

Equity in Practice Guidelines

“Try On”

An invitation to be open-minded to others’ ideas, feelings, worldviews and ways of doing things so that greater exploration and understanding are possible. The invitation also includes feeling free to take those things that “fit” and to leave or file away those things that don’t fit.

Experience Discomfort

When talking about something that is not usually a part of daily conversation, it is natural for some people to become uncomfortable. We are not surprised when we (or others) feel uncomfortable, but we do not try to rescue one another from the discomfort. It’s a learning process, and it becomes natural only through experience.

Move up, Move up

In order to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in the conversation, please monitor your own engagement. If you find yourself speaking loudly and often, move up your listening. If you are more hesitant to share your voice, move up your verbal participation.

Be aware of Intent & Impact

Invites us to consider that in cross cultural interactions, our intent might not match our impact. When we have a negative impact on others across culture, ensuring a successful outcome requires changing that negative impact. This guideline requires a willingness to take risks and to exchange and receive honest feedback about the impact of our words and actions on others. It is possible to be well-intentioned AND still say and do hurtful things.

Practice Both/And thinking

Invites us to see that more than one reality or perspective can be true at the same time, rather than seeing reality as strictly either/or, right or wrong, good or bad, this or that. Using “both/and” thinking can be very helpful in reconciling differences and conflicts that do not present easy solutions.



Notice Content AND the Process

Means notice both, “what we say”, “how/why” we say or do something and how the members of the group react. For example, notice who’s active and who’s not, who’s comfortable and who’s not, who’s interested and who’s not, including ourselves. Ask about both the process and content, and share our own thoughts and feelings too.

Practice Self-focus

Assumes that our learning about differences can be accelerated and maximized when we listen to our internal thoughts, feelings and reactions. When we find ourselves getting irritated with someone about cultural differences, we can blame or shame them or ourselves, or we can figure out internally what is causing our irritation. An effective tool for practicing self focus is using “I”, rather than “we”, “you”, or “one” statements. When we intend to refer to others, be specific about who those others are--by name or group.

Expect & Accept non-closure

This agreement asks participants to “hang out in uncertainty” and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding. This can be heavy, confusing, and lead to more questions than answers. We are engaging in an adaptive process, not implementing technical solutions.

Anything else to create a safe/brave space?

Invites us to recognize that there is a difference between ‘safety’ and ‘comfort.’ As adult learners we are each responsible for our own physical and emotional safety. Often, in situations of cross cultural disagreement individuals may assume they are unsafe, when in reality they are simply uncomfortable. Demonstrate bravery and lean into that discomfort so that we can each remain engaged and move forward together.