

Psychologically Safe Learning Environments

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The Centre for Faculty Development (CFD) is committed to creating a safe(r), brave(r), accountable, and inclusive environment for all. The fulfillment of our Centre's mission depends upon an environment of acceptance and mutual respect. We endeavor to create an environment where participants take risks together and feel open to sharing personal stories and experiences.

It is important to acknowledge a few ideas around this being a "safe" space:

- A space as a whole cannot categorically be safe – what is safe for one person may be uncomfortable for another and un-safe for another.
- There is a difference between dis/comfort and un/safety. Reflect for yourself as feelings come up if they are uncomfortable and unsafe, and what is the difference. Are you uncomfortable? Perhaps because your worldview, perspectives, actions, choices and words are being challenged? People do uncomfortable things all the time. This is different than harm. Being unsafe or harmed is when you are being dehumanized, insulted, assaulted, or excluded.
- While we aim for safe(r) learning spaces, discomfort can also be a birthplace for transformative learning - and desirable discomfort is at times the educational goal. This tension is important, and should be tended to throughout the session.
- Is it all of our responsibility to create our space with as much respect, honesty, empathy, and sincere curiosity as we can.

There are things some tactical things to consider:

- Using "I" statements. Your experiences and feelings are real, anything else is interpretation – so using "I" statements helps orient your truth as yours, and avoids misinterpreting the truth of anyone else.
- If someone else shares their experience, listen; believe that it is true even if you don't understand it. Fight any urge to put forward alternate versions of their experience (unless explicitly asked).
- Help make space for voices that have more barriers to being heard (which may include not taking up space yourself).

Specific considerations for virtual learning environments:

- Privacy: Ideally, attend virtual sessions in a private space to ensure the privacy of participants. If in a public space, please use a headset. If a headset is not possible, please disclose that you are in a public space.
- Recording: Ensure clarity on if a session is being recording, transcribed, or if the chat feature will be saved and where.

[CFD Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility Statement](#)