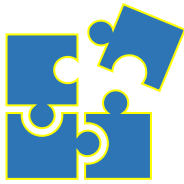


Discussion Buddy



Before starting the conversation:

- Be sure to ask if the conversation participants want to/are able to engage at the current time and place
- Is it the right time? If not, ask what time would be better
- Is it the right place? If not, be flexible so everyone can agree it is a *safe space*
- *Set intentions for the conversation* and make sure everyone is clearly onboard with them
 - Make sure context and content of the conversation are appropriate (i.e. workplace conversations should be geared toward workplace inclusivity and safety)
- Recognize an individual should never be asked to speak for the entirety of a group or culture
- Be careful not to put the responsibility of educating yourself on others
- Come to the conversation with curiosity and respect

Things to remember for each participant:

- Be prepared to *check-in with yourself* frequently about your emotions and comfort. If you feel defensive, ask yourself why. If your discomfort is too much, give yourself the opportunity to take a break. If an emotion comes on quickly and strongly, stop and process before continuing to participate.
- *Be open* to new ideas. *Be open* to learning new information. *Be open* to seeing new perspectives.
- *Listen to understand*, not to respond. Understanding includes accepting what someone says to be their experience is in fact their experience. Understanding does not include agreeing or disagreeing with someone else's experience.
 - Try focusing on what you're hearing, and not what you're saying
- If you make a mistake, *apologize* and correct yourself. Don't dwell on your mistake and try to move the conversation along; asking a follow-up question can help.
- Be careful of trying too often to interpret or equate what others say into your own experience.
- Make sure all voices in the room have an opportunity to be heard.
- If the conversation seems to be straying from the intentions, steer it back by reminding others of the purpose. If it's unable to be brought back, wrap it up respectfully and suggest it might be better continued at a different time and place.

