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Monitoring and Managing Emotionality During Difficult Dialogues

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Monitoring and Managing Emotionality During Difficult Dialogues

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Presented during Pace University's Social Justice Week

Special Acknowledgements

www.pace.edu/socialjusticeweek

Social Justice Week is a way to honor DJ Henry and acknowledge the connections between his story and racial injustice. DJ Henry had a passion for people and sports. He was a student on Pace's Pleasantville Campus and a member of the football team. On October 17, 2010, Pace's Homecoming weekend, DJ was shot and killed by a Pleasantville police officer.

Held to coincide with DJ's birthday, October 29, Social Justice Week is a community-driven effort. Social Justice Week seeks to create brave spaces that challenge white supremacy and racism, among other forms of oppression, and to create a starting point from which meaningful dialogue and action can be created for the entire Pace Community.

Indigenous Land Recognition: We recognize that we are on stolen Native land, that this land has been home to Lenni Lenape, Wappinger, and other Native communities and nations for millennia, and that we have a responsibility to be truthful about this fact and to honor the Peoples who belong to this land.

Sensitive Content Disclaimer: All topics discussed during Social Justice Week are for educational and informational purposes. Please be advised that some issues may be sensitive or triggering in nature. Discussions are not intended as a substitute for professional services. We encourage students and participants to consult with the Pace counseling center or their healthcare provider in the event of any emotional distress arising from engagement in programming.





Agenda

- Why is emotionality important and in what contexts might this material apply
- How to better recognize emotions during difficult dialogues
- How to better manage emotions during difficult dialogues
- Roadmap for navigating difficult dialogues

Why?

- Difficult dialogues apply across contexts
- They impact people within all roles of the conversation
- Unsuccessful difficult dialogues can have a large, negative impact
 - What is a “trigger”?
 - What is “trauma”?
- Successful dialogues can also have a large, positive impact



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The Role of Emotionality in Difficult Dialogues

- Emotionality is the degree to which one experiences and expresses emotions
- The high (and often negative) emotions that happen during such talks can derail one's ability to stay present, think clearly, follow ground rules, and, ultimately, obtain the potential benefits.

Recognizing Emotionality Activity

Notice what your body is doing:

Are you smiling? Frowning? Is your face tight? Loose? Hot? Normal?

Is your body still? Moving? If so, is this something that you did intentionally?

Are you breathing quickly? Slowly? Normally? Faster? Slower?

Is your heart beating more quickly?

Do you feel the same amount of energy? More? Less?

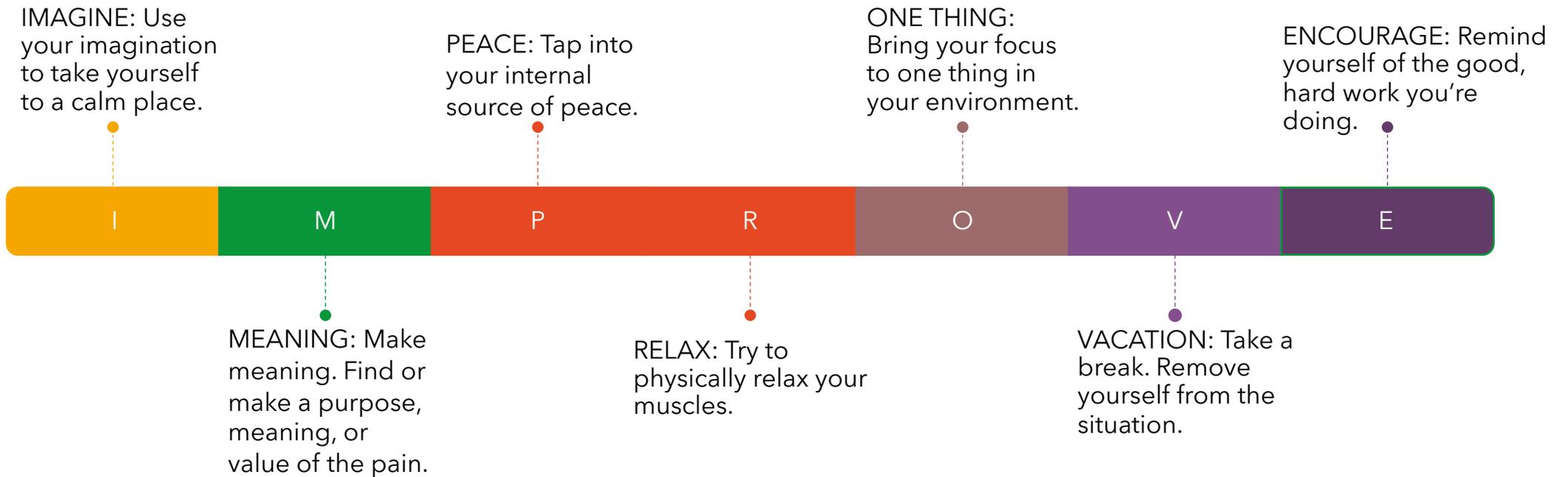
Does your body feel tight? Loose? If tight, where? Your back? Stomach? Arms? Legs?

Is your brain thinking the same way? Are thoughts moving more quickly? Slowly? Focused on thing? Have you forgotten what you were doing? Did a memory spark?

Try to give name to how you're feeling. Use a "feeling" word. These are just some options.

caring, enthusiastic, attraction, anger, compassion, sadness, fondness, longing, despair, sympathy, empathy, warm, joyful, content, amused, annoyed, cheerful, alienated, hurt, dejected, hopeless, miserable, happy, delighted, grouchy, vengeful, relieved, optimistic, lonely, shameful, insulted, remorseful, gleeful

Managing Emotionality: IMPROVE



Bring Your Own Ground Rules to Difficult Dialogues

- Remember you can choose how much or little to engage in difficult dialogues.

Bring Your Own Ground Rules to Difficult Dialogues

Non-violent communication:

- Observation
- Feelings
- Needs
- Requests

Have a framework to make decisions

Do you want to have a conversation with someone who holds views different from your own?

YES

NO

Do you want to vent, have an argument, or generate conflict?

YES

NO

Stop here!
Change the topic

Raise your voice
Interrupt
Question motives
Point out they're wrong
Say "are you kidding me??"

Listening:

Allow uninterrupted speech
Reflect what you hear
Use "I" statements
Open-ended Qs

Have a
framework to
make
decisions

Do you want to understand their
perspective?

YES

NO

Perspective taking:

Be curious

Be nonjudgmental

Focus on the other person

Assume they have positive intentions

Ask questions

Float hypothesis

Try advocating for their position

Consider why they might hold their views

Rethink whether
to have this
conversation

Have a
framework to
make
decisions

What is your goal?

**COMMON
GROUND**

Seek shared personal or political hopes, fears, goals, interests, likes, dislikes, experiences. Agree to disagree

PERSUADE

Do you understand their perspective?
Can you treat them with respect?

YES

Use arguments that
appeal to their values
taking

NO

Back to listening &
perspective

Have a
framework to
make
decisions

Remember:

- Anticipate and be aware of reactions
- Breathe
- Remember your motivations
- Pause the dialogue
- Seek support elsewhere

Summary

- Difficult dialogues are inherently challenging for most parties involved.
- While they can be painful, the rewards of participation can deepen connections with and understand of others.
- Monitor your emotions by checking on your body and naming your feelings.
- IMPROVE your emotional experience.
- Have a plan.





Thank You

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