren; foster family...
Extrovert; task-oriented; analytical; linear thinker	22. Work Style	Introvert; process-oriented; creative; circular thinker

“Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.”

Blog by Dr. Derald W. Sue, Microaggressions: More than Just Race - Can microaggressions be directed at women or gay people? Published on November 17, 2010

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>

Microaggressions: Characteristics

- Every day actions that occur all around us
- By people who believe they are fair-minded, without prejudice
- Possibly, without any conscious intent or malice
- Usually unaware of how their comment, tone, or behavior negatively impact others
- May be considered “no big deal”
- Few recognize the cumulative, enduring impact of constant barrage of microaggressions
- Some may not even recognize they experienced a microaggression until later

Potential impact and emotional toll on members of marginalized groups

- Uncertainty – never knowing when they will experience another microaggression
- Constantly vigilant, always tracking their surroundings
- Self-doubt ~ given the ambiguous nature of some situations, some might obsess over questions like, “Am I over-reacting? Being too sensitive? Misinterpreting what just happened? Just being paranoid?”
- If they bring it up to the member of the privileged group, often met with denial, defensiveness; fear that this could hurt their relationship, career path
- Left feeling “I don't belong, I can't be successful here”
- May change their behavior in hopes that this may lessen their experiences of microaggressions; may come across as overly friendly, helpful, passive, soft-spoken, ingratiating....
- Feel pressure to “act right” or their actions could be used to reinforce stereotypes about their marginalized group; carry the group on their shoulders
- Damages the respect they may have for members of privileged groups; may not use them as resources in the future
- Often invest time and energy trying to diagnose what happened, manage the impact and feelings, decide if and how to respond
- If choose to “let it go,” may judge self as colluding; feel guilty for not stepping up

Unproductive Meeting Behaviors

- a. In the 1st column, check-off any unproductive behaviors which you have observed in meetings.
- b. Then in the 3rd column, check-off any of these behaviors that you have ever done.
- c. Look back over this list, and imagine what needs the person/you were attempting to fulfill with each of these behaviors. Write these unmet needs in the 4th column. Examples of needs: recognition, inclusion, understanding, clarity, safety, connection, mutuality, collaboration, acknowledgement, efficiency, honesty, respect, competence, trust, fun, make a difference, etc.

Others do this	Unproductive meeting behaviors, when someone:	I've done this	Unmet needs
	1. Makes inappropriate comments or "jokes"		
	2. Belittles the input or comments of others		
	3. Minimizes or rationalizes away the frustrations and comments of group members		
	4. Interrupts or talks over others		
	5. Engages in side conversations		
	6. Dominates the conversation		
	7. Makes snide or sarcastic comments		
	8. Only interacts and makes eye contact with people like them; people they like		
	9. Gives unsolicited "advice;" tell someone how they should have felt or responded differently		
	10. Dismisses or ignores the input of others		
	11. Disregards feedback from group members		
	12. Laughs at or makes fun of other group members		
	13. Treats peers with disrespect		
	14. Gives someone the "silent treatment" or "cold shoulder"		
	15. Uses a negative, judgmental tone		
	16. Uses an overly aggressive or forceful style		
	17. Refuses to participate in the discussion or the activity		
	18. Is silent, shut down or withdrawn		
	19. Challenges the validity of the information being presented to serve a personal agenda		
	20. Questions the usefulness of an activity or a discussion to serve a personal agenda		
	21. Gives excuses or PLEs (Perfectly Logical Explanations) for disrespectful comments and behaviors		

	22. Raises their voice to try to silence others		
	23. Emphasizes “good intent” and does not also listen to the impact of actions		
	24. Makes negative stereotypic comments about others or self		
	25. Tells others they are “too sensitive”		
	26. Repeats or rewords what members with lower status have just said		
	27. “Hears” and acknowledges ideas only if they come from members with higher group status		
	28. Does not engage or “hear” comments from members with lower group status		
	29. Judges or dismisses input from members of lower status groups if they express anger or frustration		
	30. Only asks members of lower status groups to repeat what they have just said		
	31. When confronted, frames the situation as an “attack”		
	32. Go to lunch or socializes only with certain group members		
	33. Acknowledges and praises only certain group members		
	34. Rolls their eyes or makes other negative nonverbal behaviors when others are talking		
	35. Chastises others publically		
	34. Critiques and questions only the ideas and materials presented by lower status members		
	35. Bullies other group members		
	36. Has a patronizing or condescending manner		
	37. Derails the planned format and agenda to serve a personal agenda		
	38. Criticizes the personal character of group members		
	39. Takes credit for the work or ideas of others		
	40.		
	41.		

What Could You Do?

Directions: Choose 1-2 examples of microaggressions and exclusionary situations. Write each one in the left-hand column. Then discuss and note how you could ADDRESS the situation in the other column.

Consider as you discuss:

- What is the probable impact if **no one speaks up** in this situation?
- What could be the **positive outcomes if someone does intervene** and speak up?
- What could you do to **ADDRESS*** the situation?
 - **A** = Acknowledge (that something occurred)
 - **D** = Dialogue (in the moment or afterwards)
 - **D** = “Document” (tell someone; use the Bias Reporting System)
 - **R** = Redirect (the conversation)
 - **E** = Educate (the person)
 - **S** = Stop (the exclusionary behavior)
 - **S** = Support (the people impacted)

Microaggression, Exclusionary Situation	<i>WHAT COULD YOU DO?</i>

Developed by Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western University, 2015
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PAIRS: EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE SKILLS

P: PAN the environment and yourself; describe what you notice or engage others based on what you see (**Pay Attention Now**)

- I'm noticing I'm feeling...anyone else?
- I noticed how quiet everyone got; I'm wondering what is going on for folks?
- It seems some people were impacted by that statement, am I right?
- I'm noticing you're speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- I'm noticing that people get interrupted as they try to share...
- You seemed to have a reaction to what I just said...

A: ASK about the specifics behind the person's comment or behavior

- Could you say more about that...Tell me more...
- Can you give us an example of what you're saying...
- Help me understand what you meant by that?
- What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Can you help me understand what your intent was when you said/did...
- Can you give me some background on this situation...
- How were you impacted when....What were you feeling when...

I: INTERRUPT the dynamics

- Let's slow down the conversation and talk about what just happened...
- I'm going to interrupt and try a different approach to this conversation...
- We are not engaging according to our group norms.
- Let's take a breath...

R: RELATE to the person or their comment/behavior

- I relate to what you're saying, I...I have felt the same way...
- I remember a time when I...I did the exact same thing...
- How do others relate to that comment?
- What you're saying seems to relate to what so-and-so just said...

S: SHARE about yourself ~ self-disclose with a story or example; your feelings in the moment; the impact of a comment or behavior, etc.

- When I hear you say that I think/feel....
- Just last week I...I remember when I...
- I was socialized to believe...
- I'm beginning to feel _____...
- My heart aches as you tell that story...
- I notice I'm feeling a little triggered...

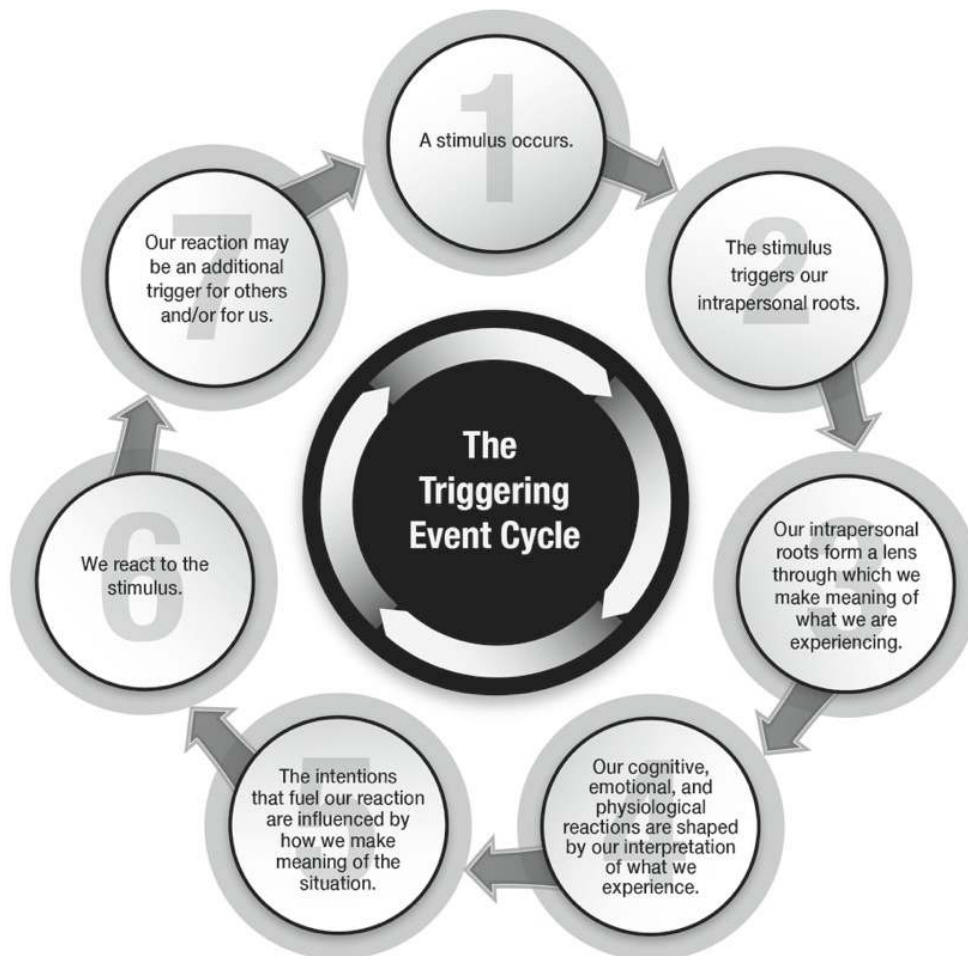
Engaging Skills	Examples/Descriptions
Ask the person for more information ~ seek to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me more... • Can you give me an example... • Can you give me some background on this situation... • What do you mean when you say... • Help me understand what you disagree with...find frustrating... • Help me understand how you came to that conclusion? • What were you feeling when...? • What's your perspective? • What led you to that conclusion?
Paraphrase the person's comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So you're saying that... • So you feel that... • So you think that... • Are you saying that... • So from your perspective...
Explore their INTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help me understand your intent when you... • What had you wanted to communicate with your comment? • What was your intended outcome? • What is underneath your comment/question?
TRACK/PAN the person's body language, tone, and comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice you had a reaction to what I just said... • I don't believe she was finished with her comment... • I notice you just got very quiet...looked away...shook your head... • I'm noticing your tone of voice... • I'm noticing your body language...
Explore the IMPACT on them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems my behavior had an impact on you... • How did that impact you? • What were you feeling when...
Acknowledge and validate their points as much as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hear that you feel... • I can see that from your perspective you think... • I'd probably feel ____, too...
Explore possible solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think we can do? • What do you see as the next steps? • One thought could be to...what do you think? • Might it be possible to...
State your desired outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is what I suggest we do... • I want to...I need...
Summarize the dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the dialogue without stating opinions or judging the dialogue. • So we've discussed...we agreed to...

Navigating “Hot Buttons” and Triggering Situations

Characteristics of a Triggering Event

Any stimulus, either external or internal to the person, through which they experience an emotional reaction that may have some or all of the following characteristics:

- unexpectedness, the person is surprised by the arousal of their feelings
- strong intensity of feelings, the person experiences their emotions as overwhelming and disproportionate to the original stimulus
- disorienting, the person is disoriented and distracted from the flow of the workshop and the planned agenda: “stopped in their tracks”
- feeling out of control and overwhelmed by the situation
- feeling “de-skilled” and reacting less effectively
- requiring extra effort to manage the situation effectively



Common Examples of Triggering Events

Directions: Use a 0-10 scale to rate how much of a “trigger” each of the following is for you when you are engaging in dialogues about issues of inclusion, race, and racism.

0 = no emotional reaction

1 -2 = mild level of emotional reaction

3-4 = low-moderate degree of emotional reaction

5-6 = moderate degree of emotional reaction

7-8 = high degree of emotional reaction

9-10 = extremely high level of emotional reaction

A. When someone(s):

- 1. makes an insensitive, stereotypic, or offensive comment
- 2. acts in ways that are classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.
- 3. interrupts or speaks over me or others
- 4. dismisses my point or that of others
- 5. demonstrates disruptive behavior including joking, side conversations, or laughing at me or others
- 6. makes snide or sarcastic comments
- 7. is belittling or demeaning
- 8. demonstrates domineering or controlling behavior
- 9. demonstrates bullying or threatening behavior
- 10. is arrogant or self-righteous
- 11. is patronizing or condescending
- 12. has a very blunt or impersonal style
- 13. has an aggressive or forceful style
- 14. tries to derail the planned format and agenda
- 15. refuses to participate in the discussion or the activity
- 16. is silent, shut down or withdrawn
- 17. is “set in their ways” and unwilling to shift their perspective
- 18. will only focus on their intent, and not the impact of their behavior
- 19. refuses to consider feedback from me or others
- 20. is crying and expressing deep emotions of pain or grief
- 21. is expressing deep anger or rage
- 22. is engaged in an intense, emotional conflict with me or others
- 23. challenges the validity of the information or statistics being presented
- 24. strongly disagrees with what I am saying
- 25. questions the usefulness of an activity or a discussion
- 26. criticizes my style, design, or approach
- 27. questions my competency
- 28. calls me classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.
- 29. criticizes or minimizes efforts related to equity, inclusion, and social justice
- 30. dismisses the conversation as “political correctness”
- 31. portrays themselves as the “victim” of “reverse discrimination”

- 32. proclaims that they are “a good one” without acknowledging their unearned privilege
- 33. continually points out what others do that is oppressive without acknowledging their own participation in the dynamics of oppression
- 34. shifts the conversation away from their privileged group and to their marginalized group
- 35. only engages in the conversation out of marginalized identities
- 36. “coaches” members of marginalized groups on how to act, think and feel
- 37. is colluding with their own oppression, “going along to get along”
- 38. defends members of privileged groups who are acting out of privilege or prejudice
- 39. publically criticizes other members of their marginalized group(s)

B. For me, when I:

- 40. make a mistake or error
- 41. do or say something biased, offensive or oppressive
- 42. do not know the answer to a question
- 43. fear I do not know how to effectively respond in a situation
- 44. start to cry or lash out in anger
- 45. believe the conversation is about to “get out of control”

C. When a colleague:

- 46. is triggered and experiencing deep emotions
- 47. mismanages an activity or makes an ineffective intervention
- 48. makes an offensive or stereotypic comment
- 49. changes the planned agenda without checking in with me
- 50. steps in as I am leading and takes over
- 51. tries to “correct,” coach, or criticize me in front of the group
- 52. is silent and “disappears” during a group discussion in which they are a member of the privileged group
- 53. is silent and “disappears” during a group discussion in which they are a member of the marginalized group
- 54. takes credit for my ideas or work

Additional common triggers for you:

Developed by Kathy Obear, kathy@drkathyobear.com www.drkathyobear.com

Journaling: The Triggering Event Cycle©

Directions: Choose one situation when **you were not satisfied** with how you reacted when you felt triggered when engaging in authentic dialogue about issues of race and racism.

1. What was the **specific situation** in which you felt triggered (Step 1)?
2. What were some of your **intrapersonal roots** fueling your triggered reactions? (Step 2) (see next pages)
3. How did you **make meaning** of the situation? **What “story” did you make up** about what you thought was happening (Step 3)?
4. **How did you know** you were triggered (Step 4)?
 - *physiological reactions:
 - *self-talk/thoughts:
 - *feelings:
 - *unconscious behaviors or responses:
5. What were your **intentions** and motives? Hoped for outcome? What were you trying to accomplish (Step 5)?
 - *unproductive motives:
 - * more productive motives:
6. How did you **react** when you were triggered? Please note both your actions as well as your intrapersonal processes, such as your feelings and fears, thoughts and “self-talk” (Step 6)?
 - * less effective reactions/responses:
 - *more effective reactions/responses:
7. **How was your effectiveness impacted by feeling triggered? How did your reactions impact you? Others (Step 7)?**

Developed by Kathy Obear, kathy@drkathyobear.com www.drkathyobear.com

Intrapersonal “Roots” of Triggering Events

Directions: Think about your triggering event. What do you believe were the various factors or “roots” that contributed to your feeling triggered?

1. **Current life issues and dynamics** (fatigue, illness, crises, stressors, etc.)

2. **Cumulative impact of recent experiences:** Does this situation remind you of recent events?

3. **Unfinished business, unresolved or unhealed past issues, traumas, and “wounds:”** Does this person remind you of anyone? Does this situation remind you of past traumas?

4. **Fears** (check-off all that are related and add any others)
 - My personal issues will become the focus of the conversation: all eyes will be on me.
 - I will lose credibility and be seen as less competent.
 - If I cry and show emotion, people will think less of me... I won't be able to manage the situation.
 - The conversation will “get out of control.”
 - People will get too emotional and I won't have the skills to manage the situation.
 - I won't know enough about the issue to engage in conversation.
 - If I challenge this issue I will be all alone without any support.
 - I won't be able to express myself clearly; I'll be misunderstood.
 - If I am too confrontational or angry, then people will judge me, be mad at me, reject me, ostracize me, etc.
 - I will be seen as incompetent and “not good enough.”
 - They will see how prejudiced I really am.
 - I'll let people down and disappoint them.
 - People won't like me or approve of me.
 - Things won't change.
 - I will make a mistake and be wrong.
 - People will be disappointed in me.
 - If I don't handle this well, people could feel uncomfortable...be hurt.
 - Things will be worse off than before.

5. Unmet Universal Needs/What I value* (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- Respect, dignity
- Trust
- Planning, order
- Fairness
- Clarity, understanding
- Openness, honesty
- Direct communication
- Respectful disagreement
- Recognition, acknowledgement
- Appreciation
- Competence, effectiveness
- Success, to make a difference
- To be kept informed and updated
- Harmony, peace...
- Safety, security
- Integrity
- Innovation and creativity
- Ease and simplicity
- Connection
- Mutuality, partnering, collaboration
- For approval
- For acceptance, belonging
- Inclusion
- Consideration
- Dependability, follow-through

6. Ego-driven desires (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- To assert, regain my power and authority
- To have control
- To win the argument; prove them wrong
- To get my way
- To make people change; “fix” them
- To make people learn
- To be right
- To shut them down, put them in their place
- To make them feel the pain and hurt I feel
- To be seen as the expert, smart
- To prove I am competent
- To gain prestige and status
- To be admired; avoid disgrace
- To be liked
- To fit in
- To be seen as a “good one,” an ally
- To be perfect
- To gain certainty and predictability
- For everyone to feel happy
- To avoid deep emotions and conflict
- To make others engage as I want them to

7. Biases, assumptions, expectations, shoulds, and judgments

*This section was enhanced by the work of Marshall Rosenberg (2005). Nonviolent Communication.
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Feelings and Emotions

Major source: Raj Gill, Lucy Leu, Judi Morin, NVC Toolkit, 2009

Sit with your reactions/reflections/experiences.... **Check-off/Circle any emotions that you felt/feel.**
Add any others to the list.

Aggravated	Distressed	Jealous
Agitated	Distrustful	Jubilant
Alarmed	Drained	Lonely
Alienated	Dumbfounded	Longing
Ambivalent	Eager	Mean
Amused	Edgy	Mortified
Angry	Embarrassed	Nervous
Anguish	Empowered	Numb
Annoyed	Empathetic	Outraged
Anxious	Enraged	Overwhelmed
Appreciative	Envious	Panic
Apprehensive	Exasperated	Paralyzed
Appalled	Excited	Peaceful
Awe	Exhausted	Perplexed
Ashamed	Exhilarated	Powerless
Bitter	Fascinated	Preoccupied
Bored	Fearful	Puzzled
Burned out	Forlorn	Raging
Calm	Frightened	Regretful
Carefree	Furious	Relieved
Confident	Grateful	Remorseful
Confused	Gratified	Repulsed
Crushed	Grief	Resentful
Defeated	Guilty	Sad
Deflated	Hateful	Surprised
Dejected	Heartbroken	Sympathetic
Depleted	Hesitant	Tender
Depressed	Hopeless	Tense
Despair	Hurt	Terrified
Determined	Impatient	Touched
Disappointed	Incensed	Unsettled
Discouraged	Indifferent	Useless
Disgusted	Indignant	Vulnerable
Disheartened	Infuriated	Wary
Disillusioned	Insecure	Weary
Dissatisfied	Inspired	Worried
Distracted	Irritated	

Common Universal Needs/Values

(Adapted from R. Gill, L. Leu, and J. Morin (2009). NVC Toolkit for Facilitators.)

acceptance	effectiveness	openness
adaptability	efficiency	order
appreciation	empathy	participation
authenticity	equality	partnership
autonomy	fairness	peace
awareness	follow-through	play
balance	freedom	presence
beauty	fun	progress
belonging	growth	purpose
caring	harmony	reflection
celebration	healing	relaxation
challenge	health	reliability
choice	honesty	relief
clarity	hope	respect
collaboration	humor	rest
communication	inclusion	safety
community	independence	security
companionship	inspiration	self-expression
compassion	integration	self-reliance
competence	integrity	space
consciousness	intimacy	stimulation
connection	joy	spontaneity
consideration	learning	stability
contribution	love	support
cooperation	mattering	trust
creating	meaning	understanding
creativity	mourning	warmth
dependability	movement	wellbeing
dignity	mutuality	
ease	nurturance	

STEP 3: Shift Your “Story” of What You Think is Happening

Step 3: The “story” I make up about what I think is happening	Given this story, how I would feel and, possibly, react less effectively	1-2 alternative stories that leave me feeling curious, compassionate, and/or caring

Identify Less Productive, “Negative” Intentions (Step 5), such as:

- win the argument
- get even; get them back
- to be right; prove the other person wrong
- to prove you are competent, smart
- assert your power and authority
- gain status and prestige; be admired
- be in control
- intimidate the other person
- “put them in their place,” shut them down
- punish the other person
- embarrass or put down
- make them feel the pain and hurt you feel
- change the other person’s views, feelings or behaviors
- to make people learn
- trick and “out fox” the other person
- keep the conversation “under control”
- avoid intense emotions: in self and others
- make everyone feel happy and harmonious
- avoid feeling or being viewed as “incompetent”
- control how others feel about you
- to seen as a “good one,” an ally
- use the current opportunity to “right the wrongs” you experienced in the past
- change the other person to account for times you either didn’t or couldn’t change oppressive people earlier in your life
- ignore them
- seek approval of others
- to be liked, to fit in
- avoid confrontation and conflict

When You Feel Triggered, Shift Your Intentions to Align with Your Inclusion Values:

- create greater inclusion
- leave people feelings whole
- engage in respectful dialogue
- do no harm
- “go with the flow;” trust the process
- deepen learning and growth
- meet the people “where they are” without judgment
- use the triggering moment to deepen understanding
- relate in to the person; connect with them
- create space for honest, authentic dialogue
- invite people to learn from the situation
- model the social justice behaviors you espouse: authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, engagement...
- model skills to navigate triggering moments: scan yourself, identify unmet needs, shift self-talk, stress management, realigning intentions, exploring intrapersonal roots...
- facilitate open, honest discussion
- create space for the other person to express their feelings, perceptions
- deepen understanding across differences
- identify the deeper issues fueling the feelings, perceptions and behaviors of others
- create safety for the expression of differing viewpoints
- treat others with respect and dignity
- encourage more people to engage in the dialogue
- support people to disagree with each other in respectful ways
- model effective recovery skills after making an inappropriate comment or when your behavior results in negative impact
- re-establish credibility with the person/group
- identify inappropriate behaviors and explore the negative impact
- interrupt unproductive, inappropriate behaviors and group dynamics
- take time to “gather oneself,” navigate personal emotions, gain perspective...
- build a “bridge” and a connection with the other person
- encourage identity development and growth
- demonstrate compassion and empathy

Step 5: Shift Your Intentions

My less productive, “negative” intentions	More productive, effective intentions	How I might respond more productively, effectively

Navigating Difficult Situations: Self-Assessment Checklist

Use the following scale to assess on your current skills and abilities during Difficult Situations:
5=Almost always 4=Most of the time 3=Much of the time 2= Sometimes 1= Rarely

- _____ 1. I acknowledge comments that seem inappropriate or triggering.
- _____ 2. I effectively name and discuss group dynamics in the moment and use them as “teachable moments” to facilitate deeper learning.
- _____ 3. I recognize that “resistance” and challenges are often doorways to deeper understanding and learning for the group.
- _____ 4. I engage people in dialogue when they make inappropriate or triggering comments.
- _____ 5. I encourage other group members to participate and engage in the discussion.
- _____ 6. I effectively navigate conflict and disagreement among group members.
- _____ 7. I can respond effectively to challenges and engage resistance from group members without taking it personally or feeling triggered.
- _____ 8. I effectively navigate behaviors I believe are distracting, including dominating, interrupting, side-tracking, side conversations, etc.
- _____ 9. I effectively navigate situations where group members are feeling and expressing deep emotions, including anger, sadness, fear, frustration, hopelessness, etc.
- _____ 10. I am able to be “in the moment” ~ fully present and focused on what is happening in the group and in myself.
- _____ 11. I use self-disclosure and share feelings, thoughts, opinions, and personal experiences as appropriate.
- _____ 12. I easily “go with the flow” and am flexible with the agenda as I adjust to the needs of the group in the moment.
- _____ 13. I can “meet the people where they are” and not demand or expect them to be farther along in their understanding or skill development.
- _____ 14. I use silence effectively.
- _____ 15. I use “Connecting Language” that bridges one person’s comments to another’s.
- _____ 16. I effectively find some relevant point in each person’s comments, even those that seem way off the topic.
- _____ 17. If I believe someone is on a tangent, I can effectively acknowledge their point, and redirect the conversation back to the group’s topic.

- _____ 18. I minimize how much I use the “telling” style, and maximize how often I pose questions or dilemmas to facilitate dialogue among others.
- _____ 19. I am aware of how I use my body language and nonverbal behavior to facilitate learning and engage others.
- _____ 20. I am aware of the how people/I may experience and interpret body language and nonverbal behaviors differently based upon their cultural perspective, and their experiences in their multiple privileged and marginalized groups.
- _____ 21. I am able to “relate in” and “see myself in others” to find compassion and connection, rather than judging them or distancing from them.
- _____ 22. I pay attention to the social group identities of others and notice patterns of participation, including who’s talking, who is quiet, who interrupts, who gets interrupted, who assumes leadership, whose ideas “plop,” etc.
- _____ 23. I am aware of my biases, assumptions, and stereotypes for various privileged and marginalized groups.
- _____ 24. I continually interrupt, reframe, and unlearn my biases, stereotypes and assumptions about privileged and marginalized groups.
- _____ 25. I understand how my various privileged and marginalized group identities impact how I am often perceived and experienced by others.
- _____ 26. I understand how my various privileged and marginalized group identities impact how I often make meaning of situations, and then how I react/respond.
- _____ 27. I continuously self-reflect to examine my behaviors, assumptions, feelings, and attitudes and their impact on others across social group memberships.
- _____ 28. I continually seek and utilize feedback about my behaviors and attitudes from members of privileged and marginalized groups; and utilize their input to improve my practice.
- _____ 29. I am aware of my “early warning signals” that I am beginning to feel triggered.
- _____ 30. I am able to notice and navigate my own triggered feelings of anger, fear, stress, grief, etc., so that I don’t “work my issues on the group.”
- _____ 31. I am aware of my triggers and their intrapersonal roots.
- _____ 32. I actively do my work around my triggers: explore their intrapersonal roots; do my healing work; etc.

Commitment Sheet

Imagine a future difficult dialogue

- How might I prepare?

- What tools might I use to navigate my triggered reactions and become more centered and present?

- What tools might I use to engage others?

My next steps

1. What specific skills and capacities do I intend to develop further?

2. What resources can help me deepen my capacity and competence?
 - a. Who can I consult with and/or observe “in action?”

 - b. What can I read and study?

 - c. What videos can I watch?

 - d. From whom can I get support and encouragement?