



Navigating Difficult Situations, Part 2

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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. Explore the impact of comments and behaviors; Acknowledge intent
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 classroom environment where all students feel heard, involved, supported, and respected

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

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

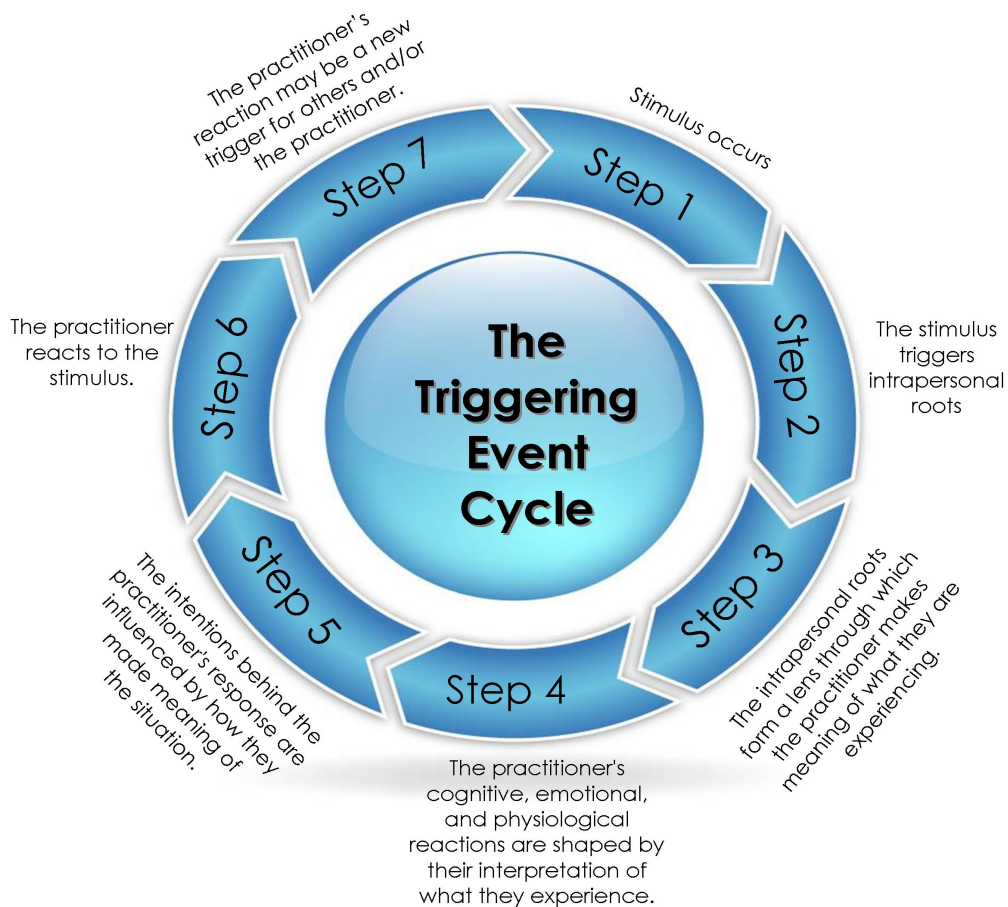
- Engage in respectful discourse
- Create a positive, collegial atmosphere
- Demonstrate mutual respect for the comments and views of all
- Speak and act in ways that do not disrupt or interfere with the learning or work of others
- Explore controversial issues through open dialogue and respectful deliberation.
- 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: Disagree with a person's ideas without attacking their humanity
- Respectfully address unproductive and exclusionary behaviors from other students

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:

- 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:

- 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 “good intent”, 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. keeps pushing their points; refuses to consider input of 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 or that of others



- 28. calls me classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.
- 29. criticizes or minimizes efforts related to equity, inclusion, and social justice
- 30. doesn't do what I ask or follow my instructions
- 31. produces low quality work
- 32. takes credit for my ideas and work
- 33. continually points out what others do that is unproductive without acknowledging their own participation in negative group dynamics
- 34. keeps me out of the loop or excludes me from important conversations
- 35. tries to undermine me or others
- 36. tries to "coach" me or correct me
- 37. is colluding with their own oppression, "going along to get along"
- 38. raises their voice to try to silence me or others
- 39. shuts down, withdraws or pouts if confronted or doesn't get their way
- 40. changes the planned agenda without checking in with me
- 41. steps in as I am leading and takes over
- 42. debates or disagrees with everything I say
- 43. believes they are always right
- 44. never gives any positive or appreciative feedback
- 45. doesn't do their job and I have to pick up the slack
- 46. does something unethical or dishonest
- 47. sends me a blasting, critical email and copies my supervisor without talking to me 1st
- 48. is more concerned with protecting their turf or career than achieving organizational goals
- 49. micromanages and second guesses me
- 50. doesn't ask for or use my input in decisions that affect me, my area
- 51. accuses me of doing something I didn't do

B. For me, when:

- 52. I make a mistake or error
- 53. I do or say something biased, offensive or oppressive
- 54. I do not know the answer to a question
- 55. I fear I do not know how to effectively respond in a situation
- 56. I start to cry or lash out in anger
- 57. I believe the conversation is about to "get out of control"

Additional common triggers for you:

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. Choose 5+ behaviors and in the 4th column, note the probable impact if these go unaddressed.

Others do this	Unproductive meeting behaviors, when someone:	I've done this	Probable impact
	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 publicly		
	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.		
	42.		

Unproductive Reactions During Difficult and Triggering Situations

Directions:

1. Check-off (✓) any of the following that you have experienced or observed from others during difficult situations.
2. Then, star (*) any that you have done when you felt triggered in difficult 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

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
- Immobilized
- Doesn't respond or interrupt exclusionary comments and actions
- Overly anxious and scared

Flounder Responses

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

What Could You Do? ADDRESS IT!

Developed for Student Diversity 360 session by Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western Reserve University

Directions: Choose 1-2 examples of microaggressions and exclusionary situations that could occur in your organization. Write each one in the left-hand column. Then discuss and make notes in the other columns:

- 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 (with the person)
 - **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>

Panning/Observing Group Dynamics with an Inclusion Lens

Use the following prompts as you use an Inclusion Lens to observe and observe/pan group dynamics. Identify “just the facts” and the actual details of the situation without any assumptions, interpretations, judgments, or conclusions.

1. What differences are present in the group? Which group memberships? and how many from various groups?
2. Who is talking?
3. Who is quiet? Doesn't speak as often as others?
4. How are people reacting nonverbally?
5. Who initiates the topics?
6. What ideas are brought up? By whom?
7. Whose ideas get considered? Whose ideas don't get much discussion?
8. Whose ideas are discounted? Or “plop” without comment?
9. How do decisions get made?
10. Who interrupts others? Who gets interrupted? Who is never interrupted?
11. How and when do the tone and energy of the conversation shift and change?
12. How much air-time do people take?
13. Who has changed their way of engaging recently?
14. Who do people look at when they are talking?
15. Who has eye contact with whom while others are talking?
16. Who engages in side conversations?
17. Who brings up issues of respect and inclusion?
18. How do people respond when different issues of inclusion are raised?
19. What issues of inclusion and respect are not being brought up or discussed?
20. As you notice interpersonal dynamics that are not inclusive, who intervenes to shift the dynamics? Who doesn't?
21. As you observe exclusionary comments and actions, wonder: Is this an isolated incident or a possible common pattern of experience?
- 22.
- 23.

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

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...

Four (4) Types of Responses

1. **Redirect:** Refocus group without any reference to current group dynamics

- I'd like to move on to the next agenda item.
- Getting back to what we were talking about...

2. **Indirect:** A more vague, general comment to refocus group on topic and effective group dynamics.

Pose possibilities:

- It might be useful...
- I'd suggest we consider...
- One way to proceed could be...
- It may be more productive right now to...

3. **Direct: Acknowledge the current situation and/or the uninclusive or disrespectful dynamic**

State your thought or opinion:

- I think that... I need...
- I believe it's important that...

Share your observation directly:

- I noticed that every time we start to talk about our team dynamics, someone shifts the conversation away from the topic.
- I'm noticing that the only time we talk about our group effectiveness is when I bring it up.
- I've noticed that when we started to discuss our dynamics, a number of folks look down, start writing notes...I'm curious what others have noticed? And what is going on for folks?

4. **Connect: Invite others to connect to what you are saying, and share what they notice**

- Anyone connect to what I am saying?
- I'm curious what others are noticing?

Recovery Tools: The 3 R's

It is critical to develop the capacity to demonstrate effective recovery skills when our comments and behaviors negatively impact others. We need the ability to acknowledge the other person's perspective, apologize for any negative impact, and commit to responding differently in the future.

REFLECT

As soon as you notice you feel triggered, *Begin Within*, and reflect on the following:

- 1) How am I feeling? How intense are my emotions? (-10 to +10)
- 2) What are my physiological reactions?
- 3) What story did I make up about this situation?
- 4) What intentions and motives fueled my reaction?
- 5) What intrapersonal roots are fueling my less effective reactions?
 - a) Current life issues
 - b) Cumulative impact
 - c) Unresolved issues and old wounds
 - d) Fears
 - e) Unmet Needs
 - f) Ego-driven desires
 - g) Assumptions, bias, shoulds, expectation and judgments
- 6) What might I have said or done that contributed to these difficult dynamics? Just now? Recently?
- 7) Relate to the person(s) whose behavior was the source of your trigger: How am I just like them?

RELEASE

- 1) Do some stress releasing activities to de-escalate the intensity of your physiological and emotional reactions
- 2) Create the time and space to release your retriggered emotions

REALIGN

- 1) Refocus on positive, productive intentions
- 2) Shift your initial story and subsequent thoughts

Then, choose how you want to RE-ENGAGE and RESPOND

If you are unclear why the dynamics are so charged and difficult, but suspect someone(s) may feel triggered:

- Did I say or do something that was offensive or triggering?
- Have I done something recently that is related to what we are talking about?
- Can you tell me more about what is troubling for you?
- It seems my behavior had a negative impact. I'm open to hearing how I've impacted you.
- I notice I'm feeling triggered, and I sense you are, too.

If you realize your behavior crossed a line, own your behavior and apologize:

- I notice I just interrupted you. I apologize.
- I realize what I just said/did was unproductive/offensive.
- I regret what I just did.
- I apologize. I was wrong to _____.
- I misspoke just now, and I apologize.
- I was wrong to just raise my voice and cut you off.
- I want to apologize for my tone.

If you realize someone is triggered by your comment or behavior, even if you feel you had not crossed a line:

- It seems something I did or said was triggering for you. Can we talk about it?
- Can you say more about the impact of what I said or did?
- I hear the impact of what I said/did. And I apologize.

If someone gives you feedback about your behavior:

- **Acknowledge and paraphrase** what behaviors they are concerned about and the impact
 - So it sounds like you felt demeaned and dismissed by my actions.
 - When I interrupted, you shut down and didn't want to participate any longer.
 - You felt angry and disappointed when I followed up on Jerry's idea and not yours.
- If you are still unclear, **ask about the impact**
 - Can you say more about the impact of what I said on you?
 - What was the impact of my comment? Behavior?
- Ask if they have **any further feedback** for you or other issues to discuss
 - Is there anything else about the impact of my behavior you or others want to talk about?
 - Are there other comments or actions that I've made that anyone wants to give me feedback on or discuss at this moment?
- **Apologize** for the impact and your behavior.
 - I apologize for my actions and regret the impact I had on you.

- **Appreciate** the person and the conversation
 - I appreciate your willingness to give me this feedback
 - I hope you'll continue to feel free to talk to me about this issue or anything else I do or say that creates a difficulty for you or the team.
- State **what you intend to do differently** in the future
 - It's my intention to think about all this, and to be far more aware of my tone and actions in the future.
 - As we go forward, my intention is to _____. Does this work for you?
 - Is there anything else you would like me to do differently in the future?

Navigating Ourselves: Self-Management Interventions

As soon as you feel triggered, *Begin Within*

1. Conduct a “systems check” to track internal self-talk, feelings, physiological responses and intentions
2. Use stress management techniques (deep breathing, centering exercises) to minimize the impact of physiological and emotional reactions
3. Search for your intrapersonal roots that are fueling your reaction to the trigger
4. Notice how you interpreted the situation: your “story” about what you believe happened
5. Shift your “story” about the situation
6. Notice initial intent for how you want to respond
8. Use self-talk to shift your intentions to align with your values and vision for social justice
9. Assess your part in the group dynamics
10. Relate to the participants whose behavior was the source of your trigger: How are you just like them?
11. Identify your hoped for outcomes: the destination of your response

Change your interpretation of the triggering event (Step 3)

- * If someone is "resistant":
 - They seem to feel safe enough to be honest about their thoughts and feelings
 - Now we can get to the heart of this issue...
- * If someone "interrupts":
 - I don't appreciate their timing, but they have a legitimate point/question.
 - They seem to have a lot of energy about this topic....
- * If someone makes a prejudicial remark:
 - Well, they came by their biases honestly in this society....
 - I wonder what they fear....
- * If someone is angry:
 - I wonder what feelings of hurt or fear are under their anger?
- * If someone gives negative feedback:
 - I can model how to be open to feedback....
 - This could be a powerful learning opportunity for me and others....
 - Maybe I have something to learn here....

- * If I make a mistake or make a prejudicial remark:
 - I can model how to be non-defensive and honestly acknowledge my comment....
 - I can model how to own and apologize for the impact of my behavior....and commit to working on myself and paying more attention...
- Focus on what is positive
 - At least they are willing to engage in this dialogue....
 - A few people are really getting it...
 - He did a nice job of reaching out to support her....
 - I really respect them for hanging in with this topic....
- Focus on their intent
 - I know they don't intentionally try to make my life miserable.
 - These are good-hearted people....
 - They're doing the best they can...

Navigate your emotions ~ (Step 4)

- Monitor your level of emotional arousal
- Stay task-oriented
- Take a time-out
- Practice detachment
- Be still and meditate
- Vent your emotions with a colleague
- Simply name what you're feeling, and then hold your feelings for now, knowing you can explore and release them later
- Journal about the triggering event during a break or time-out

Restructure self-talk ~ (Step 4)

- **Thought stopping: stop your thoughts and refocus on what is happening in the moment.**
 - **Restructure irrational beliefs**
- * I have to be liked and approved of by everyone
- Some people may not like me. In fact, if this is a useful interaction, people may leave feeling confused and full of unsettling emotions.

- * I must be competent in all situations and not make mistakes
 - If I make a mistake, I can use it as an example in the conversation. They will see that I am human just like they are.
- * I have to know all the answers
 - I am not the expert here. My role here is to facilitate their coming to their own answers and finding their voice.
- * I must remain calm and control my feelings
 - If I get upset, I know I can manage my emotions. I could even use the event as a learning opportunity in the conversation.
- * I am responsible for their learning and growth
 - I will do the best I can. I am not responsible for everyone's learning. People will take away from here what they need.
- * People who are bad should be blamed and punished
 - I was just like them not too long ago....I see myself in them. I want to help them learn from this experience.
- * I must try to change people to think and behave as I think they should
 - I have no right to try to change people. I can share my experience, strength, and hope, and talk about the impact of their behavior on me and others. Who am I to know what they need?
- **Positive self-talk**
 - I can handle this
 - I've done this before
 - I am a competent, talented person...
 - I have a lot to offer these folks...
- **Calming self-talk**
 - Breathe...steady....
 - I don't have to know everything
 - I don't have to have the "perfect" answer...
 - Everything works out for the best...
 - What's the worst thing that can happen....
 - Trust the process.....
 - I'm doing the best I can. I don't have to be the expert....
 - This isn't about me.....don't take this personally
 - Everything happens for a reason....
 - This, too, shall pass....
 - How important is it....

• **Explore your part in the situation**

- I wonder why I am so triggered...
- What else is going on for me?
- Which of my issues and needs are being triggered in this interaction?
- What needs of mine are not getting met?
- Who does this person remind me of?
- What personal issues are interfering with my willingness or ability to be helpful?
- I wonder if I did something that triggered them...
- What am I doing that is contributing to their behavior?
- How have I acted inappropriately?
- What rules or expectations have I set-up that are not working?

• **Empathetic self-talk**

- I wonder what this person really needs, what they are really feeling...
- I wonder what they feel threatened about? scared about?
- How can I better understand where this person is coming from?
- How am I like this person?
- When have I felt similarly?

• **Recognize the person's level of competence**

- They don't understand...
- They don't have the ability to do what I want them to do...
- I know they're doing the best they can with what they know.
- This work takes significant skill...
- It takes a long time to unlearn all this prejudice....

Get Clear on Your Intentions ~ Identify Less Productive, “Negative” Intentions (Step 5), such as:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embarrass or put down the other person • 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 • avoid confrontation and conflict • 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 your 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

When You Feel Triggered, Shift Your Intentions to Align with Your Social Justice Values, such as:

- 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, identifying unmet needs, shifting self-talk, stress management techniques, realigning your 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

Navigating Triggering Situations: Engaging Others (Step 6)

1. Get grounded in process outcomes: demonstrate respect and dignity; an opportunity to build relationship, connection, allies...
2. Avoid the “ABC’s” of Potholes: Attacking, Belittling, Convicting
3. Explore, clarify, ask questions...to gather more information and understand their perspective....and gain time to re-center yourself and choose an effective response
4. Explore their intent: Help me understand what your intent was when you said...
5. State your truth, feelings, the impact on you...with care and compassion
6. Name the impact on organizational goals...with care and compassion
7. “Put a face on the issue”
 - a. Individual Level: Share your past and/or current diversity-related experiences (personal and work-related)
 - b. Group Level: Share others’ diversity experiences (personal and work-related)
 - c. Organizational Level: Discuss policies, practices, and procedures that have a negative differential impact on clients and staff across social identity groups, and organizational goals

Use "meta-interventions"

Ask the person(s) to take the "pulse" of the situation reflect on the process:

- What do you notice happening right now?
- How are we working together?
- How well are we respecting each other?
- How would you describe how people are treating each other?

Begin Within ~ Keep the focus on yourself; start by sharing what is going on for you, about you...

1. Here’s what’s going on for me as I hear you....
2. Here’s where I relate....
3. Here’s what I wonder about as I hear you....
4. Another way I might approach this is....
5. I hear what you’re saying about.....a place where I have a different perspective is....
6. A dilemma for me is....
7. I’m on a learning edge here...what I’m curious about is....

Use the “self as instrument”

It takes great skill, personal awareness, presence, and self-confidence to effectively use triggering events as "teachable moments;" however, when managed effectively these moments can be some of the more powerful learning opportunities for others. The dynamics in the room often mirror those that others experience in their lives and in society. Triggering events can provide a microcosm within which people develop greater insight, knowledge, and skill to more effectively handle incidents they confront in everyday life. The following strategies can help people to use their emotional reactions to triggering events to inform their response and as a part of their intervention strategy.

• Name your feelings and reactions

- Describe your experiences, feelings, and perceptions to create a shared understanding of the situation
- Name the triggering event from your perspective and try to engage others in dialogue

• Test for similar reactions

- "I'm feeling frustrated, does anyone else feeling this way?"
- "I'm feeling anxious right now. Do others feel nervous, too?"

Steps to Engage in Difficult Dialogues

1. Get grounded in positive intentions ~ The DESTINATION:

- Create a teachable moment
- Stir cognitive dissonance
- Demonstrate respect and dignity
- Leave them feeling whole...
- Plant seeds...Influence hearts and minds...
- Help person(s) explore the impact of their behavior, understand the reasons their behavior has a negative impact on others/building an inclusive community
- Re-establish the boundaries for civil discourse
- Do no harm!
- Make a human connection; build the relationship for future dialogue
- Support those impacted by the comments/actions

P.A.I.R.S. ~ Skills to Engage

P: PAN the environment, yourself ~ as data to diagnose; name your pan as an intervention

A: ASK questions to explore

I: INTERRUPT the process

R: RELATE to others, their comments

S: Share, use self-disclosure as your response

2. Based on what you PAN, engage others in the conversation

- I noticed that....I overheard your conversation and thought I heard you say....
- I notice that folks were laughing...I'm curious what that's about?
- I noticed how quiet everyone just got...I'm wondering what is going on for folks?
- It seems some people were impacted by that statement.
- I'm noticing you're speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- We've had some comments from this side of the room, what are your thoughts and reactions? (looking at the other side of the room)
- I'm wondering if people are feeling triggered right now?
- The energy in the discussion seemed to shift after...

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

- Gives you time to center, better understand the comment, choose a response
- May help the person hear themselves and reflect on what they said, the impact...

4: A: ASK clarifying questions

- I want to make sure I understand your point...you think that...
- Are you saying that...
- Help me understand what you meant by that?
- I don't understand your point...
- What do you mean when you say...
- Come again? Or Can you repeat that?

5. A: ASK questions to gather more information

- 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 disagree with...find frustrating...
- Help me understand how you got to that conclusion?
- What has been your experience that led you to that conclusion?
- What readings or research are you referencing?

6. A: ASK questions to get them to reflect on their comment

- When was the first time you heard that?
- How do you think others could be impacted by your comment? Behavior?
- Why might others disagree with your comment?
- What if I gave you a convincing argument and data that was counter to your perspective? What might that mean for you?
- How do you think others will view you when you make similar comments?

7. A: ASK questions to explore their intention

- What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Help me understand your intent when you said...
- What did you mean to say with that comment?
- What is underneath your comment/question?

8. I: INTERRUPT the process and give space to process

- 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...

9. **R: RELATE** to the person who made the comment (Reflectively)

- How are you just like this person? Were just like them? (search in other categories of difference)
- When have you said or done something similarly?
- When might you say or do something like this in the future?

10. **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?
- Who can relate?
- What you're saying seems to relate to what so-and-so just said...

11. **S: SHARE: "Put a Face on the Issue"**

- Share a personal example or one you have heard from a credible source
- Invite others to share personal examples and stories ~ verbally; in writing
- Offer to share resources, articles so they can review different perspectives
- Offer to meet with them and talk about your life experiences
- Ask them to talk with 2-3 other people in the near future to hear their experiences and stories

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

- My heart aches as you tell that story...
- As a ___, I... (tell a story, give an example)
- I'd like to share the impact of your comment...
- I'm feeling uncomfortable with what you're saying...
- I'm noticing I'm feeling ___, anyone else?
- I notice I feel triggered right now....
- That's a trigger word/phrase for me...
- I need to stop a moment and talk about what just happened. I...

13. Give the "benefit of the doubt" if you directly confront their comment

~ a face saving tactic

- I trust/know you didn't intend this... I
- You're probably not aware of the impact of your comment...

Strategies to Discuss and Leverage Differing Perspectives

- **Facilitate each person/group sharing their perspective**
 - **Set-up the process:** I'd like us to slow the process down, and create space for everyone to voice their perspective, and to make sure we understand each other...before we begin to explore our differences.
 - Invite someone to go 1st and ask the group to listen carefully since you will be asking someone to summarize what they heard
- **Ensure others understand the differing perspective**
 - Can someone summarize what you heard?
 - Check back with the person who 1st spoke: How close is that to what you were saying?
- **Ask the group to identify the "common ground," where they heard similarities and agreement**
- **Ask the group to summarize the differing perspectives**
- **Invite the group to explore the differences with questions of curiosity**
 - Give them some possible prompts: Can you say more about...Can you talk about the reasons you feel so strongly...Can you say more about the outcomes you want...What's the intent behind your idea...How does your idea help meet our overall goals...
 - Facilitate the exploring of all the varying perspectives that have been raised
 - Consider taking notes on a chart of key points
- **Ask the group what additional similarities/common ground they notice after exploring the differing perspectives**
- **Continue dialoguing and exploring until consensus or a decision is reached**

Strategies to Navigate Intense Disagreements and Conflict

- **Model the skills they want others to learn and use**
- **Name the group dynamic**
 - I'm noticing the intensity of the conversation
- **Use self-disclosure to provide a frame and support**
 - I'm excited we're beginning this conversation
 - Many groups never get this honest and authentic
 - There's a lot we can all learn as we engage and explore our differing perspectives
- **Reference group norms and working agreements**
 - We've agreed to engage in conflict and explore disagreements
 - And we've agreed to discuss conflicts within our norms...
- **Use "meta-interventions"**

Ask the person(s) to take the "pulse" of the situation reflect on the process:

 - What do you notice happening right now?
 - How are we working together?
 - How well are we respecting each other?
 - How would you describe how people are treating each other?
 - What do you feel needs to happen so we can have a productive, honest dialogue?
- **Ask people to paraphrase what they heard someone say BEFORE they state their perspective**
- **Ask people to use dialogue questions and engage each other, rather than have a debate**
- **Use tentative rather than absolute language, such as "You seem" or "My impression is..."**
- **Acknowledge when you hear good points, where other people are right**
- **Refer to the person's original premise and assumptions and draw a different conclusion based on their own reasoning**
- **Clouding**
 - Agree in principle
 - Agree in probability
 - Agree in part and ignore the rest

Strategies to Manage Behaviors that Disrupt the Dialogue

- **If you feel you were interrupted:**
 - Inform rather than demand: use "I wasn't finished yet, " instead of "Stop interrupting me"
- **If you feel you someone else was interrupted:**
 - Inform rather than demand: "I don't think she was finished;" "I don't think he had completed his comment..."
- **Ignore any negative comments/accusations, and redirect them back to the topic/task.**
- **Request respect; refuse to continue the conversation if the person is abusive, demeaning, or rude**
- **Interrupt and confront inappropriate behavior**
- **Acknowledge and own your mistakes and inappropriate behavior that may have contributed to the current dynamics**
- **"Table" the discussion for a later time**
 - Recognize their point, note it for later discussion, and move on
 - Keep a list on flip chart paper of issues and questions for further discussion for when time allows
- **Give them a choice.**
 - We don't have time to address that issue now. I'd be glad to talk with you at break or after the session.
 - You can either choose to participate in this activity, or feel free to sit and observe and take notes on what you see happening.
 - I'm going to invite others to join this conversation. You can either stay and listen or if you choose, you can choose to leave.
- **Leave or end the conversation**

Biased Comments or Behaviors: Tools for Engaging Others

Consider the following tools and prompts as you prepare to have a conversation with the person whose behavior you believe came out of some conscious or unconscious bias.

1. Get clear on your intention for speaking with the person

- What do you hope to accomplish?
- How can you engage the other person in a way that they leave feeling whole and respected?

2. Relate to the person who made the comment

- Think about times you have you said or done something similarly...
- Imagine how you might say or do something like this in the future...

3. Choose an appropriate time and place to engage the person about what you observed.

Sometimes it's helpful to talk with them privately. Other times it may be useful to discuss the issue in the moment in front of all of the people who heard the comment or observed the interaction.

4. Get clear on the “facts” of what you observed and tracked

- Think through the specific behaviors you tracked
- Mentally practice describing what you observed without any interpretations, conclusions or judgments.

5. Initiate a conversation with the person

- I'd like to talk with you about what I just observed. Is this a good time to talk for a few minutes? (If not) When might you have a moment?

6. Gather more data about the situation you observed

- I overheard you talking with that client/staff member. Can you give me some background on what was going on? OR Can you help me understand the context for what was occurring?

7. Check out what you tracked:

- Can you tell me again what you remember saying?
- I thought I heard you say....Is that accurate?

8. Assume “good intent” and that the person is unaware of the probable negative impact of their comments/actions, and then **describe the facts** of what you tracked

- You probably didn’t notice what the impact of that comment was when you said....
- We’re so busy these days, you probably didn’t realize the impact of what you did just then, when you...
- I don’t know if you’re aware of it, but when you said _____, I think/saw/observed the client have a clear reaction...I observed (describe the specifics of what you observed)
- I trust you didn’t intend for your behavior/comments/actions to have a negative impact, but I noticed...OR I felt...

9. Do not assume the person recognized what they had said or done

- My guess is you weren’t aware of how your tone was coming across to the client...OR what your nonverbal behaviors were saying to the client...
- My guess is you’re not aware that the phrase you used has a negative impact on others...
- I know you were making a joke, and my guess is you’re not aware how uncomfortable that comment can make others....

10. Ask the person what the unintended impact of their comments and actions might be

- How do you think the client felt?
- How might they have interpreted what you said/did?
- What message do you think that comment/action might send?
- How might they now feel about future interactions with us?

11. Acknowledge the probable impact of the comments/actions; **offer additional ones**, if applicable

- I agree that the unintended impact probably was...
- In addition to what you said about the probable impact, I also think that....
- I agree and I’ve had friends from this Outsider group who have told me that when they hear these comments they feel....because...
- When I hear you say that I think/feel....
- Many people would take that comment to mean....

12. Acknowledge the probable differential and disproportionate impact based on Insider and Outsider group memberships. (i.e. Heterosexuals and Gays/Lesbians/Bisexuals; Whites and People of Color; Married and Single; Older, Middle-aged, and Younger, etc.)

- As you know a number of people may feel uncomfortable by this type of comment, and, it may have a different level of negative impact on people in Outsider groups given the pattern of treatment they experience in many aspects of society, and how often they have heard similar comments...experienced similar treatment...

13. Explore the person's intent behind their comment/action

- What were you wanting to accomplish with your comment? Action?
- What was going on for you when you said/did _____?
- What were you feeling when you said/did. _____?

14. Acknowledge the person's intent behind their comments and actions, **and begin to explore alternative ways** they could have responded

- I understand you were feeling _____. As you look back, what might have been a more effective way to respond in that situation?

15. Acknowledge the effective tactics they offer, and add any additional ones, if applicable

- I think your idea would have been one way to respond. Another thought for next time might be to _____...
- I like your idea, and recently when I was in a similar situation I _____...
- That's one possibility, and someone once suggested to me to ...

16. Explore the impact of your raising this issue with the person

- I appreciate your discussing this with me, and I'm curious how this conversation was for you?

17. Offer to be of support in the future

- I'm still picking up pointers and techniques as well. And if you ever want to talk situations like this through in the future, I'd be more than willing to offer my best thoughts.

Specific Tools for Engaging Comments

- Offer a differing viewpoint (gently), and then redirect the conversation back to the activity at hand.
- If you assess that the person's behavior has continued to cross a line, consult with your supervisor.

WHAT IF???

1. The person doesn't agree they said what you heard...

- a. You may decide to end the conversation and give them the benefit of the doubt
 - I must have misunderstood...
- b. If you suspect they are trying to "cover their tracks," you may consider continuing the dialogue:
 - I'm glad to hear I misunderstood, because, as you know, in this organization those types of comments...

2. **The person is defensive** and doesn't appear receptive to your comments

a. Relate in and make a connection with the person

- I can relate to thinking the same thing, and then someone gave me some feedback recently...
- I remember saying something pretty similar not too long ago, and someone gave me a heads up about the unintended impact of my comments...I appreciated knowing because I don't want to offend others or make them uncomfortable...

b. Clarify your expectations of them

- In the future I'd appreciate if you would...OR I expect that you will...
- I'll be very concerned if this happens again...

c. Clarify organizational expectations

- You may not agree with what I'm saying...and as you know, this organization is committed to creating an inclusive work environment for all staff and is committed to providing exceptional service to the wide diversity of current and potential clients. Your comments/actions do not support our mission and goals. In the future I expect you to...

d. Check to see they understood your message

- I want to make sure you understand what I'm saying. Can you tell me what you're taking away from this conversation?
- Would you repeat back the essence of what I'm saying?

e. Invite them to ask any questions or give you any feedback

- Do you have any questions or comments related to what we're talking about?
- Do you have any feedback for me?
- If you ever have feedback for me, I'd appreciate hearing from you....

f. Re-establish the relationship

- I value your contribution to this team...
- We work well together, and I appreciate that...
- It's my hope we can put this behind us and keep working well together...OR It's my hope we can use this as a learning experience for us both and continue to have conversations about inclusion and diversity in the future

Helpful Tactics

1. Gather more information

- Help me understand more about what you mean?
- I'm curious when you first heard that term or phrase?

2. Clarify what you "heard"

- I want to make sure I understand your point...you think that...
- Are you saying that...
- So you feel...
- You believe that...

3. Ask the person to walk you through their thought process so you can better understand how they came to their assumptions and conclusions

- Can you help me understand how you came to that conclusion?
- What has been your experience that led you to that conclusion?
- What assumptions are underneath your conclusion?

4. Focus the discussion on the PROCESS of the discussion

- I noticed that we tend to spend more time talking about these issues, and far less time talking about these other ones...
- I'm noticing that the only time we talk about ___ is when I bring it up...
- It seems that whenever we start talking about ___, someone changes the topic back to something else.
- I've noticed that when we are discussing ____, a number of folks look down, start writing notes...I'm curious what others have noticed?

5. Name the group's process or dynamic and shift the focus to be more inclusive

- We've talked about how this policy could impact people of color and white women....I'm wondering how it may impact GLBT employees across gender and race?
- I'm noticing that whenever we talk about race, whites turn and ask a question of one of the people of color. I'd like to hear from some of the whites in the room: What do you notice that whites, as a group, tend to say, do, and feel around issues of race in the workplace?
- This has been a great discussion about the chilly climate for women and men of color. I don't want to move off this too soon, and I also want to make sure we have time to have a similar conversation related to dynamics of age and length of service in the organization...

6. Give the “benefit of the doubt”

- You probably already thought of this... You probably noticed that...
- An unintended outcome of that idea could be that...
- I know you didn’t intend this, but when you have a side conversation while I’m speaking....

7. If you think someone misunderstood or is misrepresenting what you said

- I believe I said something different than that...What I said was...

8. Recognize comments and behaviors that help create greater inclusion before you give further feedback

- I appreciate the several best practices you’ve gathered for us to review, and I was wondering if there also were some that more specifically address...
- I appreciate your working to be inclusive in your language...and I understand the term “GLBT” to be more inclusive and current than “homosexuals”

9. Acknowledge the accumulative impact of what you are experiencing

- I know I’m having a strong reaction to what you said....and this is only one of many times I have heard similar comments recently....OR .and, as you know, this seems to be a pattern we keep running into that creates an obstacle...

10. Ask questions to raise their awareness

- When did you decide/choose to be heterosexual?
- What are some of the ways that Christianity is embedded in the way we interact and in the policies and practices of our nation? Organization?

11. Invite others to get engaged in the dialogue

- I’m curious what others are thinking? What other ideas do people have?
- Name your reaction and test to see where others are: I’m feeling unsettled about this possibility, is anyone else?
- Ask if others feel differently than what is being proposed: This is one way we could proceed. Does anyone have a different suggestion?
- Ask others to take the "pulse" of the situation and reflect on the process: I’m curious what people are noticing about our group dynamics?
- Ask if others have heard and experienced the situation as you did: That scene in the video hit me as Islamophobic...What do others think?

12. How to Confront Repeated Inappropriate Behaviors...1st, 2nd, 3rd time...

1st time:

- Describe the behavior you observed
- State what you want to be different
 - * I'd appreciate it if you'd...

2nd time:

- Describe the behavior: I believe this is the 2nd time we've talked about this...This is the IMPACT when you do that....I need you to change your behavior

3rd time: Give clear consequences if they continue this behavior: This is the 3rd time I've asked you to...If you do this again...

13. Questions to explore possible and unintended (hopefully) exclusionary practices and attitudes in planning and decision-making discussions:

- Do we have the full breadth of social identity groups and perspectives at the table? Involved in the process?
- Does our process seriously consider the input and perspectives of a broad range of group memberships?
- How might our unconscious attitudes and assumptions about _____ be playing out in this decision?
- What could be the impact of this on clients and staff from various and multiple dominant and subordinated groups?
- How might this inadvertently advantage some and disadvantage others?
- How can we make this inclusive for members of various and multiple group memberships?

14. Different Communication Styles

a. Direct

- I think that...I need...
- It's important that....We need to...

b. Pose possibilities

- It might be useful...
- I'd suggest we consider...
- One way to proceed could be....

c. Competing style

- State your thought or opinion right after another person, no connection
- I think...Well I think....My idea is to...this is how we should proceed...

d. Debating style

- Reference the other person's ideas in order to negate them or disagree with them

e. Connecting style

- Acknowledge what was said by others
- Connect your comment to theirs
- Build on what has been said, i.e., Connected to what you're saying; Building on that thought; Similar to what she said, I think; I like your idea and another way to go about this is...

f. Engaging style

- If a direct statement is made, ask a question to gather more information, deepen understanding, gain time to respond...
- Tell me more..
- Can you give me an example?
- What's your intended outcome? your intent behind that?
- How might that impact others?
- What's your thinking behind how that helps us meet our goal?

How to be an Ally: Things to Keep in Mind

A. Avoid Common Dialogue Pitfalls

1. PLEs ~ Perfectly Logical Explanations
2. Yea, but....
3. That happens to me/my group, too....
4. I know someone who...and they don't agree with you....
5. I don't see it that way; therefore, it doesn't really happen....
6. That doesn't happen to me...(so it doesn't exist)
7. Don't you think that...
8. You're overreacting...you're too sensitive...
9. He/she's a good person...they never meant to do that....
10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!

B. Be Aware of Cumulative Impact

This concept occurs when a subordinated group member experiences repeated negative oppressive incidents, either in a short period of time or over a long period. Their feelings of anger, fear, distrust, frustration, etc., may build up and then they might “over-react” and respond out of cumulative impact for a number of reasons, including:

- it is not safe for them to challenge the people who treated them negatively
- they are tired of intervening and trying to educate others

A good ally understands that many subordinated group members may be carrying the cumulative impact of a long series of negative treatment. If they seem irritated or unusually upset, the ally tries to not take it personally, but instead, tries to offer support to the subordinated group member by:

- acknowledging the degree of feelings the subordinated group member is experiencing
- offering to listen to stories of how the person has been negatively treated (without interrupting, arguing, justifying, or trying to “give advice” and “fix it”)
- asking if there is anything they can do to be supportive

C. Recognize Intent AND Impact

When a member of a dominant group says/does something hurtful or inappropriate, their tendency is to want to EXPLAIN their INTENT (I didn't mean it! It was just a joke! I didn't do it on purpose...). However, the pain and hurt, the IMPACT, is still very real to the subordinated group members.

A good ALLY first acknowledges their impact, apologizes, and asks to hear more about how they have negatively impacted the subordinated group member. And then asks how they can help, be supportive, make amends, avoid similar transgressions in the future, etc.

D. Recognize Varying Levels of Differential Risk and Credibility

It is important that all people, subordinated and dominant group members, work to intervene and stop oppression wherever they see it. AND dominant group members are generally given more credibility, listened to more seriously, and have fewer risks when they intervene, as compared to members of subordinated groups. A good ally consistently recognizes opportunities to speak up and intervene, knowing that it is their responsibility to take action, regardless of the risks involved.

E. Recognize and Use your Discretionary Power

All people have some personal power, and possibly position power from which to speak up and intervene. They have the discretion/the choice of when or how or if to intervene.

Dominant/dominant group members tend to have MORE discretionary power, given how often they are in positions of authority, and because of the greater credibility they have in society.

F. Distinguishing Behavior

Most dominant group members will be perceived as “just another man...white...administrator” UNTIL they show THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS that they are actively working as an ally against oppression. When dominant group members speak up and intervene, they DISTINGUISH themselves from the overall dominant group who generally both consciously and unconsciously perpetuate oppression.

G. Intervening in Oppressive Situations

Good allies take the initiative to try to STOP inappropriate behaviors and situations. They then look for ways to EDUCATE the person(s) who made the comment/took the action, in hopes that they may learn why what they did was harmful, and to not repeat it in the future. Allies also offer SUPPORT to the target of the negative treatment when possible.

Tools and Tips: Responding in Cross-Cultural Conflicts

A. Responding to Common Dialogue Blockers

1. PLEs ~ Perfectly Logical Explanations

- That may be true, but here's how I see it....or another way to view it...
- There may be a number of factors that contributed to this situation. Another one that does have to do with diversity might be.....
- When you say that, I feel you're discounting my experience. In that situation I felt...
- You could be right that this one specific time it had nothing to do with prejudice. But it feels so similar to so many other times in my experience when I have been treated negatively/experienced discrimination...it's hard to not assume this is just like all those other times....
- Your opinion that this has nothing to do with prejudice could be true...But what would it mean if my perception was true: that this person reacted to me out of their bias and stereotypes?

2. Yea, but....

- What do you think the impact on me is when you say that?
- You may not have intended this, but when you give a "YEA, BUT" I feel discounted and that you have dismissed my perspective and experience.
- I'm curious what you were hoping to communicate with that statement?
- Honestly, I'm rather upset about what happened. And I can't hear your perspective right now. What I need is for someone to just listen to me and acknowledge what I experienced and am feeling....
- I'm curious why you chose to give me a "Yea, But" just then?

3. That happens to me/my group, too....

- This dynamic/situation does happen to other groups, too. The difference might be HOW OFTEN how often it happens to them, and WHY it happens to them. For instance: most whites have received bad customer service. It rarely happens to them because some has prejudice towards them because of their race. And it probably doesn't happen to them as frequently.
- How does it feel when it happens to you? How often does that happen? Why does it happen to you? So you have a "window of understanding" to connect to what I and my group experience much of the time.

4. I know someone who...and they don't agree with you....

- There might be some people who don't see this as I do. That doesn't discount my experience or perception.
- Not all ____ may feel like I do. And, unfortunately, there are many around here that do agree with me and have had very similar experiences. Are you open to hearing more about my experiences?

5. I don't see it that way...(therefore, it doesn't really happen....)

- You might not have ever recognized this dynamic before or seen it happen. There was a time I didn't see it this way, either. But after having it happen SO MANY times and when I can't find any other explanation, that I now believe that there most often is some prejudice underneath this type of reaction....

6. That doesn't happen to me...(so it doesn't exist)

- I'm glad and hopeful that it doesn't. And hope you never do experience this. And this is what happened to me, and I've heard many other folks describe all too similar experiences....
- It might not, or you may not notice it happening to you....but here's what I've tracked and noticed in my life....

7. Don't you think that...

- I'm wondering if you have a statement behind your question.....
- Do you have a specific example that illustrates what you're trying to ask or say?
- I'm curious what you think about that....

8. You're overreacting...you're too sensitive...

- You may not agree, but I feel very strongly about this. And I would appreciate your respecting me enough to at least acknowledge my perspective.
- When you say that, I want to end the conversation and would probably never talk to you about these serious issues again.
- Your intent might be to try to help or support me, but the impact of that statement is infuriating.

9. He/she's a good person...they never meant to do that....

- That comment just dismissed and discounted my experience.
- Many "good people" do very inappropriate and harmful things.
- Regardless of the intent, this was the impact of their actions....
- I'm not questioning if they're good or bad, I'm talking about the impact of their actions.

10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!

- I'm open to hearing your intent, but I'd first appreciate your acknowledging the impact of your comment/actions....
- What was your intent....I hear your intent was _____, and I hope you can also realize the impact was different than what you intended.

11. That had nothing to do with _____ (an "ism")!! It's just their personality!

- That may be what you believe, and I have observed/experienced this type of situation so many times...and I have tracked a diversity cut to this...Here's the way I see it...

B. Responding When Someone is Triggered

- I'm noticing you're speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- I'm wondering if you're feeling triggered right now?
- This response is unusual for you....I'm wondering what else is going on for you?
- I'm wondering if something else is going on or did something happen that's related to why you're feeling this way?
- You're raising issues I want to talk about, and I'm also noticing that the depth of your emotions seems out of proportion to this situation...
- I notice I'm feeling a little triggered, and I wonder if you are, too?
- I think we're both a bit triggered right now....
- I want to talk about this further, and I can hear you better when you're not so triggered. What if we take a break and then come back to talk about this...

C. Responding When Someone is Reacting out of Cumulative Impact

- Obviously I've said/done something to trigger you. What's going on?
- I can see you have a strong reaction to this. What happened?
- My guess is this is:
- an example of what has happened to you a lot in the past....
- what happens to you all the time...
- not the first time something like this has happened...
- I'm open to hearing what happened if you want to talk....
- Is there anything I can do to be supportive of you?

D. Responding When Your Comment/Action Has Had a Negative Impact on Someone Else

- It seems what I said had an impact on you. I'm open to hearing it.
- I want to apologize for what I said/did....I was wrong...and I'm open to hearing how I've impacted you....
- Thank you for letting me know this. It is my intention to change my behavior in the future...
- Is there anything I can do to make amends...

E. Responding When You Are Triggered

- I notice I feel triggered right now....
- That's a trigger word/phrase for me...
- I need to take a break and come back to this later....
- I need to stop a moment and talk about what just happened. I'm feeling triggered and this is why....
- This may have more to do with me than you, but I'm feeling triggered by what you just said....

Adapted in part from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates (215) 248-8100

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, who’s 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.