

Straight A's for Facilitating Discussions about Diversity and Social Justice

AFFIRM-- Affirm people's willingness to raise issue for discussion.

- Thank you for asking that question. I'm sure others were wondering about that too.
- I appreciate your taking the risk to share that with us.
- That's an important issue. I'm glad you brought that up.

ACKNOWLEDGE— Acknowledge what people are saying. Paraphrase their words and feelings to ensure understanding. Acknowledge areas of agreement or commonalities with others.

- I'm hearing you say that..... Is that correct?
- It sounds like you feel.....
- So from your perspective....
- It seems like you're both concerned abouteven though you're approaching it differently.

ASK-- Ask questions to better understand individuals' thinking, feelings, and perspectives and to help them reflect on their views.

- Can you tell me more about how you came to think that?
- What experiences led you to that belief?
- How were you feeling when?

ADD— Add more information, historical/social/political context, or alternative explanations. Challenge misinformation and invite in other perspectives.

- This research study found that.....
- What institutional policies might have contributed to these inequalities?
- Let's consider how the history of has impacted what we see today.
- How might people's social identities affect their experiences in this situation?
- What are some other explanations for this?
- Let's hear some other perspectives.

ASSESS and ADDRESS-- Assess individual and group dynamics and your own internal and external responses and decide how to address them.

To the group:

- People are very quiet. I'm wondering what's going on. Let's do a go-round or take a moment to reflect.
- I saw that some people had a reaction. Let's hear how people were impacted by that statement.

To self:

- I'm starting to get more tense. What's triggering me?
- I'm starting to see this person just as a stereotype. I need to refocus on their full humanity.

APPRECIATE-- Appreciate people's willingness to engage with these difficult issues. Summarize and highlight any learnings.

- Thank you for engaging thoughtfully with these challenging issues and really listening to each other.
- Based on our discussion, it seems that that