

Breakout Discussion

What is “Healthy Discourse?” What makes it healthy?



CONFLICT WELLNESS

STUDENT AFFAIRS NOVEMBER 16, 2020

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Expectations

Please do what you need to do to stay engaged

Please feel free to ask questions at any time

Use the chat and raise your hand features

I invite vulnerability and openness. Please respect the vulnerability of others. Please be respectful of those not in the room.

Other Expectations?

Overview

Healthy Discourse

Reflective Listening

Healthy Discourse - Terminology

“Healthy Discourse”

“Conflict Wellness”

“Safe Space”

“Brave Space”

“Confidentiality” or “What’s said in the room, stays in the room”

Healthy Discourse – Case Study and Discussion Questions

Case Study: The student organization “UCR Healers” is a service organization for undergraduate students interested in becoming health professionals. Organization members volunteer at hospitals and health clinics throughout the year, and have meetings throughout the year where they learn more about careers in health professions. The group is fairly tight knit and members often hang out and grab food together after their meetings. After the most recent meeting, the topic of abortion came up in the informal gathering afterwards. Several members had very strong feelings about the topic and a heated argument broke out. A couple of core members, who identify as “pro-life” feel excluded from the rest of the group. The group officers want to try to address the issue somehow. They think it might be helpful to try to talk about the issue but don’t know how to proceed. They come to you asking for advice.

Discussion Questions: What advice would you give to the student leaders? What do you think they should consider in holding this conversation?

Tips for Healthy Discourse: Before the meeting (see handout)

- Establish expectations in advance.
- Give people the opportunity to opt in or out without guilt.
- Require a commitment to genuine dialogue.
- Clarify expectations about what will be disclosed to others outside the room.
- Clarify the purpose of dialogue and whether decision making or action or is anticipated as an outcome.
- Meet in a physical environment conducive to dialogue.
- Err on the side of fewer people in the room.
- Establish ground rules on what it looks like to disagree well.
- Frame the issue(s) objectively in a way that is agreeable to all participants.
- Consider using an impartial facilitator/mediator/moderator.

Tips for Healthy Discourse: During the meeting (see handout)

- Provide freedom for participants to call for a break at any time for any reason.
- Graciously enforce ground rules when they are violated.
- Identify and acknowledge significant imbalances or disparities between the parties. These include disparities of power, impact, understanding and numbers.
- Beware binary thinking and false equivalencies.
- Create opportunities for self-reflection.
- Use the “Ouch rule.”
- Encourage genuine vulnerability but discourage emotional red herrings.
- Pay attention to feelings and identity triggers as well as to ideas.
- Distinguish between intent and impact.
- Practice reflective listening.
- Surface underlying interests.

Reflective Listening

Intention matters!

Summarize content

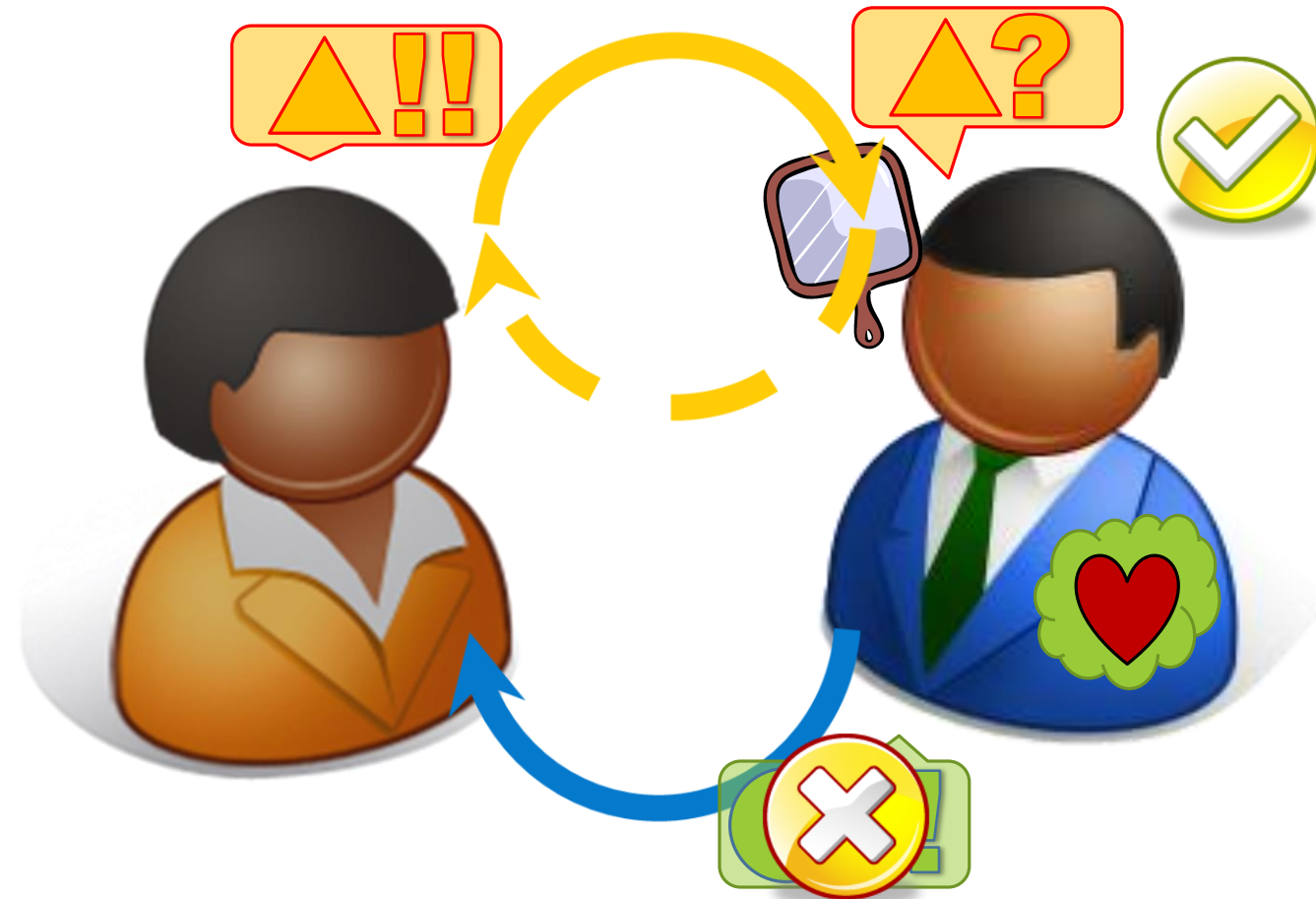
Summarize feelings

Summarize interests

Confirming/Tentative language

Reframing

Clarifying questions



Intention Matters

“What deters me from listening well?”

“What motivates me to listen well?”

Intention Matters – Some key pointers

- Some people say “don’t make assumptions.” I respectfully disagree. I say actively make good assumptions. I listen better when I actively assume that I don’t understand than if I merely try to avoid assuming I understand.
- Understanding ≠ Agreement
- Listening is strength not weakness
- Need to be on the train before it leaves the station.



Summarize Content

Summarizing Content involves merely restating the substance what has been said nearly verbatim, without adding any new information. This is typically done to confirm that the message being delivered has been accurately received, to communicate to the speaker that the listener is listening, and help satisfy the speaker's desire to be heard.

Summarize Content: "You need to come to meetings on time. I respect your time. You need to respect mine."

- a) "I understand. I will try to come on time from now on."
- b) "Our meeting time is important to you."
- c) "You want me to come to meetings on time and find it disrespectful of your time when I come late."
- d) "I do my best to be on time. Unfortunately, the traffic is unpredictable."

Summarize Emotion

Summarizing Emotion is similar to Summarizing Content, except the emphasis is on summarizing the emotions being communicated, both spoken and unspoken. Summarizing emotion is best used when the listener senses that emotions are an important part of what the speaker is trying to communicate. Summarizing Emotion attends to a speaker's emotional needs. Additionally, they open the door to discussing what is driving the emotions rather than merely emoting at one another.

Summarize Emotion: "You need to come to meetings on time. I respect your time. You need to respect mine."

- a) "You feel that I am being disrespectful."
- b) "You are frustrated because I have been coming to meeting late."
- c) "Why are you getting so upset about this?"
- d) "You want me to come to meetings on time and find it disrespectful of your time when I come late."

Summarizing Interests

Interests are the reasons behind the statement. By summarizing the spoken interests or unspoken interests of the speaker in a statement, the listener is able to deepen the discussion towards what is really motivating the speaker.

Summarize Interests: “You need to come to meetings on time. I respect your time. You need to respect mine.”

- a) “You are frustrated because I have been coming to meeting late.”
- b) “Our meeting time is important to you.”
- c) “You want me to come to meetings on time and find it disrespectful of your time when I come late.”
- d) “I do my best to be on time. Unfortunately, the traffic is unpredictable.”

Confirming / Tentative Language

Language that shows that you are reflecting what the speaker is saying, and not making conclusions.

Examples:

“It sounds like you feel...”

“If I am hearing you correctly, you ...”

“Correct me if I am hearing this incorrectly, but it sounds like... “

“You are saying.... Am I getting that right?”

Reframing

Reframing moves beyond mere summarization and subtly shift the tone or perspective of the statement without altering its underlying message. Reframing is commonly used to replace inflammatory statements with more neutral language

Reframe: “There was no excuse for that miserable presentation. You were totally unprepared.”

a) “My presentation was miserable and I was totally unprepared.”

b) “You think my presentation was inexcusably horrible due to my complete lack of preparation.”

c) “You think my presentation had a few problems and that I could have been a little more prepared.”

d) “You are disappointed in my presentation and believe I should have been better prepared.”

Small Group Exercise

Your co-worker Efrem says to you: “I know I said I would get the budget summary to you by Thursday but it has been a crazy week. I’ve been putting out fires all day and Juan just told me he now needs the figures tomorrow instead of next week. So, I will get it to you by Friday.”

In your group come up with 3 different responses:

- 1) Summarize Content
- 2) Summarize Emotion
- 3) Summarize Interests