

Guideline 1 - We speak in “I” statements

An “I” statement is a style of communication that focuses on the feelings or beliefs of the speaker rather than thoughts and characteristics that the speaker attributes to the listener. This helps create a space where we can all share our experiences in a way that is less likely to put those listening on the defensive.

Guideline 2 - We refrain from giving advice

The intent of this discussion is to be able to safely share our own personal experiences and thoughts while learning from listening to one another’s. In order to manifest this intention, we refrain from interjecting our own personal thoughts or experiences into someone else’s in the form of advice.

Guideline 3 - We refrain from asking direct questions

In order to create a safe place to share our thoughts and experiences, the extent of information shared needs to be decided by the person sharing. To create this type of environment, we refrain from asking anyone direct questions about their thoughts or experiences

Guideline 4 - We share only our own personal experiences

This is a time to share our own personal experiences, and not those of others. We strive to create a safe place in our discussions, even for those who are not present. By sharing our own personal experiences, we can help insure the extent of what we are sharing remains our own beliefs and feelings.

Guideline 5 - We speak one at a time

We are discussing a topic that is complex and very personal. We show each person sharing respect by allowing them to share without interruption.

Guideline 6 - We leave politics at home

We understand that the topic of race is intertwined with the current political climate; however, this is not a time to bring up political issues since they may divide or alienate participants.

Guideline 7 - We are respectful of one another

We are all entitled to our own opinions, thoughts, and experiences. We will refrain from shaming comments, gestures, and facial expressions. No matter how different someone else’s opinion is from our own, there is always something to learn if we have compassion and understanding for one another.