Facilitating Classroom Discussion around Charged Topics

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Specific Aims for the Day

To provide Participants with

1. Tools and strategies for moderating and managing difficult conversations around topics such as race, gender, and campus climate.

2. Experiential activities that simulate charged topics and difficult dialogs, using case studies and scenarios.
• Regardless of setting, what are some difficult dialogs?

• What makes them difficult?

• What is it about the classroom setting that makes difficult dialogs more difficult?

• What’s conflict got to do with any of this?
• Conflicts are “super-sized disagreements” where one or both parties perceive a threat
• If ignored, conflicts tend to get worse
• We respond to conflicts subjectively more than objectively, with multiple influences
• Conflicts tend to trigger strong emotions, rooted in life experiences
• Conflicts tend to be the seeds for personal and professional growth
• Strive to manage stress quickly from an attentive and level perspective

• Strive to monitor your own feelings and actions

• Strive to hone in on the emotions of the individuals speaking to you and/or each other

• Strive to respect and validate differences
The Tool Kit for Facilitating Difficult Dialogs

- Tips for Diffusing Conversations
- Ground Rules for Civil Discourse
- Tips for Active Listening
- The Use of “I” Statements
• Place Holder
• Place holder
• Place Holder
The Use of “I” Statements

• Place Holder
Over the next several slides, we will address a couple of different scenarios in the classroom
Scenario 1

- Perhaps a disagreement between students regarding a controversial topic
Scenario 2

- Perhaps a disagreement between the faculty member and a student regarding a difficult topic
• [http://cmhc.utexas.edu/fightingfair.html](http://cmhc.utexas.edu/fightingfair.html)