

Creating a Brave Space for Challenging Conversations

We strive to create inclusive, brave spaces where everyone can participate actively and equitably in conversations about issues characterised by diverse and often contradictory intragroup convictions, beliefs, experiences and opinions.

Through conversations in a brave space, we can:

- Gain new insights into each other's convictions, beliefs and experiences.
- Develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and each other.
- Challenge the biases, prejudices and stereotypes we hold.
- Care for each other.
- Build trust.
- Create new opportunities for developing, repairing and deepening relationships.

To create an effective brave space, we understand that we must strive to implement the following fundamental ideas¹:

1. Controversy with Care

- a. We use open and honest dialogue to gain a better understanding of each other's experiences, convictions and values.
- b. We accept that we have varying and sometimes opposing opinions and acknowledge that controversy is often a significant part of talking through complex issues.
- c. During these conversations we strive to maintain dignity and respect and we assume that other participants are striving to uphold that as well.

2. Owning Intentions and Impacts

- a. We promise not to hurt each other intentionally.
- b. We recognise that we must hold ourselves responsible for how our words and actions affect others even if that impact was unintentional.
- c. We recognise the importance of carefully reacting to and addressing instances where a conversation has negatively affected the emotional wellbeing of people we work with.

¹ Based on: Arao, Brian and Clemens, Kristi (2013): From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces. Chapter 8 in their book *The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections From Social Justice Educators*.

3. Challenge by Choice

- a. We are willing to challenge ourselves and each other.
- b. We are willing to step out of our comfort zone and into the less known and potentially uncomfortable place where opposing opinions are actively listened to and reflected upon.
- c. While we value inclusivity, we also acknowledge that we all have the freedom to step in and out of challenging conversations. If someone does not want to participate in a conversation, we respect their decision.

4. Respect

- a. No matter whether we agree with a person's ideas or opinions we respect them for who they are and what they bring to the conversation.
- b. We also show respect by listening actively to each other, being curious, asking clarifying questions and adhering to agreed rules about confidentiality.
- c. We are aware of our internal dialogue and we try our best to be non-judgmental when deriving meaning from what others are saying.

5. No Attacks

- a. We will not tolerate shouting, insulting- or threatening behaviour and microaggression.
- b. We recognise that we might feel hurt while participating in conversations in the brave space and we are willing to show our vulnerability.
- c. If anyone is getting hurt, we speak out for each other.

No matter what happens in the brave space we remember to show love and compassion for each other.