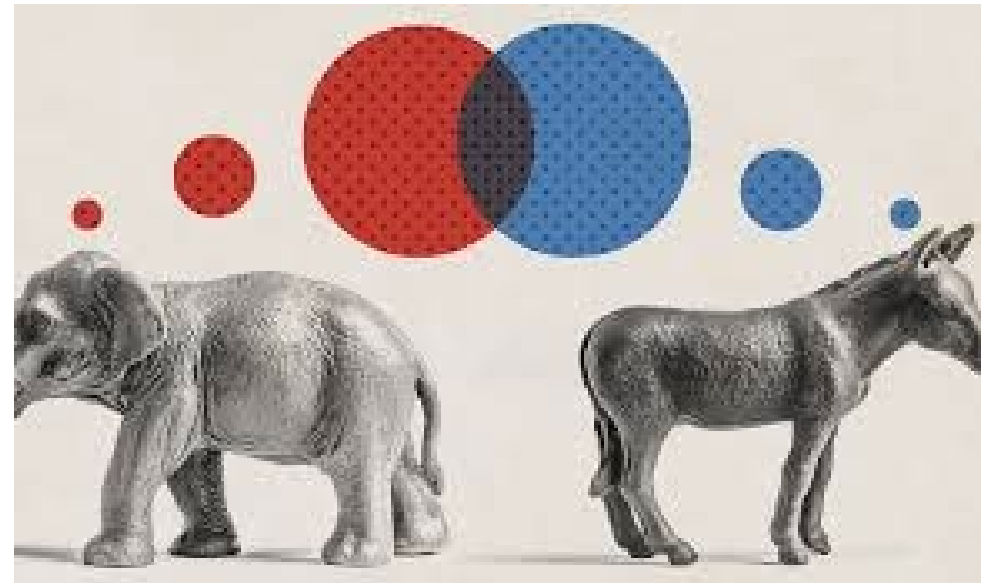
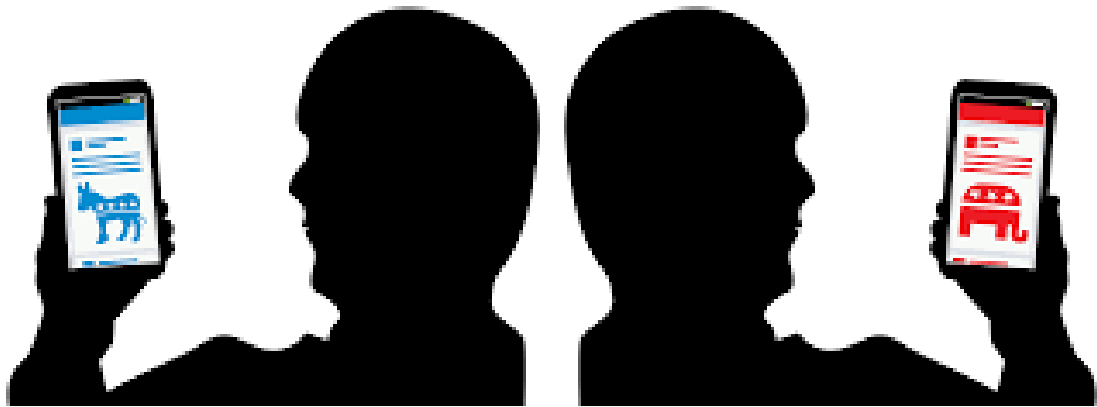
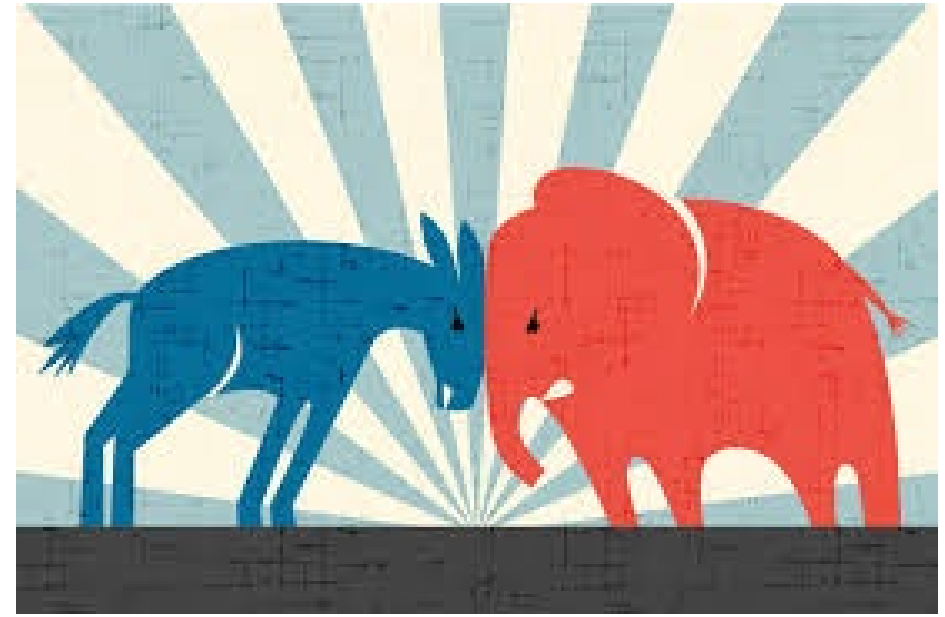
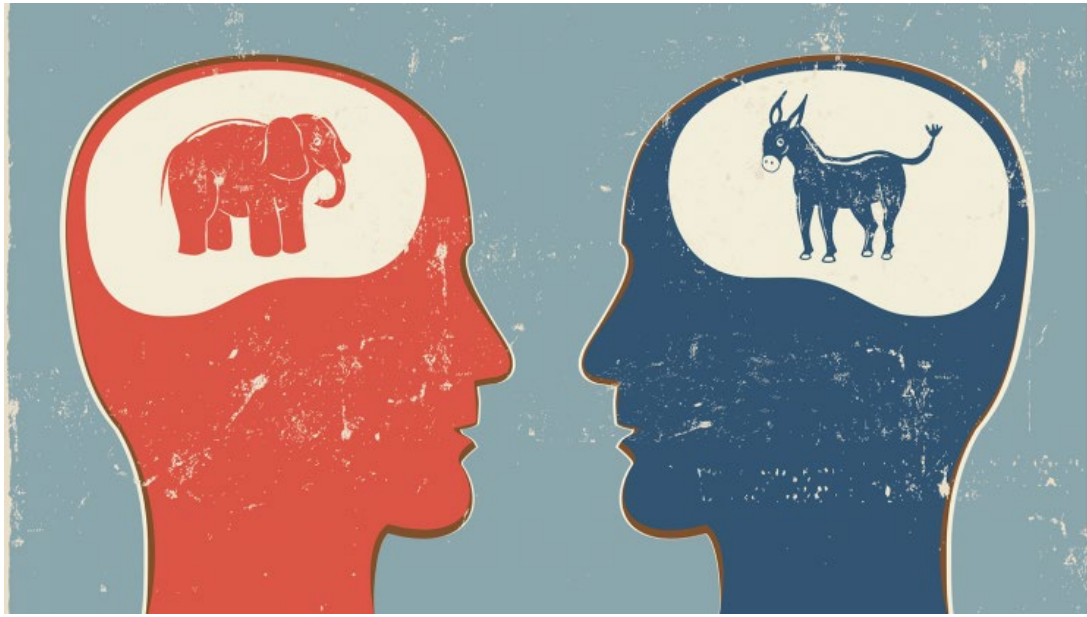




Handling Hot Topics and Difficult Dialogues

New Faculty Seminar -- Fall, 2022





It is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority.

~ Benjamin Franklin

AZ QUOTES



Always question the authority.

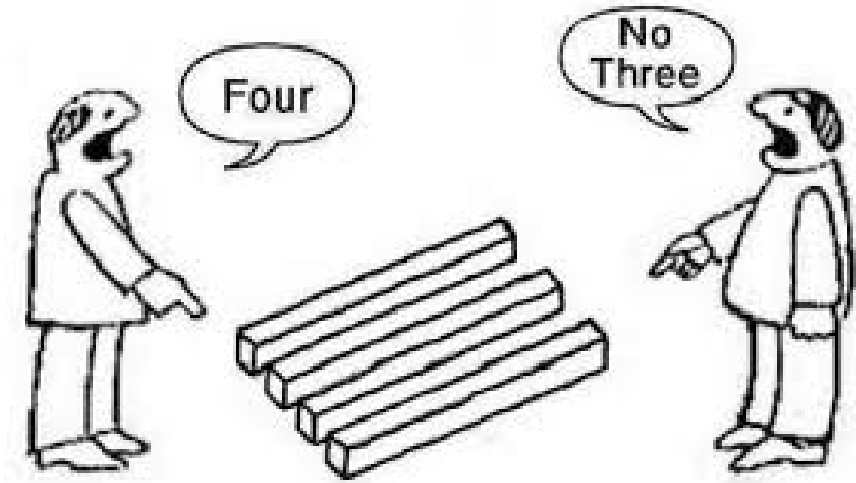
— Tom Morello —

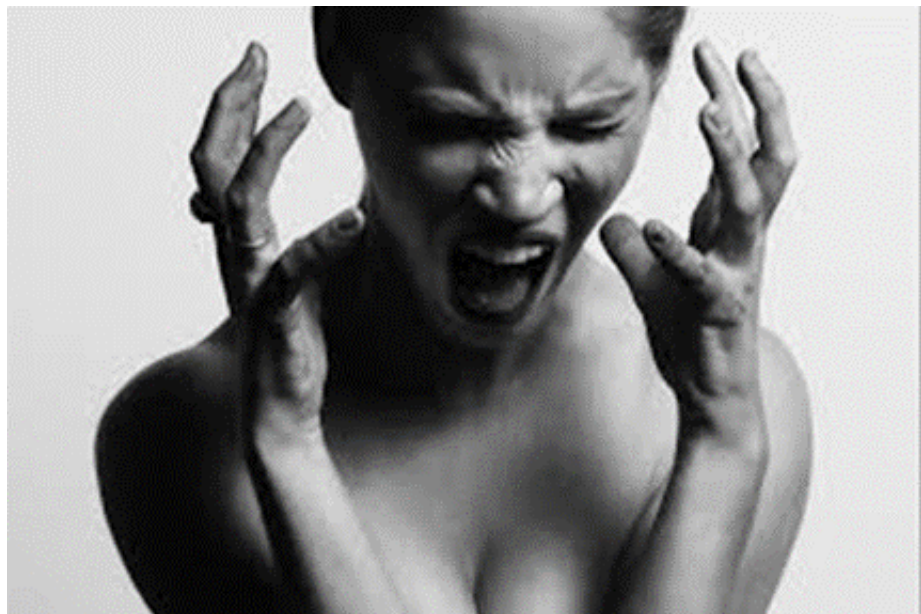
AZ QUOTES



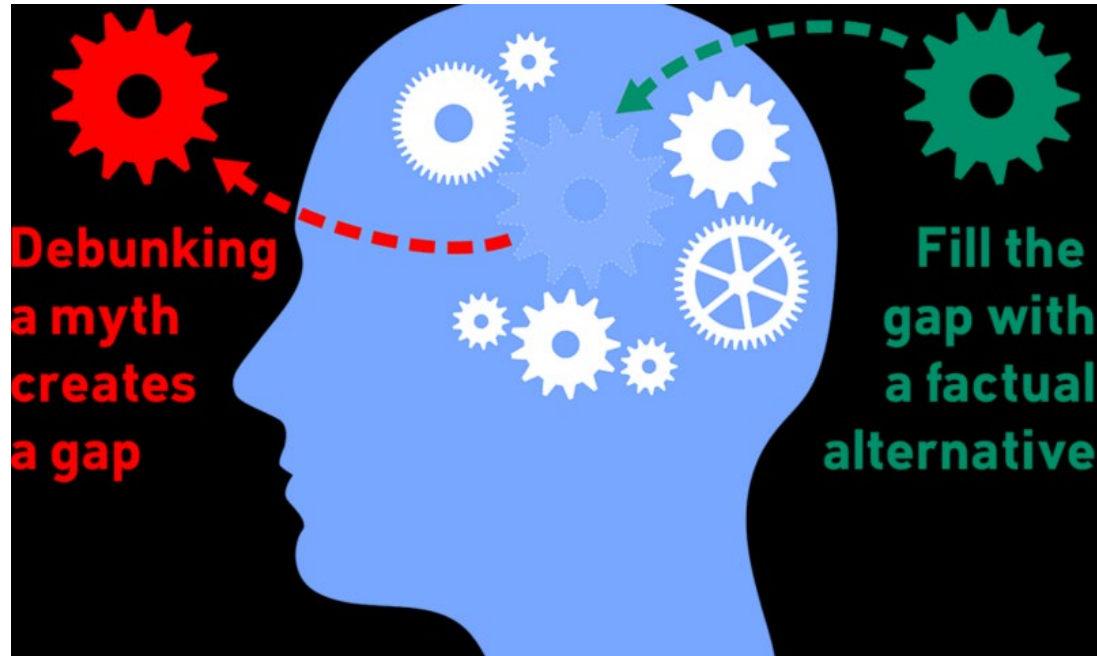
What does this look like in our classes?
What have you experienced?

What can we do?





Minding the Gap: Misconceptions, Misinformation, & Ignorance



- <https://undsci.berkeley.edu/teaching/misconceptions.php>

Something to think about...

<https://www.newyorker.com/.../why-facts-dont-change-our...>



NEWYORKER.COM

Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds

New discoveries about the human mind show the limitations of rea...

Towards a Strategy

Establish a climate of trust and civility

A major determinant of a successful educational experience is a shared sense of **respect** among and between the students and their instructor.

- Indeed, our general education program emphasizes the cultivation of independent learners who appreciate and respect diverse identities and perspectives in multiple contexts.

How do we get started?

- Set expectations **clearly, early, and often**
 - In the **syllabus**, in a welcome message on your **Canvas** page, during your **first meeting** with your students, in your **assignments**.
 - Use real and pertinent examples of civility and incivility; what is expected and what is not tolerated.
 - Clearly articulate what we expect from our students and what they can expect from us. Explain why it matters!
- **It's not all about rules, it's about relationships.**
 - Our initial value proposition to students should not be all about us and what matters to us, *it should value them*.
 - Make an effort to understand where our students are coming from.
- **Get to know one another.**
 - We should know one another's names and something about us all. How? Why? Have them put their preferred names and pronouns in their Zoom name fields and Canvas.
- **Listen...and encourage listening**
 - This means resisting the impulse to reply immediately, for us and our students.
- **Model appropriate behavior, respect, and civility!**

Set the tone and build the rulebook

- **Help the students** to get to know one another...and you. Preferred names, interests, etc. Think of activities to foster this.
- **Clarify your position** on civility then talk with your students about rules involving
 - Participation
 - Interruptions
 - Ad hominem attacks
 - Shutting down
 - Respect
- **Apply the rules** to F2f, zoom, chat, discussion boards

Know what to do, when, and how

Don't (just) be a first responder –look for flashpoints!

- Looks of disbelief
 - Looks of disengagement
 - Looks of anger/agitation
 - Knowing “that student” is going to say *something*
- Intervene
 - Pause
 - Reframe the topic and the rules for engagement
 - For example,
 1. Use timed intervals for students to think, reflect, write, and share
 2. Have them explore the issue from “the other side”
 3. Treat all sides fairly
 4. State and work towards a goal, conclusion, or solution
 5. Conclude the session with your own words, assessing the situation and how they handled it.

Develop and apply a process

- When the temperature rises, everyone takes a breather
- Ask them to think about what they are thinking or feeling and write it down
- Return to the topic
- Address the contentious topic and ask students to develop the argument for each side. Require each side to hear it out before responding. It is then up to us to pull it all in/together...or maybe ask them to (1) write about it, or (2) do a simulation, adopting the opposing position.
- Be free to talk after class
- Check yourself!

Consider pedagogies that facilitate civil discussion, reduce the likelihood of flare-ups, and help students understand their own tolerances



DISCUSSIONS



DEBATES



SIMULATIONS



INTERVIEWS



COLLABORATIVE
RESEARCH



PROBLEM-BASED
LEARNING

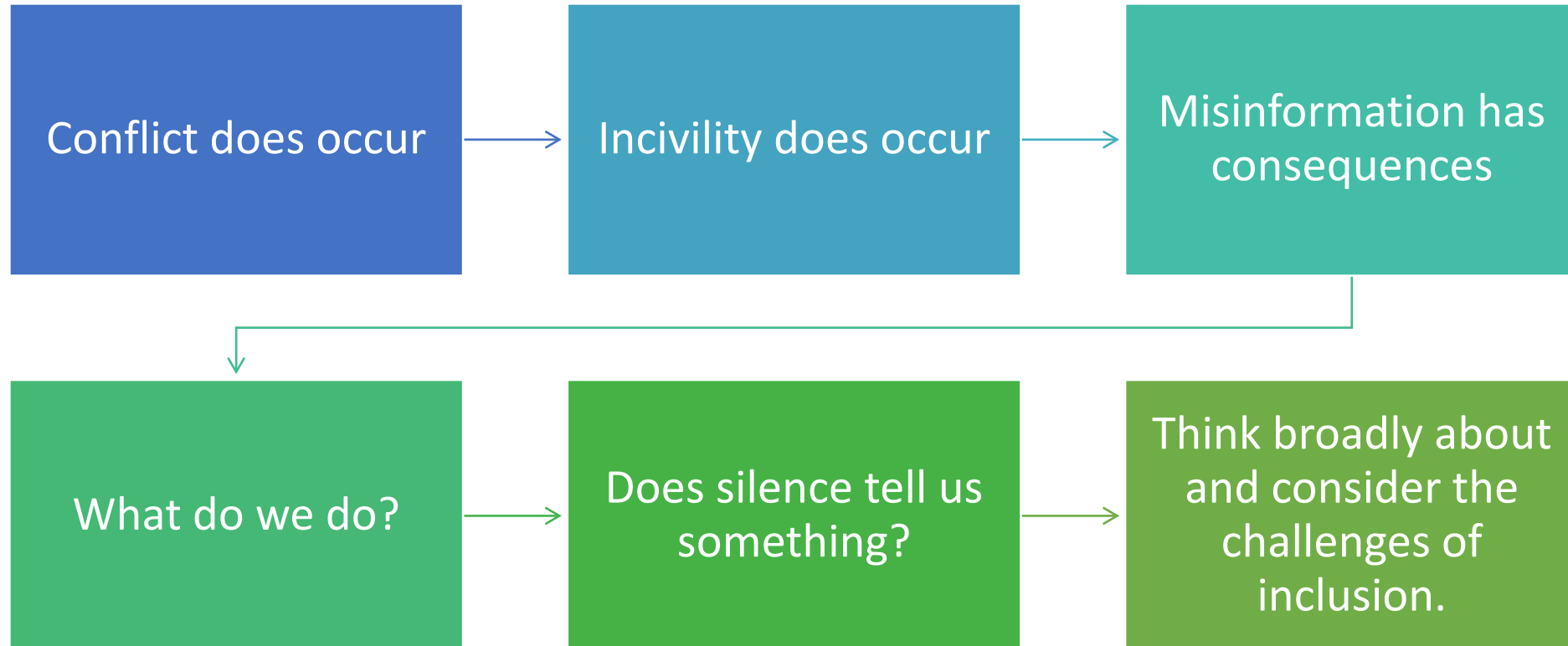


METACOGNITION
EXERCISES AND
JOURNALS



ONLINE FORUMS

So far so good, but...



Case Study #1

- **Something is said (Lateral violence and conflict)**
- In your class, there is a discussion about _____. One student expresses a strong sentiment and another chimes in, supporting that argument. In the chat window, a student remarks strongly about the persons making these arguments and the positions themselves. The chat window lights up as the students appear to be going at it.

What does this tell you? What do you do?

Case Study #2

Well, that's your opinion (Misinformation and defiance)

- Pick a topic –healthcare, the environment, immigration, voter fraud, you name it-- that fits what you teach. Imagine an assignment that requires your students to develop and present an argument. Now imagine a response rooted less in evidence than opinion, and dependent on sources that are not scholarly or, by conventional standards, reputable. The student argues that it is all just a matter of opinion; that her/his opinions and sources are as good and valuable as yours. When you disagree, you are accused of bias. The student assumes a defiant posture with her/his work.

- **What do you do?**

Strategy 1: Open The Front Door

When the temperature rises: Open The Front Door

- O = Observe
 - A concrete, factual observation
- T = Think
 - Thoughts based on observations, but not intended to put the other person on the defensive
- F = Feel
 - Emotions you or others may have as a result of what you observed/conflict
- D = Desire
 - Desired outcome

(with gratitude to Dr. Tasha Souza)

How it Works: A Scenario

- Own it:
 - *I* observed
 - *I* think
 - *I* feel
 - *I* desire
- Pause, process, and proceed:
 - Point out what you noticed (rolling eyes, arms folding, etc). **O**
 - Indicate what this makes you think (that you said something contentious that might need to be discussed further). **T**
 - Indicate a potentially emotional response you or others may have (discomfort, misunderstanding, fear). **F**
 - Indicate a desired outcome (someone giving voice to their gestures, a civil conversation on the topic). **D**

Strategy 2: Calling Our and Calling In

CALLING IN OR OUT?

CALLING IN: When you talk to someone privately about a harmful comment or action they may have made.

When to use?

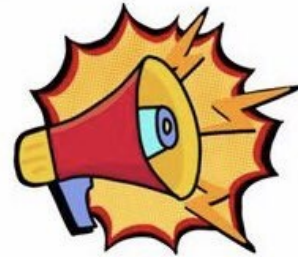
1. When you have a relationship with the person.
2. When you believe the person is open to learning.
3. When you want to give them the benefit of the doubt.
4. More compassionate than calling out so recommended to try first, if possible.



CALLING OUT: When you announce in a public manner that someone said or did something harmful.

When to use?

1. When calling in is not possible.
2. When calling in was not successful.
3. When their words or actions are harmful to many people.
4. When the harmful comment or action was done in public.



[@msgps.study.hall](https://www.instagram.com/msgps.study.hall)

[@sylviaduckworth](https://www.instagram.com/sylviaduckworth)

Interrupting Bias: Calling Out & Calling In

Interrupting Bias: Calling Out vs. Calling In

- Calling Out:**
- When we need to let someone know that their words or actions are unacceptable and will not be tolerated
 - When we need to interrupt in order to prevent further harm
 - Will likely feel hard and uncomfortable, but necessary
 - Allows us to hit the "pause" button and break the momentum

- Calling In:**
- When there is an opportunity to explore deeper, make meaning together, and find a mutual sense of understanding across difference
 - When we are seeking to understand or learn more
 - When we want to help imagine different perspectives, possibilities, or outcomes
 - Provides for multiple perspectives and encourages paradigm shifts
 - Focused on reflection, not reaction
 - Is not just a suggestion with an uptick (Don't you think you should...?)

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wow. Nope. Ouch. I need to stop you right there. | That word/comment is really triggering and offensive. Be mindful and pick a different word. | I need to push back against that. I disagree. I don't see it that way. |
| Okay, I am having a strong reaction to that and I need to let you know why. | I don't find that funny. Tell me why that's funny to you. | I wonder if you've considered the impact of your words. |
| I hmmm.. maybe you want to think this one through a bit more and speak about it later. | I need you to know how your comment just landed on me. | That's not our culture here. Those aren't our values. |
| Is sex/gender/gender identity/gender expression/race/class/ethnicity/religion/ability/immigration status/ body type/ marital status/ age/ pregnancy relevant to your point? How? | It sounded like you just said _____. Is that really what you meant? | I feel obligated as your peer/colleague/co-worker/friend/supervisor to tell you that your comment wasn't okay. |
| It sounds like you're making some assumptions that we need to unpack a bit. | You may or may not realize this, but you're talking about me/my story/my identity markers. | I need to leave the room if the conversation is going to continue down this road. |
| Remember, it is a powerful thing for the target of oppression to hear these words from the mouth of an ally! | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I'm curious, What was your intention when you said that? | How might the impact of your words/actions differ from your intent? | What sort of impact do you think your decision/comment/action might have? |
| How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone might misinterpret your words/actions? | How might your own comfort level, assumptions, expectations, prior experiences be influencing your beliefs, decisions, process? | How is _____ different from _____? What is the connection between _____ and _____? |
| What criteria are you using to measure/assess etc? | How did you decide, determine, conclude... | What would have to change in order for _____? |
| What do you assume to be true about _____? | Why is this the best way to proceed? What other approaches have you considered? | What is making you the most fearful, nervous, uncomfortable or worried? |
| Why do you think that is the case? Why do you believe that to be true? | Why do you think others have/haven't moved in that direction? | How do you know it's working? |
| Why did the result or response cause a problem for you? | What would other stakeholders say/think/feel? | In your opinion, what is the best case scenario? |
| Think: How might we call out the behavior, while calling in the person? | | |

Strategy 3: What your students can do

Four ways to get your students involved

1. **Critical Incidents/Cognitive-Affective Wrapper**

1. Have students identify what they thought, what they felt, what they learned, when, how, and why.

2. **Waterfalling and the Five-Minute Rule**

1. Take a topic/question/marginalized position and require students to pause, think, write, and post.

3. **Modified Fishbowl Exercise**

1. Let those who share a position talk among themselves and have those with opposing viewpoints listen, then rephrase what they heard, what the main point is.
 1. The exercise began with concentric circles, but that can be threatening. Consider alternatives. Consider alternatives in remote teaching and learning.

4. **Research the position**, cite the sources, discuss how information from different sources can lead to different conclusions



Remember to:

- Be clear
- Be patient
- Be present
- Be curious
- Be professional

And:

- Listen
- Learn
- Process
- Respond

Don't normalize what's not normal

Don't agree to be agreeable

Do "fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

~and remember~

"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

<https://lithub.com/rebecca-solnit-on-not-meeting-nazis-halfway/>

Resources

- [Teaching after Charlottesville](#) by Derek Bruff
A review of best-practices for faculty-student interactions after a traumatic event and resources specific to teaching in the wake of violence at Charlottesville in 2017
- [Discussing Traumatic Events](#) from UC Berkeley
Guidelines on how to prepare for and structure a discussion, if you choose to do so
- [Brené Brown on Empathy \(video\)](#)
3-minute video on distinction between empathy and sympathy with strategies about how to listen to and connect with someone who is suffering
- [Calling In: A Quick Guide on When and How](#) by Sian Ferguson
Distinction between calling out and calling in as ways to get someone to stop an oppressive behavior (calling in attempts to do this in the most loving, self-respecting way possible)
- [Teaching After Tragedy](#)
This is focused on K-12 educators but still has some useful information.
- [The Faculty Focus Special Report on Diversity and Inclusion in the College Classroom](#)
"Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom: Concrete Strategies for Cooling Down Tension" (p. 4)
"Seven Bricks to Lay the Foundation for Productive Difficult Dialogues" (p. 6)
"Overcoming Racial Tension: Using Student Voices to Create Safe Spaces in the Classroom" (p. 9)
"Managing Microaggressions in the College Classroom" (p. 10)
- [Responding to Everyday Bigotry](#) from Southern Poverty Law Center
Strategies for responding to bigotry at work, home, in public, and in yourself
- [Responding to Microaggressions with Microresistance: A Framework for Consideration](#) by Cynthia Ganote, Floyd Cheung, and Tasha Souza (pp. 3-7)
Theory of how microresistance can be an effective response to microaggression
- [Start Talking: A Handbook for Engaging Difficult Dialogues in Higher Education](#), ed. Kay Landis, University of Alaska Anchorage www.difficultdialoguesuaa.org
Field manual of strategies for engaging controversial topics in the classroom.
- [Stop Talking: Indigenous Ways of Teaching and Learning and Difficult Dialogues in Higher Education](#) by Libby Roderick and Ilarion Mercurieff www.difficultdialoguesuaa.org
Book on how indigenous ways of knowing and communicating can lead to more authentic learning and teaching in all communities
- [Self-Care Resources for Days When the World Is Terrible](#) compiled by Miriam Zoila Pérez
Ideas for how to maintain health, sanity, and integrity and includes resources for everyone but especially for people of color and LGBTQ individuals
- [There Is No Apolitical Classroom: Resources for Teaching in These Times](#)
Post created by members of NCTE's [Standing Committee Against Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English](#).
- [Eight Actions to Reduce Racism in College Classrooms](#) by Harper, S.R. & Davis, C. H.F.
- <https://podnetwork.org/publications-backup/resources-for-supporting-our-campuses-in-politically-fraught-times/>