

SOME CONSIDERATIONS WHEN ENGAGING IN CIVIL DISCOURSE

Material excerpted and adapted from *UNESCO Manual on Developing Intercultural Competence Based on Human Rights* by [Darla K. Deardorff](#) (UNESCO, 2018)

Strategies for Becoming More Interculturally Competent:

1. Seek first to understand – listen for understanding instead of judgment or reply
2. Value others as fellow humans
3. Recognize the way you see the world is only one way – there are many other ways
4. Resist making assumptions about others
5. Assume positive intent (don't take it personally)
6. See culture's role in your own behavior, communication, and identity
7. Seek to understand culture's role in others' behavior, communication and identity
8. Learn more about how others communicate in face-to-face interactions (beyond words)
9. Adapt your communication to the expectations within the particular situation
10. Be intentional about engaging in positive intercultural interactions

Some Ground Rules for Engaging in Civil Discourse:

1. Respect self and others
2. Avoid making assumptions (although that's quite natural as humans to do¹)
3. Don't take personal offense at what or how something is said
4. Presume positive intent
5. Speak only from personal experience and not on behalf of others
6. Speak own truth (be genuine)
7. Refrain from harmful comments
8. Maintain confidentiality
9. Respond to others as fellow humans

FACILITATION TIPS

Intercultural Facilitation Competencies (excerpted from Bennett, 2012, p. 14)

The effective intercultural facilitator has the ability to:

- Communicate clearly to nonnative speakers of the language used in the program
- Facilitate multicultural groups (including taking turns, use of silence, etc.)
- Adapt to different ways of communicating (verbally and nonverbally)
- Suspend judgment of alternative cultural norms
- Recognize culture-specific risk factors for participants (loss of face, group identity, status, etc.)
- Develop multiple frames of reference for interpreting behavior
- Demonstrate good judgment in selecting the most appropriate interpretation in an intercultural situation
- Ask sensitively phrased questions to avoid making assumptions or showing bias
- Avoid idioms, slang, colloquial language, and aphorisms
- Recognize bias in goals, content, process, materials, AND instructions
- Interpret nonverbal behavior in culturally appropriate ways
- Monitor the use of humor for cultural appropriateness
- Display cultural humility through words and action

¹To avoid making assumptions, it is important to listen and observe very carefully first and then to consider different explanations for the communication issue at hand – this can often start by asking “help me understand why....” See Additional Tools for more on the OSEE Tool for this