

Fostering a Positive Workplace Environment and Navigating Conflict

Supervising in the Time of Covid-19 Session

11.10.20

A Strategy

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**

Context(s)

- Remember:
 - **Multiple different populations and environments:** the classroom, the office, the chat window, students, and colleagues (lateral and hierarchical).
 - **Conversation is a two-way street** ...and others may have observations, thoughts, feelings, and desired outcomes of you, and you have to be open to that and mindful of power differentials, operative assumptions, and implicit biases.
 - **This returns us to our premise** of establishing and maintaining a positive workplace environment.
 - Be available
 - Be accessible
 - Be present
 - Be curious
 - Be empathetic
 - Be transparent
 - Set the tone...
 - Listen, learn, and lead
 - Share
 - Follow-up
- And please:
 - Stop expecting everyone to be online, available, and accessible All. The. Time.
 - Don't assume that not replying to an email is a sign of disrespect or defiance, of being overwhelmed or disinterested –there may be reasons for a delay and sometimes people choose different means of communicating.
 - Recall that we are all working in an “and” mode of operation.
 - Don't let your team think you're talking about them before talking to them.



In Search of Healing

America is facing one of the deepest divides in our history — and, no matter who wins the election, a difficult path forward



This is a tough time, not just politically, but socially, conversationally, institutionally, and individually.

The tyranny of absolutes is not helpful, so

- Listen
- Think
- Feel
- Process
- Respond

Don't normalize what's not normal
Don't agree to be agreeable

"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."
(Culture change doesn't happen overnight)

Resources

- <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/cetl/handling-hot-topics.asp>
- [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)
- [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
- A solution from Communication: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/03/14/communication-professor-establishes-rules-his-students-talking-about-trump-class>
- https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/why-facts-dont-change-our-minds?utm_social-type=owned&mbid=social_facebook&utm_brand=tny&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR3rBSeS1yIQLGT0ii5Qqz-Xm1XNqZ25KMXkToxDPSSbyK_fvxVjigXOXyY
- Touch of Grey, The Grateful Dead.