



Communication Guidelines for Anti-Racist Discussion

1. Name the discomfort

The fastest way to dispel discomfort is to address it head on. If you are feeling uncomfortable with a topic, name what you are feeling! Labeling and bringing emotions out into the open allows them to be examined with a more objective eye; you are then observing your emotion, not being controlled by it.

2. Your impact is everything

Stating intentions early can help avoid misunderstandings. However, if a peer is hurt by something you did or said, your intention is no longer the focus; the impact of your words or actions is more important. Apologize if you harmed someone, accept feedback graciously, and decide how you want to learn from it.

3. Keep a learner's mindset

Seek to understand, before being understood. Your experience is valid and real, but that does not make it universal. In response to a new concept or difficult feedback, think: "I am grateful to have received this new information and can now choose how I want to integrate and use this information."

4. Use sound academic arguments

Refer back to the text: When attempting to make a statement that is not from direct and immediate personal experience, it should always be backed by an academic resource.

- **Discuss like a scholar:** Be cautious of generalizations and unsupported claims, be wary of logical fallacies, and watch for misleading data.
- **Check your sources:** What are the biases present in the sources you have cited? What are the sources of their data?
- **Form complete rhetorical arguments:** When making a claim, use logic and back up your assertions with evidence.

5. Use appropriate language

In this class there is a zero tolerance policy for overt racist language and abusive terms. In this class we also avoid terms that are anachronistic, and update your language as you learn: some terms may have been acceptable in the past but are no longer respectful terms.

6. Make all voices heard

Look around the room; do most people look like you? If so, how can you make sure less represented groups are represented in the discussion? Before speaking up, ask, "Does saying something add something critical to the discussion, or does it take an opportunity away from an under-represented voice?"

Ask your classmates what they think! Outside of creating space for peers to speak, nominating (*naming*) a peer in discussion also has a huge positive impact on engagement and builds a stronger community.

