

Interrupting and Dismantling Racism: Our Role and Responsibility as White Allies to Create Racial Justice

Kathy Obear, Ed.D, Center for Transformation & Change

www.drkathyobear.com Kathy@drkathyobear.com

Beth Yohe, The Conflict Center

www.conflictcenter.org Beth.Yohe@conflictcenter.org

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Learning Outcomes

- Increase your self-awareness and knowledge about the dynamics of race and racism in your organization.
- Challenge yourself to take an honest look within so you can think, work, and interact more effectively – across and within racialized identities.
- Examine the far-reaching impact of racist dynamics on individuals as well as on organizational goals.
- Deepen your capacity to recognize and interrupt racist attitudes and behaviors that occur all around us, every day.
- Gain insight on how you can build a larger community of white allies to shift the climate and culture of your organization.
- Explore practical, proven tools and skills to revise policies and practices with a Race Lens.

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“The systemic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (Whites). This subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.” (p. 88-89) Curriculum Design. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.) (1997), Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook (pp. 82-109). New York: Routledge.

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!

Meeting & Classroom Guidelines ~ Your Intentions & Guidelines

*To create environments where everyone feels heard, involved, supported, and respected

*To create productive and engaging environments 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

Examine Your Socialization Experiences

1. How do you identify racially?
2. Describe the racial demographics of your neighborhood, school, family, social groups...
3. When do you remember being told there were different races? What were you told?
4. What were some of the prevailing messages and images of whites and people of color as you were growing up?
5. Were there times that you didn't believe that race and racism really existed or mattered very much?
6. What were your experiences interacting (or not) with people of different racialized groups?
7. Share some early experiences when you realized people were categorized by race and skin color.
8. How were people of your race and other racialized groups treated? Depicted? Talked about?
9. What various roles and responsibilities did people of different races have? Were shown to have?
10. When did you realize you were treated differently based on your race/skin color?
11. Share some significant moments or turning points that shaped you as a _____ (how you identify racially?)
12. Share a time you witnessed racist actions/comments. How did you feel? What did you do?
13. What are 1-2 ideas or assumptions/biases *you used to have* about another racial group; what happened to help you shift towards greater understanding, accuracy, or acceptance?
14. Talk about a time, you now realize, that your actions/comments were exclusionary and fueled by racial stereotypes?
15. Talk about a time you spoke up and responded when you noticed racist comments or behaviors or interrupted white privilege.

Authentic Dialogue Prompts: Building Community Among White Allies

Directions ~ With your partner, share and relate to each other as you discuss:

1. Share an example of a time you spoke up and effectively engaged someone whose comment or behavior was biased or misinformed: How did you feel? What did you do/say?
2. When are you at your best as an ally or change agent?
3. What are some of your fears as you engage issues of race and racism?
4. What biases or stereotypes do you still notice within yourself?
5. When and where do you get stuck? How do you feel when you are stuck and less effective?
6. What would feel supportive from colleagues? To help you continue to grow and develop skills?
7. When have you:
 - a. Felt fear when interacting with people of color?
 - b. Felt fear when interacting with whites?
 - c. Felt guilt or shame?
 - d. Felt anger towards people of color?
 - e. Felt anger towards whites?
8. What are 5+ ways you see people benefiting from white privilege?
9. What are some examples of how whites have intentionally used white privilege to help dismantle racism?
10. When have you seen others use white privilege to gain an unfair advantage or greater access?
11. What racist thoughts do you still have?
12. What are 1-2 examples (over the past 1-2 years) when you have acted based on some racial stereotypes or racist thoughts?
13. When do you remember realizing that **whites** believed they were superior to people of color, people who were biracial/multiracial? (smarter, more organized, better leaders, more competent, etc.)
14. When do you remember realizing **that you** believed whites were superior to people of color, people who were biracial/multiracial? (smarter, more organized, better leaders, more competent, etc.)

Developed By: Kathy Obear, Kathy@drkathyobear.com www.drkathyobear.com

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™

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.

Unproductive Classroom & Meeting Behaviors

- a. In the 1st column, check-off any unproductive behaviors which you have observed in meetings, classrooms, or workshops.
- b. Then in the 3rd column, check-off any of these behaviors that you have ever done.
- c. Choose 5-10 behaviors and in the 4th column, make some notes about the probable impact when these occur, especially if no one interrupts or addresses them.

Others do this	Unproductive behaviors, when someone:	I've done this	Probable impact, especially if unaddressed
	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.		
	42.		

“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>

“Racial microaggressions are the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned white people who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated.”

Published on October 5, 2010 by Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D. in Microaggressions in Everyday Life

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life>

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 across group membership
- 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

Common Racial Microaggressions and Racist Dynamics on College Campuses

1. Over time, you have notice that most students do not greet or interact with the only Arab student in the study group.
2. You notice the students who get talked over or ignored most frequently in discussions are the few Latinx and Black students.
3. You hear some students making fun of how an international student of color pronounces some words in English.
4. A white woman clutches her purse as a dark-skinned man gets on an elevator.
5. A biracial student has endured dismissive, uninclusive comments from a couple of classmates for the 1st 3 weeks of the semester. When she finally decides to discuss the racist class dynamics with the professor, the faculty member says, "You probably misunderstood them. I've had them in class before. They are really good students."
6. White students frequently comment to a Korean American student, "You speak English so well. Where are you from?" And when she answers, "New York," she is then asked, "No, where are you really from?"
7. A manager of color is working on the weekend in jeans and a t-shirt and is assumed to be a maintenance worker.
8. You notice that some white students seem to react negatively when they see a Palestinian woman wearing a veil/hijab on campus.
9. If more than 3 men of color are standing around, people assume they are "in a gang."
10. Students who are Black or Latinx often have to show 1-2 forms of ID to use a computer lab, while white students are not asked to show any.
11. An Asian American friend of yours is talking to some white students in the hall about a racist situation that happened on campus. One of the white students says, "Why do you have to make everything about race? They were probably just having a bad day..."
12. Students seem to give respect to white faculty members, but often complain about, question, and challenge faculty of color.
13. Whites appear nervous and uncomfortable as they talk with students of color.
14. You overhear a professor "complimenting" an African American woman, "You're very articulate!"
15. When someone points out the racist comment a student just made, their 1st reaction is, "I'm not racist. I was just kidding. I didn't mean it."
16. A Native American student tries to talk to their academic advisor about the complete absence of discussion of Native and Indigenous peoples in their social science courses. The advisor appears confused and abruptly shifts the conversation to talk about the remaining degree requirements for graduation.
17. Introducing the white presenter as Dr. __, and the presenter of color with a doctorate as Ms. or Mr. _____.

18. A Latina was made fun of for the way she spoke and how she pronounced some words. Someone asked, "How did you even get into this school?"
19. You overhear a white student say, "I don't want any international students in our study group; they have nothing to offer." Another white student added, "Well, some of the Black students are just as bad."
20. A Latinx student told their white male faculty they couldn't afford to purchase a textbook and asked if the faculty member could lend him a book. Faculty member said, "If you can't afford the book maybe you shouldn't be in the class."
21. On the 1st day of class, white students, upon seeing two people in the hall before class, a white man and a black woman, walked up to the white man and asked him if class would be starting soon. The woman of color is the professor; the white man is the graduate assistant.
22. In a group meeting, an Asian American woman confronts a white male student and he turns and mutters, "What a B____!"
23. You overhear a student saying to a woman of color, "You should straighten your hair. You'd be much more attractive."
24. A young black man has been pulled over or stopped by police 21 times in his 1 st three years of college.
25. Someone vandalized a poster promoting a rally to support DACA students: "Build a Wall! Go back to Mexico!"
26. People who are about to walk past a darker skinned man of color check to make sure their wallet is deep in their pocket.
27. Two Asian American students, who look nothing alike, work in the same office. They are often called by each other's name by some of the staff.
28. Two Pakistani students are leaving a local restaurant when they hear racist and Islamic slurs yelled at them from white men driving by.
28. You overhear a white muttering a comment about a black manager: "They got that promotion because of their race!"
29. Bookstore clerks follow around customers of color while white customers are eagerly greeted and asked if they need any help.
30. A workshop is facilitated by a white woman and a woman of color. Every time the facilitator of color gives directions for an activity, someone always asks her to repeat what she just said or fails to follow her directions. In the full day session, no one ever asks the white facilitator to repeat anything she said nor fails to follow her directions.
31.
32.
33.

Microaggression	Bias and/or assumptions possibly fueling the comment or behavior
1. Woman clutches her purse as a dark-skinned South Asian man gets on elevator.	
2. Students who are Black or Latinx often have to show 1-2 forms of ID to use a computer lab, while white students are not asked to show any.	
3. Bookstore clerks follow around customers of color while white customers are eagerly greeted and asked if they need any help.	
4. In group project work, whites only talk to other whites, and overlook, don't engage people of color.	
5. The Latina female supervisor is assumed to be the secretary of the department.	
6. People react negatively when they see a woman wearing a veil/hijab.	
7. Someone asks an Asian American, "Where are you really from?"	
8. Over time, you have notice that most students do not greet or interact with the only Arab student in the study group.	
9. You hear some students making fun of how an international student of color pronounces some words in English.	
10. Someone vandalized a poster promoting a rally to support DACA students: "Build a Wall! Go back to Mexico!"	
11.	
12.	

Examples of Microaggressions in Your Organization

	Microaggression	Impact	Intent
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Gallery of Stories

Purpose:

- Participants read/hear examples of microaggressions and daily indignities that people from marginalized groups have experienced on campus.
- Broadens and deepens understanding of current privileged and marginalized group dynamics on campus.
- Creates empathy and energy to create greater inclusion.

Time needed: 30-60 minutes

Set-up:

- Materials needed: 2 pages of blank copy paper/participant; pens
- Distribute paper, pens as needed
- Give directions
- Give participants 5+ minutes to write their examples

Directions (post on chart/PPT slide):

Write about TWO actual situations or patterns of uninclusive and/or disrespectful treatment that marginalized group members experience on campus. Write one (1) example/piece of paper. The situation may have happened to you, or you witnessed it, or you heard the story about from a credible source:

- Recent situation or pattern of experience (within last 2-3 years)
- Occurred on campus or in the local community
- Anonymous/Generic: NO NAMES or key references
- You can share one or more of the following:
 - * What is/was the situation?
 - * By group membership ~ who were the main players and their central group memberships?
 - * How did you feel? Others feel?
 - * What was the impact of this situation on you? Others?
 - * What, if anything, did someone do to create greater inclusion?

To Create Small Groups

- Ask each person to fold up their examples and trade them with 5+ different people.
- Then ask them to form small groups of 8-10, mixed by group membership, and sit down together in a circle.

Directions for Small Groups

- "In a moment, people will read the stories aloud to the small group.
- One person reads 1 story, then the next person in the circle, and so on.
- Do not talk about the stories, just keep reading them.

- Silently as you listen, begin to notice your feelings and reactions, and any patterns you notice.
- One person collects up the stories as they are read, and then pass them to your assigned group every 8-10 stories.
- We will circulate these stories a couple of times so that each small group will read about 40-60 stories before we talk about them.
- Any questions?
- Again, these are generic and anonymous. Don't spend any time trying to identify who might have been involved. The reality is the same type of situation has most likely occurred multiple times on campus."

Debriefing in Small Groups

- After 10-15 minutes, end the reading of the stories
- Ask group members to discuss the following prompts among themselves (post on chart/PPT slide):
 - *In your small group share and discuss:
 1. What are your feelings and reactions as you hear these stories?
 2. What's 1 example that stood out to you and why?
 3. What impact could this have?
 4. What are other examples that these reminded you of?

Note: This activity is called the "Gallery" because we used to post the stories on the wall and have participants silently read them, and then discuss.

Common Racist Behaviors and Attitudes of Many Whites

Directions: review these common group dynamics:

- a. Check-off any dynamics which you have observed or heard a credible story about.
- b. Make a note next to the dynamics that you have personally experienced, felt, or done.
- c. Add any additional common patterns/dynamics you have witnessed or experienced.

Some/Many Whites Tend to (consciously and unconsciously):

1. believe they have “earned” what they have, rather than acknowledge the extensive white privilege and unearned advantages they receive; believe that if people of color just worked harder...
2. not notice the daily indignities that people of color experience; deny them and rationalize them away with PLEs (perfectly logical explanations)
3. work to maintain the status quo and protect the advantages and privileges they receive
4. believe that white cultural norms, practices and values are superior and better
5. internalize the negative stereotypes about people of color and believe that whites are smarter and superior to people of color
6. want people of color to conform and assimilate to white cultural norms and practices
7. accept and feel safer around people of color who have assimilated and are “closer to white”
8. blame people of color for the barriers and challenges they experience; believe that if they “worked harder” they could “pull themselves up by their bootstraps”
9. believe that people of color are not competent and are only hired/promoted to fill quotas
10. interrupt and talk over people of color
11. resent taking direction from a person of color
12. dismiss and minimize frustrations of people of color and categorize the person raising issues as militant, angry, having an “attitude,” working their agenda, not a team player...
13. focus on their “good intent” as whites, rather than on the negative impact of their behavior
14. focus on how much progress we have made, rather than on how much more needs to change

15. want people of color to “get over it” and move on quickly
16. get defensive when people of color express their frustrations with current organizational and societal dynamics
17. “walk on eggshells” and act more distant and formal with people of color
18. segregate themselves from people of color and rarely develop authentic relationships across race
19. exaggerate the level of intimacy they have with individual people of color
20. fear that they will be seen and “found out” as a racist, having racial prejudice
21. focus on themselves as an individual (I’m not racist; I’m a good white), and refuse to acknowledge the cultural and institutional racism people of color experience daily
22. pressure and punish whites who actively work to dismantle racism to conform and collude with white racism; criticize, gossip about, and find fault with white change agents
23. expect people of color to be the “diversity expert” and take the lead in raising and addressing racism as their “second (unpaid) job”
24. minimize, under-value, ignore, overlook and discount the talents, competencies and contributions of people of color
25. rephrase and reword the comments of people of color
26. ask people of color to repeat what they have just said
27. assume the white teacher/coach/facilitator/employee, etc., is in charge/the leader; assume people of color are in service roles
28. rationalize away racist treatment of people of color as individual incidents or the result of something the person of color did/failed to do
29. dismiss the racist experiences of people of color with comments such as: That happens to me too...You’re too sensitive...That happened because of _____, it has nothing to do with race!
30. judge a person of color as over-reacting and too emotional when they are responding to the cumulative impact of multiple recent racist incidents
31. accuse people of color of “playing the race card” whenever they challenge racist policies and practices; instead of exploring the probability of negative differential impact based on race, or that racist attitudes and beliefs are operating

32. if confronted by a person of color, shut down and focus on what to avoid saying or doing in the future, rather than engaging and learning from the interaction
33. look to people of color for direction, education, coaching on how to act & what not to do
34. compete with other whites to be “the good white.” the best ally, the one people of color let into their circle, etc.
35. if a white person makes a racist comment or action, aggressively confront them and pile on the feedback to distance from them and prove who is a better ally
36. seek approval, validation, and recognition from people of color
37. if confronted by a person of color, view it as an “attack” and focus on and critique HOW they engaged me, not my original comments or behaviors
38. disengage if feel any anxiety or discomfort
39. avoid confronting other whites on their racist attitudes and behaviors
40. when trying to help people of color, feel angry if they don’t enthusiastically appreciate the help
41. believe there is one “right” way, meaning “my way” or the “white way”

More productive approaches:

42. track patterns of differential treatment of people of color and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others
43. continually learn more about the experiences of people of color and racism
44. recognize when people of color might be reacting out of cumulative impact, and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences
45. analyze policies and practices to assess any differential impact on people of color and intervene to create change
46. constantly track daily organizational activities to ensure fairness, respect, and inclusion for all people with respect to group dynamics, communication, task assignments, professional development opportunities, decision-making, conflict management, mentoring, networking, etc.

Dig Into Your Roots: What's Fueling Your Behavior?

When you notice or are confronted about your racist actions, ask yourself:

1. What were the racist biases fueling my actions or inactions?
2. When and how were these taught and reinforced around me?
3. If the person had been white, how might I have reacted? How have I treated whites in similar situations?
4. When have I done or thought this before?
5. How can I interrupt this racist pattern in the future?

Interrupt & Shift Our Racist Internalized Dominance

When we notice we have a racist thought, we need to ask ourselves:

1. **Is it true?** Really true? (Adapted from Byron Katie, *The Work*)
2. What is my **evidence** that this is more true for people of color than whites?
3. When **whites exhibit the same behavior**, how do I make meaning of that?
4. **Who does it serve** for me to think this thought right now?
5. What is **my pay-off** for having and maintaining this racist thought?

To be more effective, more of the time:

Respond in ways that:

- Interrupt racist dynamics,
- Engage others to reflect on the impact and intentions of their racist actions,
- Educate why the comment, behavior or policy has a racist impact, and
- Build connections and relationships with whites for further dialogue, learning, and organizational change

Common Fears

Directions: Check-off any of the following fears that you have felt or anticipate as you engage in difficult conversations.

1. What if I make a mistake?
2. What if I say something stereotypic or biased?
3. Will I be seen as a fraud?
4. What if I can't handle a situation?
5. If I don't manage this well, will people could get hurt...
6. If I don't manage this well, it might hurt my relationships with others
7. Am I making this worse?
8. Am I ready to participate in this discussion?
9. People will get defensive and I won't know how to respond.
10. The conversation will "get out of control."
11. People will get too emotional and I won't have the skills to manage the situation.
12. I don't know enough to engage in the conversation effectively.
13. If I don't do this well, I'll let people down.
14. "Things won't change."
15. My comments will be dismissed.
16. I'll feel triggered by someone's comments or behaviors.
17. My personal opinions and behaviors will become the focus of the conversation.
18. I will lose credibility and be seen as less competent.
19. If I am too confrontational, there will be repercussions.
20. People will be disappointed in me.

What are Your Inclusion Values and Intentions?

- create greater inclusion
- leave people feeling 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, connect to the person
- create space for honest, authentic dialogue; sharing of feelings, perceptions
- invite people to learn from the situation
- model the social justice behaviors you espouse: authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, engagement...
- deepen understanding across differences
- identify deeper issues fueling feelings, perceptions and behaviors
- 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
- identify inappropriate behaviors and explore the negative impact
- interrupt unproductive, inappropriate behaviors and group dynamics
- build a “bridge” and a connection with the other person
- encourage identity development and growth
- demonstrate compassion and empathy

Have You Ever Had These Less Productive Intentions?

- 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 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 be 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

Common Unproductive Reactions During Difficult, Triggering Situations

Kathy Obear, Ed.D., www.drkathyobear.com kathy@drkathyobear.com

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 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?

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 (with the person in the moment, 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	WHAT COULD YOU DO?

* Developed by Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western University, 2015 nxs399@case.edu

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...

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

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...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...

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

Four (4) Types of Panning Responses

1. **Redirect**: Refocus the group without any reference to the 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 the group on the 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?

Kathy Obear, Ed.D, *Alliance for Change Consulting and Coaching*, www.drkathyobear.com
kathy@drkathyobear.com

From “White Supremacy Culture” ~ Tema Okun, *changework*

http://www.cwsworkshop.org/pdfs/CARC/Overview/3_White_Sup_Culture.PDF

- Perfectionism
- A sense of urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity over quality
- Worship of the written word
- Paternalism
- Either/or thinking
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- Progress = Bigger, More
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort

How MIGHT these advantage whites and disadvantage people of color?

1. Information sessions to advertise on-campus job opportunities for students occur in the late evenings.
2. New students get to choose their residence hall as soon as they submit their housing deposit.
3. To apply to be an Orientation Coordinator (paid position) students need experience as an Orientation Leader (unpaid position.)
4. Tenure and promotion processes place a high value on student evaluations.
5. In the hiring process candidates are required to report their salary history.
6. Using SATs and ACT scores for undergraduate admission decisions.
7. Greek Life policies at PWIs that require historically/majority BLACK, LANTIX, APIDA, NATIVE AMERICAN Greek groups to maintain baseline membership or run the risk of losing campus recognition.
8. Bereavement policies only cover deaths of family members.
- 9.
- 10.

Traps and Potholes for Allies to Avoid, a Beginning List

Tanya Williams, Ed.D., and Kathy Obear Ed.D.

1. Colluding and trying to maintain the status quo culture
2. Trying to keep your status, membership in “the club” while saying you are creating change
3. Fear of losing your access, connections, and future career opportunities
4. Attached to what people will say about you
5. Afraid of the consequences and backlash if you speak truth to power
6. Thinking you know all you need to know; feeling you have arrived; done all your self-work
7. Believing you have the right answer, you know exactly what is needed
8. Perfectly logical explanations, PLEs
9. Having some information and skills, but nowhere near enough competence
10. Acting alone or in isolation
11. Going it alone or only with other privileged group members; not having accountability structures and meaningful relationships with people in the corresponding marginalized group
12. Motivated by wanting to “help” people in marginalized identities
13. Reacting out of rescuing, patronizing, or condescending energy
14. Motivated by guilt, shame, or pity
15. Unclear why you do ally work; not clear on your motives and self-interest, i.e., reclaiming your humanity as you partner to create true equity and inclusion for all; understanding how oppression negatively impacts you in your privileged
16. Wanting recognition and appreciation for your contributions
17. Taking over and dominating conversations
18. Assuming leadership roles in cross identity groups with thoughtful group dialogue
19. Not partnering with and following the leadership of people from the corresponding marginalized identity(s)
20. Reacting out of self-righteous energy
21. Social justice arrogance: believing you “get it” and others “don’t get it”
22. Believing there is a progression from mediocre ally to “super ally”
23. Personal attacks on people who “don’t get it”
24. Shaming others or yourself for not knowing enough, doing enough, etc.
25. Acquiescing to anything people from marginalized groups say and do

26. Disappearing from conversations and deifying people from marginalized groups
27. Defensiveness to feedback from people from both marginalized and privileged groups
28. Resistance to looking at impact of your behavior
29. Unwilling to explore how you may be reacting out of internalized dominance
30. Holding back out of perfectionism, fear making a mistake, or being wrong
31. Fear of intense emotions (yours or others), especially anger and deep pain
32. Not seeing all people as worthy human beings, deserving of respect and dignity
33. Hiding your prejudicial thoughts and implicit bias
34. Fear of being vulnerable
35. Disengaging from other members of your privileged group(s)
36. Calling yourself an ally without engaging in active change work with people from the corresponding marginalized identity(s) ~ the people you say you are an ally to
37. Only working on a single identity; not seeing and working with the intersections and simultaneity of multiple identities
38. Having a very shallow definition and vision of change work: focused on diversity and increasing demographics without systemic, sustainable organizational change to create inclusive, socially just organizations
39. Doing for others what they can do for themselves
40. Thinking there is a checklist, a to-do list of “right” ally behaviors
- 41.
- 42.
- 43.
- 44.
- 45.
- 46.
- 47.
- 48.

Checklist for Allies and Accomplices:
Tools and Strategies to Increase Your Capacity and Effectiveness as Change
Agents
(A Place to Start)

Directions: Read each of the following and rate how often you effectively demonstrate these skills:

1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Occasionally 4 = Often 5 = Always

1. Consistently track interactions and group dynamics: work to create balance of engagement among all members; and speak up when you notice exclusionary comments and behaviors.
2. Cultivate relationships with other members of privileged groups who actively work to dismantle oppression and create inclusive organizations. Talk honestly about where you get stuck and ask for feedback and coaching.
3. Continue to deepen your awareness about privilege and dominant culture, and how these operate in you, others, and organizations/systems.
4. Recognize and change in the moment when you are operating out of stereotypes, privilege, and/or dominant cultural beliefs.
5. Track patterns of negative differential treatment on members of marginalized groups and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others.
6. Support others when they question or challenge uninclusive or disrespectful behaviors or policies so they are not alone. Recognize that marginalized group members have a far greater risk if they challenge and speak up.
7. Recognize and intervene when unconscious bias and prejudice are impacting opinions and decisions.
8. Continually learn more about the experiences of members of marginalized groups and oppression.
9. Recognize when members of marginalized groups might be reacting out of cumulative impact and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences.
10. Analyze policies, programs, services, and practices to assess any differential negative impact on members of marginalized groups and shift practices to create change.

11. Track current utilization of services and assess the degree of satisfaction and usage by members of marginalized groups.
12. Regularly assess the climate and culture of organizations and analyze the data for any differential experiences from members of marginalized groups.
13. Constantly track organizational activities to ensure fairness, respect, and inclusion for all people with respect to group dynamics, communication, task assignments, professional development opportunities, decision-making, conflict management, mentoring, networking, hiring and promotion, etc.
14. Ask questions to seek to understand BEFORE disagreeing or defending your position.
15. If your behavior has had an impact on a member of a marginalized group, avoid defensively talking about your intent. Instead, listen thoughtfully to their feelings and perspective; acknowledge the impact; make amends and change your behavior as needed.
16. In meetings and conversations, ask these questions, “How might this impact members of different marginalized groups?” “What perspectives and input might we be missing from different marginalized groups?”
17. Talk with members of privileged groups who seem to be colluding, “going along to get along” ~ help them consider the consequences of their actions and shift their behaviors.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Developed by Kathy Obear, Ed.D., *Center for Transformation & Change*
Kathy@drkathyobear.com www.drkathyobear.com

Self-Assessment: Critical Skills for Inclusion Practitioners

Developed by Kathy Obear, Ed. D., 2014

Directions: Read each of the following and rate how often you currently practice these skills:

1= Never 2 = Rarely 3= Occasionally 4= Often 5= Always

A. Use an Inclusion Lens to both observe and respond effectively to group dynamics.

- _____ 1. I intentionally notice/track the various privileged and marginalized group memberships of others during meetings, conversations, etc.
- _____ 2. I intentionally use an Inclusion Lens to notice/track how people interact with each other, including: whose ideas get attended; whose ideas are ignored/dismissed; who interrupts; who gets interrupted; who is given leadership; how much air time people use; how people react verbally and nonverbally as others share; how decisions get made, who has eye contact with whom; to whom do people direct their comments, etc.
- _____ 3. I describe the details or “facts” of what I observe/pan without judgment, assumption, interpretation or conclusions.
- _____ 4. I notice what issues of diversity are discussed effectively and which ones are ignored or not addressed productively.
- _____ 5. I introduce topics or issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that others do not seem to raise or bring up.
- _____ 6. I respond effectively when I notice stereotypic and/or exclusionary comments and behaviors in meetings.
- _____ 7. I am aware of how people may experience and interpret comments and nonverbal behaviors differently based upon their cultural perspective, and their experiences in their multiple privileged and marginalized groups.

B. Engage others effectively

- _____ 8. I encourage group members to participate and engage them in the process.
- _____ 9. I use effective listening and communication techniques, including clarifying, paraphrasing, open-ended questions, etc.

- _____ 10. I use "Connecting Language" that bridges one person's comments to another's.
- _____ 11. I demonstrate empathy effectively.
- _____ 12. I am able to "relate in" and "see myself" in others to find compassion and make a connection with them, rather than judging them or distancing from them.
- _____ 13. I use silence effectively.
- _____ 14. I effectively use my tone of voice and nonverbal behavior to engage others.
- _____ 15. I use humor appropriately and effectively.
- _____ 16. I use self-disclosure and share feelings, thoughts, opinions, and personal experiences effectively.
- _____ 17. I acknowledge and appreciate people's participation.
- _____ 18. I summarize discussions and make transitions effectively.
- _____ 19. I effectively move discussions along and keep the group focused and "on track."
- _____ 20. I effectively include all members in the discussion.
- _____ 21. If I believe a member(s) has been overlooked or excluded I intervene to either indirectly bring them into the conversation or more directly note the group dynamic.
- _____ 22. I effectively find some relevant point in participant comments, even those that seem way off the topic.
- _____ 23. If I believe someone is on a tangent, I can effectively acknowledge their point, and redirect the conversation back to the group's topic.
- _____ 24. I effectively help participants recognize assumptions and help them differentiate between observable facts and interpretations.
- _____ 25. I minimize how much I use the "telling" style and maximize how often I pose questions or dilemmas to facilitate dialogue among group members.
- _____ 26. I easily "go with the flow" and am flexible with the agenda as I adjust to the needs of the group in the moment.
- _____ 27. I can "meet people where they are" and not demand or expect them to be farther along in their understanding or skill development.

- _____ 28. I effectively name and discuss group dynamics among members in the moment and use them as “teachable moments” to facilitate deeper understanding and learning.
- _____ 29. I can “let go of the outcome” and “trust the process” knowing learning takes place even when I do not recognize it happening in the moment.

C. Facilitating discussions with an Inclusion Lens

- _____ 30. I talk about the college’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- _____ 31. I state that it is everyone’s responsibility to help create a campus climate that is respectful and inclusive for all community members.
- _____ 32. I effectively discuss the common daily indignities and micro-aggressions that people from marginalized groups experience on campus.
- _____ 33. I effectively discuss specific behaviors and actions that help create an inclusive campus environment.
- _____ 34. I consistently demonstrate respect for all participants across privileged and marginalized group memberships.

D. Responding in “difficult dialogues” with an Inclusion Lens

- _____ 35. I effectively navigate discussions where group members are feeling and expressing deep emotions, including anger, sadness, fear, frustration, hopelessness, etc.
- _____ 36. I am able to be “in the moment” ~ fully present and focused on what is happening in the group and in myself during difficult dialogues.
- _____ 37. I effectively respond to participant behaviors I believe are distracting, including dominating, interrupting, side-tracking, side conversations, etc.
- _____ 38. I acknowledge comments which sound inappropriate or triggering.
- _____ 39. I engage people in dialogue when I experience one of their comments as inappropriate or triggering.
- _____ 40. I recognize that “resistance” and challenges from group members are often doorways to deeper understanding and learning for the group.
- _____ 41. I effectively navigate conflict and disagreement among group members.

- _____ 42. I respond effectively to challenges and engage “resistance” from group members without taking it personally or feeling deeply triggered.
- _____ 43. I can use triggering events as “teachable moments” for the group.

E. Use an Inclusion Lens to analyze current policies, practices, services, programs, and marketing/media

- _____ 44. I recognize what identity groups will most likely have their needs met given a specific policy, practice or program.
- _____ 45. I recognize what identity groups might not have their needs met given a specific policy, practice or program.
- _____ 46. I recognize possible unintended negative differential impact across group memberships given a specific policy, practice or program.
- _____ 47. I track current utilization of programs and services within your area by group membership.
- _____ 48. I continually gather data about the impact, perceptions, and experiences of the programs, services, climate, etc., by group membership.
- _____ 49. I use these data to continually evaluate and revise current programs, services, practices, procedures, facilities, etc., to ensure inclusion for the full breadth of students, staff and faculty you served through our area.
- _____ 50. I create process maps of current programs, services, policies, procedures, norms, unwritten rules, etc., to identify where they currently create inclusion as well as areas needing greater equity.
- _____ 51. I identify the discretionary points where unintended bias could result in differential treatment and experiences in planning and decision-making processes, hiring and development practices, programs and services, policies, procedures, etc.
- _____ 52. I continually research national/international trends and promising practices from peer institutions and other campus departments.

F. My self-work as an Inclusion Practitioner

- _____ 53. I am aware of my biases, assumptions, and stereotypes for the full range of privileged and marginalized groups.
- _____ 54. I continually interrupt, reframe, and unlearn my biases, stereotypes, and assumptions about members of privileged and marginalized groups.
- _____ 55. I understand how my various privileged and marginalized group memberships impact how I am perceived and experienced by others.
- _____ 56. I understand how my various privileged and marginalized group memberships impact how I make meaning of situations, and then how I react/respond.
- _____ 57. I am aware of how my beliefs about “what is “effective” _____ has been influenced by my socialization and experiences in my multiple privileged and marginalized group memberships (i.e., communication styles, decision-making practices, dialogue skills, conflict resolution, training, meeting management, supervision, advising...)
- _____ 58. I continuously use an Inclusion Lens to self-reflect to examine my behaviors, assumptions, feelings, and attitudes and their impact on others.
- _____ 59. I continually seek and utilize feedback about my behaviors and attitudes from members of privileged and marginalized; and utilize their input to improve my practice.
- _____ 60. I am aware of my “early warning signals” that I am beginning to feel triggered.
- _____ 61. I am able to notice and navigate my own triggered feelings of anger, fear, stress, grief, etc., so that I do not “work my issues on the group.”
- _____ 62. I am aware of my common triggers and their intrapersonal roots.
- _____ 63. I actively do my work around my triggers: explore their roots; do my healing work; etc.
- _____ 64. I actively expand my understanding of issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Prepare, Envision & Take Action

1. How will you maintain your level of passion, energy, motivation, and commitment to create change?

2. Who is in your community of support? How will you expand your community (within and across racial identities) to ensure you maintain the necessary support, personal development, and accountability to work in coalition to create meaningful, sustainable change?

Adapted from materials developed by Shannon M. Jolliff-Dettore - Director of LGBTQ Services - Bovee University Center
110 A Office (989) 774-3637 - Fax (989) 774-1727 - jolli1sm@cmich.edu

What is possible? List a wide range of possible next steps:

Identify 3-5 actions you will take to:

- a. Create greater racial justice in your organization

- b. Develop a broader community of white allies & change agents

- c. Support the leadership and professional development of colleagues of color

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....

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
 - 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 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 and feelings 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?"

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

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 mean 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...

2. 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?

3. 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 on and off campus
- 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...

10. 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...

Obear, K. H. (2013). Navigating triggering events: Critical competencies for social justice educators. In L. M. Landreman (Ed.), *The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections from Social Justice Educators*. Stylus.

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

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 Islamaphobic...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 students, staff, and faculty from various and multiple privileged and marginalized 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. Diagnosing Privileged and Marginalized Group Dynamics

Use the following prompts to diagnose the potential privileged and marginalized group dynamics as you analyze a recent situation, case study, etc.

1. What are the various group memberships of the people involved, and which privileged and marginalized group memberships seem central to this situation?
2. What are the probable perspectives and feelings of each party?
3. How might unconscious attitudes, assumptions, and bias be playing out in this situation?
4. What are the possible privileged and marginalized group behaviors and dynamics in the situation?
5. What organizational issues are relevant in this situation, such as formal and informal policies, norms, procedures, organizational practices, etc.
6. What are the probable outcomes if this situation is left unaddressed? For members of marginalized groups? Members of privileged groups? For the team? For the organization?
7. Given your diagnosis, what and/or who should be the focus of a response and why?
8. What might be some effective ways to respond? And by whom?

15. 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?

16. Continuum for how to engage others:

- **Redirect:** Refocus group on topic/task without any reference to current group dynamics
- **Indirect:** A more vague, general comment to refocus group on topic and effective group dynamics
- **Direct:** Acknowledge the current situation, and/or the uninclusive or disrespectful dynamic

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

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 marginalized 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 marginalized 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 marginalized group member by:

- acknowledging the degree of feelings the marginalized 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 privileged 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 marginalized group members.

A good ALLY first acknowledges their impact, apologizes, and asks to hear more about how they have negatively impacted the marginalized 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, marginalized and privileged group members, work to intervene and stop oppression wherever they see it. AND privileged group members are generally given more credibility, listened to more seriously, and have fewer risks when they intervene, as compared to members of marginalized 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. Privileged 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 privileged 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 privileged group members speak up and intervene, they DISTINGUISH themselves from the overall privileged 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.

**Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates; Developed by Kathy Obear,
kathy@drkathyobear.com www.drkathyobear.com**

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....

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 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 might be the unintended impact of their comments and actions

- 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 students.

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