

Navigating Triggering Events: Critical Competencies for Engaging in Difficult Dialogues

Facilitated by:

Kathy Obear, Ed.D., Alliance for Change Consulting, www.drkathyobear.com

What are Your Inclusion Values and Intentions?

- create greater inclusion
- leave people feelings whole
- engage in respectful dialogue
- do no harm
- “go with the flow;” trust the process
- deepen learning and growth
- meet the people “where they are” without judgment
- use the triggering moment to deepen understanding
- relate in to the person; connect with them
- create space for honest, authentic dialogue
- invite people to learn from the situation
- model the social justice behaviors you espouse: authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, engagement...
- model skills to navigate triggering moments: scan, yourself, identifying unmet needs, shifting self-talk, stress management techniques, realigning your intentions, exploring intrapersonal roots...
- facilitate open, honest discussion
- create space for the other person to express their feelings, perceptions
- deepen understanding across differences
- identify the deeper issues fueling the feelings, perceptions and behaviors of others
- create safety for the expression of differing viewpoints
- treat others with respect and dignity
- encourage more people to engage in the dialogue
- support people to disagree with each other in respectful ways
- model effective recovery skills after making an inappropriate comment or when your behavior results in negative impact
- identify inappropriate behaviors and explore the negative impact
- interrupt unproductive, inappropriate behaviors and group dynamics
- build a “bridge” and a connection with the other person
- encourage identity development and growth
- demonstrate compassion and empathy

Have You Ever Had These Less Productive, “Negative” Intentions?

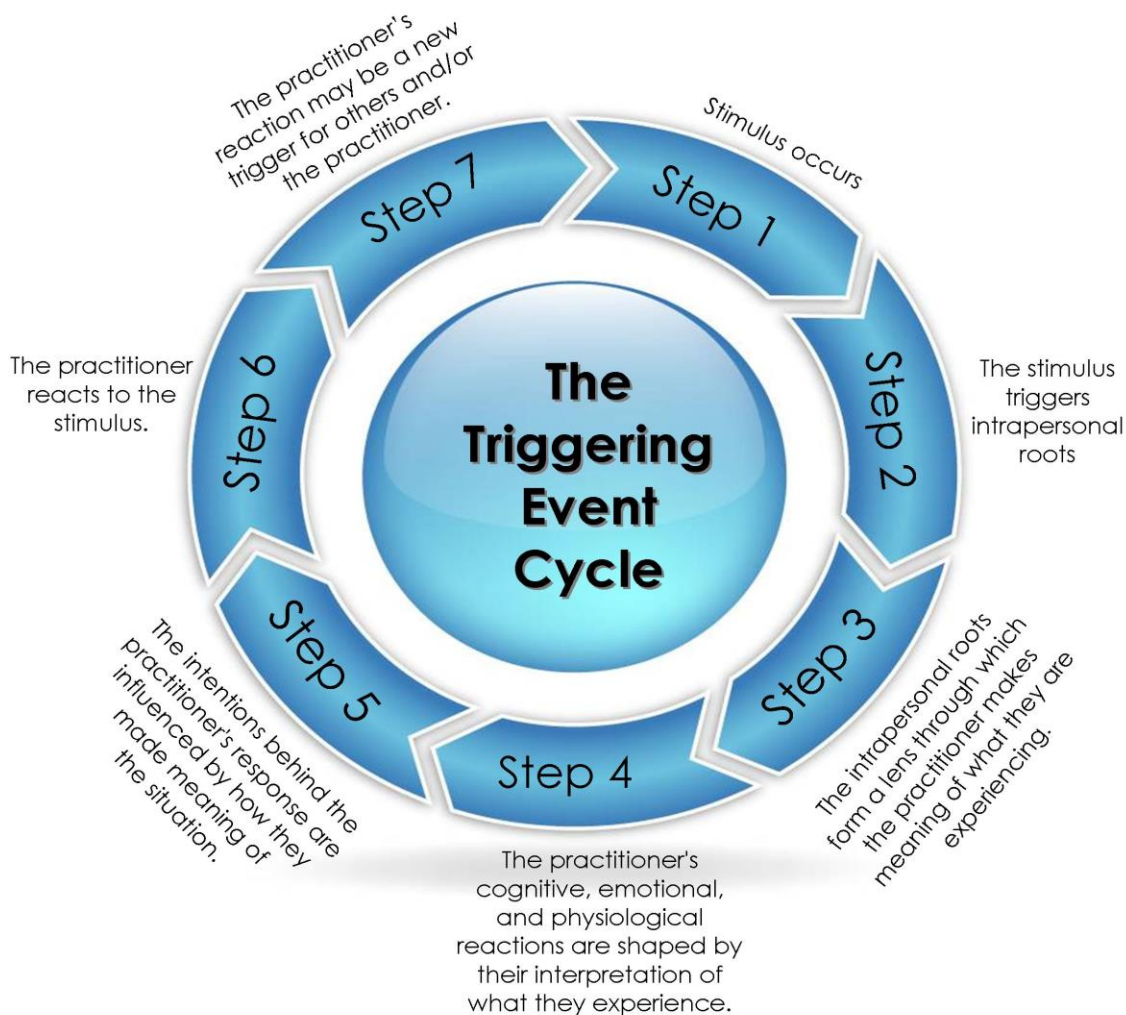
- win the argument
- get even; get them back
- to be right; prove the other person wrong
- to prove you are competent, smart
- assert your power and authority
- gain status and prestige; be admired
- be in control
- intimidate the other person
- “put them in their place,” shut them down
- punish the other person
- embarrass or put down the other person
- make them feel the pain and hurt you feel
- change the other person’s views, feelings or behaviors
- to make people learn
- trick and “out fox” the other person
- avoid confrontation and conflict
- keep the conversation “under control”
- avoid intense emotions: in self and others
- make everyone feel happy and harmonious
- avoid feeling or being viewed as “incompetent”
- control how others feel about you
- to seen as a “good one,” an ally
- use the current opportunity to “right the wrongs” you experienced in your past
- change the other person to account for times you either didn’t or couldn’t change oppressive people earlier in your life
- ignore them
- seek approval of others
- to be liked, to fit in

Navigating “Hot Buttons” and Triggering Situations

Characteristics of a Triggering Event

Any stimulus, either external or internal to the person, through which they experience an emotional reaction that may have some or all of the following characteristics:

- unexpectedness, the person is surprised by the arousal of their feelings
- strong intensity of feelings, the person experiences their emotions as overwhelming and disproportionate to the original stimulus
- disorienting, the person is disoriented and distracted from the flow of the workshop and the planned agenda: “stopped in their tracks”
- feeling out of control and overwhelmed by the situation
- feeling “de-skilled” and reacting less effectively
- requiring extra effort to manage the situation effectively



Common Examples of Triggering Events

Directions: Use a 0-10 scale to rate how much of a “trigger” each of the following is for you when you are engaging in difficult dialogues about issues of inclusion.

0 = no emotional reaction

1 -2 = mild level of emotional reaction

3-4 = low-moderate degree of emotional reaction

5-6 = moderate degree of emotional reaction

7-8 = high degree of emotional reaction

9-10 = extremely high level of emotional reaction

A. When a participant(s):

- 1. makes an insensitive, stereotypic, or offensive comment
- 2. acts in ways that are classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.
- 3. interrupts or speaks over me or the participants
- 4. dismisses my point or that of a participant
- 5. demonstrates disruptive behavior including joking, side conversations, or laughing at me or participants
- 6. makes snide or sarcastic comments
- 7. is belittling or demeaning
- 8. demonstrates domineering or controlling behavior
- 9. demonstrates bullying or threatening behavior
- 10. is arrogant or self-righteous
- 11. is patronizing or condescending
- 12. has a very blunt or impersonal style
- 13. has an aggressive or forceful style
- 14. tries to derail the planned format and agenda
- 15. refuses to participate in the discussion or the activity
- 16. is silent, shut down or withdrawn
- 17. is “set in their ways” and unwilling to shift their perspective
- 18. will only focus on their intent, and not the impact of their behavior
- 19. refuses to consider feedback from me or others
- 20. is crying and expressing deep emotions of pain or grief
- 21. is expressing deep anger or rage
- 22. is engaged in an intense, emotional conflict with me or others
- 23. challenges the validity of the information or statistics being presented
- 24. strongly disagrees with what I am saying
- 25. questions the usefulness of an activity or a discussion
- 26. criticizes my style, design, or approach
- 27. questions my competency as the facilitator
- 28. calls me classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, , etc.
- 29. criticizes or minimizes efforts related to equity, inclusion, and social justice
- 30. dismisses the conversation as “political correctness”
- 31. portrays themselves as the “victim” of “reverse discrimination”
- 32. proclaims that they are “a good one” without acknowledging their unearned privilege

- 33. continually points out what others do that is oppressive without acknowledging their own participation in the dynamics of oppression
- 34. shifts the conversation away from their privileged group and to their marginalized group
- 35. only engages in the conversation out of marginalized identities
- 36. “coaches” members of marginalized groups on how to act, think and feel
- 37. is colluding with their own oppression, “going along to get along”
- 38. defends members of privileged groups who are acting out of privilege or prejudice
- 39. publically criticizes other members of their marginalized group(s)

B. For me, when

- 40. I make a mistake or error
- 41. I do or say something biased, offensive or oppressive
- 42. I do not know the answer to a question
- 43. I fear I not know how to effectively respond in a situation
- 44. I start to cry or lash out in anger
- 45. I believe the conversation is about to “get out of control”

C. When a colleague:

- 46. is triggered and experiencing deep emotions
- 47. mismanages an activity or makes an ineffective intervention
- 48. makes an offensive or stereotypic comment
- 49. changes the planned agenda without checking in with me
- 50. steps in as I am leading and takes over
- 51. tries to “correct,” coach, or criticize me in front of the group
- 52. is silent and “disappears” during a group discussion in which they are a member of the privileged group
- 53. is silent and “disappears” during a group discussion in which they are a member of the marginalized group
- 54. takes credit for my ideas or work

Additional common triggers for you:

Developed by Kathy Obear, Alliance for Change, kobear@earthlink.net

Conversation stoppers

The following behaviors may negatively impact the quality of the discussion:

- Interrupting, speaking over each other
- Mostly using a telling and directive style
- Giving too much advice without asking questions to help others come up with their own solutions
- Pushing your point; insisting others do things your way
- Avoiding giving constructive feedback or using vague generalizations
- Overly critical focus on what they did wrong, what needs to change
- Always jumping right into task mode, without spending time developing and deepening relationships
- Assuming responsibility for the others' situations and trying to fix it for them
- Inappropriate jokes, gossip or stereotypic comments
- Making assumptions based on social group memberships, including gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality/ways of knowing, age, sexual orientation, nationality, im/migration status, educational background, disability status, veteran status, etc.

Common Dialogue Pitfalls/Traps (*Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates)

1. PLEs (perfectly logical explanations)
2. Yea, but....
3. That happens to me/my group, too....
4. I know someone who...and they don't agree with you....
5. I don't see it that way; therefore, it doesn't really happen....
6. That doesn't happen to me...(so it doesn't exist)
7. Don't you think that...
8. You're overreacting...you're too sensitive...
9. He/she/hir's a good person...they never meant to do that....
10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!
11. But don't you think we have come a long way? There's been so much progress....
12. That was an isolated incident....
13. Well, maybe you should have reacted differently...approached them differently....(blaming the victim)
14. That had nothing to do with race (or gender identity or class....)

Journaling: The Triggering Event Cycle

Directions: Choose one situation when **you were not satisfied** with how you reacted when you felt triggered when engaging in authentic dialogue about issues of race, equity, and inclusion.

1. What was the **specific situation** in which you felt triggered (Step 1)?

2. What were some of your intrapersonal roots fueling your triggered reactions? (Step 2) (see next page)

3. How did you **make meaning** of the situation? **What “story” did you make up** about what you thought was happening (Step 3)?

4. **How did you know** you were triggered (Step 4)?
 - *physiological reactions:
 - *self-talk/thoughts:

 - *feelings:
 - *unconscious behaviors or responses:

5. What were your **intentions** and motives? Hoped for outcome? What were you trying to accomplish (Step 5)?
 - *unproductive motives:
 - * more productive motives:

6. How did you **react** when you were triggered? Please note both your actions as well as your intrapersonal processes, such as your feelings and fears, thoughts and “self-talk” (Step 6)?
 - * less effective reactions/responses:
 - *more effective reactions/responses:

7. **How was your effectiveness impacted by feeling triggered? How did your reactions impact you? Others (Step 7)?**

Intrapersonal “Roots” of Triggering Events

Directions: Think about your triggering event. What do you believe were the various factors or “roots” that contributed to your feeling triggered?

1. **Current life issues and dynamics (fatigue, illness, crises, stressors, etc.)**

2. **Cumulative impact of recent experiences: Does this situation remind you of recent events?**

3. **Unresolved or unhealed past issues, traumas, and “wounds:” Does this person remind you of anyone? Does this situation remind you of past traumas?**

4. **Fears (check-off all that are related and add any others)**
 - My personal issues will become the focus of the conversation: all eyes will be on me.
 - I will lose credibility and be seen as less competent.
 - If I cry and show emotion, people will think less of me....I won't be able to manage the situation.
 - The conversation will “get out of control.”
 - People will get too emotional and I won't have the skills to manage the situation.
 - I won't know enough about the issue to engage in conversation.
 - If I challenge this issue I will be all alone without any support.
 - I won't be able to express myself clearly; I'll be misunderstood.
 - If I am too confrontational or angry, then people will judge me, be mad at me, reject me, ostracize me, etc.
 - I will be seen as incompetent and “not good enough.”
 - They will see how prejudiced I really am.
 - I'll let people down and disappoint them.
 - People won't like me or approve of me.
 - Things won't change.
 - I will make a mistake and be wrong.
 - People will be disappointed in me.
 - If I don't handle this well, people could feel uncomfortable...be hurt.
 - Things will be worse off than before.

5. Unmet Universal Needs/What I value* (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- Respect, dignity
- Trust
- Planning, order
- Fairness
- Clarity, understanding
- Openness, honesty
- Direct communication
- Respectful disagreement
- Recognition, acknowledgement
- Appreciation
- Competence, effectiveness
- Success, to make a difference
- To be kept informed and updated
- Harmony, peace...
- Safety, security
- Integrity
- Innovation and creativity
- Ease and simplicity
- Connection
- Mutuality, partnering, collaboration
- For approval
- For acceptance, belonging
- Inclusion
- Consideration
- Dependability, follow-through

6. Ego-driven desires (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- To assert, regain my power and authority
- To have control
- To win the argument; prove them wrong
- To get my way
- To make people change; “fix” them
- To make people learn
- To be right
- To shut them down, put them in their place
- To make them feel the pain and hurt I feel
- To be seen as the expert, smart
- To prove I am competent
- To gain prestige and status
- To be admired; avoid disgrace
- To be liked
- To fit in
- To be seen as a “good one,” an ally
- To be perfect
- To gain certainty and predictability
- For everyone to feel happy
- To avoid deep emotions and conflict
- To make others engage as I want them to

7. Biases, assumptions, expectations, shoulds, and judgments

*This section was enhanced by the work of Marshall Rosenberg (2005). [Nonviolent Communication](#).

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kobear@earthlink.net www.AllianceForChange.com

Common Universal Needs/Values

(Adapted from R. Gill, L. Leu, and J. Morin (2009). NVC Toolkit for Facilitators.)

acceptance	effectiveness	openness
adaptability	efficiency	order
appreciation	empathy	participation
authenticity	equality	partnership
autonomy	fairness	peace
awareness	follow-through	play
balance	freedom	presence
beauty	fun	progress
belonging	growth	purpose
caring	harmony	reflection
celebration	healing	relaxation
challenge	health	reliability
choice	honesty	relief
clarity	hope	respect
collaboration	humor	rest
communication	inclusion	safety
community	independence	security
companionship	inspiration	self-expression
compassion	integration	self-reliance
competence	integrity	space
consciousness	intimacy	stimulation
connection	joy	spontaneity
consideration	learning	stability
contribution	love	support
cooperation	matterng	trust
creating	meaning	understanding
creativity	mourning	warmth
dependability	movement	wellbeing
dignity	mutuality	
ease	nurturance	

Navigating Ourselves: Self-Management Interventions

As soon as you feel triggered, *Begin Within*

1. Conduct a “systems check” to track internal self-talk, feelings, physiological responses and intentions
2. Use stress management techniques (deep breathing, centering exercises) to minimize the impact of physiological and emotional reactions
3. Search for your intrapersonal roots that are fueling your reaction to the trigger
4. Notice how you interpreted the situation: your “story” about what you believe happened
5. Shift your “story” about the situation
6. Notice initial intent for how you want to respond
8. Use self-talk to shift your intentions to align with your values and vision for social justice
9. Assess your part in the group dynamics
10. Relate to the participants whose behavior was the source of your trigger: How are you just like them?
11. Identify your hoped for outcomes: the destination of your response

Change your interpretation of the triggering event (Step 3)

- * If someone is "resistant":
 - They seem to feel safe enough to be honest about their thoughts and feelings
 - Now we can get to the heart of this issue...
- * If someone "interrupts":
 - I don't appreciate their timing, but they have a legitimate point/question.
 - They seem to have a lot of energy about this topic....
- * If someone makes a prejudicial remark:
 - Well, they came by their biases honestly in this society....
 - I wonder what they fear....
- * If someone is angry:
 - I wonder what feelings of hurt or fear are under their anger?
- * If someone gives negative feedback:
 - I can model how to be open to feedback....
 - This could be a powerful learning opportunity for me and others....
 - Maybe I have something to learn here....
- * If I make a mistake or make a prejudicial remark:
 - I can model how to be non-defensive and honestly acknowledge my comment....
 - I can model how to own and apologize for the impact of my behavior....and commit to working on myself and paying more attention...
- Focus on what is positive
 - At least they are willing to engage in this dialogue....
 - A few people are really getting it...
 - He did a nice job of reaching out to support her....
 - I really respect them for hanging in with this topic....

- Focus on their intent
 - I know they don't intentionally try to make my life miserable.
 - These are good-hearted people....
 - They're doing the best they can...

Navigate your emotions ~ (Step 4)

- Monitor your level of emotional arousal
- Stay task-oriented
- Take a time-out
- Practice detachment
- Be still and meditate
- Vent your emotions with a colleague
- Simply name what you're feeling, and then hold your feelings for now, knowing you can explore and release them later
- Journal about the triggering event during a break or time-out

Restructure self-talk ~ (Step 4)

- **Thought stopping: stop your thoughts and refocus on what is happening in the moment.**

- **Restructure irrational beliefs**

- * I have to be liked and approved of by everyone
 - Some people may not like me. In fact, if this is a useful interaction, people may leave feeling confused and full of unsettling emotions.
- * I must be competent in all situations and not make mistakes
 - If I make a mistake, I can use it as an example in the conversation. They will see that I am human just like they are.
- * I have to know all the answers
 - I am not the expert here. My role here is to facilitate their coming to their own answers and finding their voice.
- * I must remain calm and control my feelings
 - If I get upset, I know I can manage my emotions. I could even use the event as a learning opportunity in the conversation.
- * I am responsible for their learning and growth
 - I will do the best I can. I am not responsible for everyone's learning. People will take away from here what they need.
- * People who are bad should be blamed and punished
 - I was just like them not too long ago....I see myself in them. I want to help them learn from this experience.
- * I must try to change people to think and behave as I think they should
 - I have no right to try to change people. I can share my experience, strength, and hope, and talk about the impact of their behavior on me and others. Who am I to know what they need?

- **Positive self-talk**

- I can handle this
- I've done this before
- I am a competent, talented person...
- I have a lot to offer these folks...

- **Calming self-talk**

- Breathe...steady....
- I don't have to know everything
- I don't have to have the "perfect" answer...
- Everything works out for the best...
- What's the worst thing that can happen....
- Trust the process.....
- I'm doing the best I can. I don't have to be the expert....
- This isn't about me.....don't take this personally
- Everything happens for a reason....
- This, too, shall pass....
- How important is it....

- **Explore your part in the situation**

- I wonder why I am so triggered...
- What else is going on for me?
- Which of my issues and needs are being triggered in this interaction?
- What needs of mine are not getting met?
- Who does this person remind me of?
- What personal issues are interfering with my willingness or ability to be helpful?
- I wonder if I did something that triggered them...
- What am I doing that is contributing to their behavior?
- How have I acted inappropriately?
- What rules or expectations have I set-up that are not working?

- **Empathetic self-talk**

- I wonder what this person really needs, what they are really feeling...
- I wonder what they feel threatened about? scared about?
- How can I better understand where this person is coming from?
- How am I like this person?
- When have I felt similarly?

- **Recognize the person's level of competence**

- They don't understand...
- They don't have the ability to do what I want them to do...
- I know they're doing the best they can with what they know.
- This work takes significant skill...
- It takes a long time to unlearn all this prejudice....

Get Clear on Your Intentions ~ Identify Less Productive, “Negative” Intentions (Step 5), such as:

- win the argument
- get even; get them back
- to be right; prove the other person wrong
- to prove you are competent, smart
- assert your power and authority
- gain status and prestige; be admired
- be in control
- intimidate the other person
- “put them in their place,” shut them down
- punish the other person
- embarrass or put down the other person
- make them feel the pain and hurt you feel
- change the other person’s views, feelings or behaviors
- to make people learn
- trick and “out fox” the other person
- avoid confrontation and conflict
- keep the conversation “under control”
- avoid intense emotions: in self and others
- make everyone feel happy and harmonious
- avoid feeling or being viewed as “incompetent”
- control how others feel about you
- To seen as a “good one,” an ally
- use the current opportunity to “right the wrongs” you experienced in your past
- change the other person to account for times you either didn’t or couldn’t change oppressive people earlier in your life
- ignore them
- seek approval of others
- to be liked, to fit in

When You Feel Triggered, Shift Your Intentions to Align with Your Social Justice

Values, such as:

- create greater inclusion
- leave people feelings whole
- engage in respectful dialogue
- do no harm
- “go with the flow;” trust the process
- deepen learning and growth
- meet the people “where they are” without judgment
- use the triggering moment to deepen understanding
- relate in to the person; connect with them
- create space for honest, authentic dialogue
- invite people to learn from the situation
- model the social justice behaviors you espouse: authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, engagement...
- model skills to navigate triggering moments: scan, yourself, identifying unmet needs, shifting self-talk, stress management techniques, realigning your intentions, exploring intrapersonal roots...
- facilitate open, honest discussion
- create space for the other person to express their feelings, perceptions
- deepen understanding across differences

- identify the deeper issues fueling the feelings, perceptions and behaviors of others
- create safety for the expression of differing viewpoints
- treat others with respect and dignity
- encourage more people to engage in the dialogue
- support people to disagree with each other in respectful ways
- model effective recovery skills after making an inappropriate comment or when your behavior results in negative impact
- re-establish credibility with the person/group
- identify inappropriate behaviors and explore the negative impact
- interrupt unproductive, inappropriate behaviors and group dynamics
- take time to “gather oneself,” navigate personal emotions, gain perspective...
- build a “bridge” and a connection with the other person
- encourage identity development and growth
- demonstrate compassion and empathy

Navigating Triggering Situations: Engaging Others (Step 6)

1. Get grounded in process outcomes: demonstrate respect and dignity; an opportunity to build relationship, connection, allies...
2. Avoid the “ABC’s” of Potholes: Attacking, Belittling, Convicting
3. Explore, clarify, ask questions...to gather more information and understand their perspective....and gain time to re-center yourself and choose an effective response
4. Explore their intent: Help me understand what your intent was when you said...
5. State your truth, feelings, the impact on you...with care and compassion
6. Name the impact on organizational goals...with care and compassion
7. “Put a face on the issue”
 - a. Individual Level: Share your past and/or current diversity-related experiences (personal and work-related)
 - b. Group Level: Share others’ diversity experiences (personal and work-related)
 - c. Organizational Level: Discuss policies, practices, and procedures that have a negative differential impact on staff, faculty, and students across social identity groups, and organizational goals

Use "meta-interventions"

Ask the person(s) to take the "pulse" of the situation reflect on the process:

- What do you notice happening right now?
- How are we working together?
- How well are we respecting each other?
- How would you describe how people are treating each other?

Use the “self as instrument”

It takes great skill, personal awareness, presence, and self-confidence to effectively use triggering events as "teachable moments;" however, when managed effectively these moments can be some of the more powerful learning opportunities for others. The dynamics in the room often mirror those that others experience in their lives and in society. Triggering events can provide a microcosm within which people develop greater insight, knowledge, and skill to more effectively handle incidents they confront in everyday life. The following strategies can help people to use their emotional reactions to triggering events to inform their response and as a part of their intervention strategy.

• Name your feelings and reactions

- Describe your experiences, feelings, and perceptions to create a shared understanding of the situation
- Name the triggering event from your perspective and try to engage others in dialogue

• Test for similar reactions

- "I'm feeling frustrated, does anyone else feeling this way?"
- "I'm feeling anxious right now. Do others feel nervous, too?"

Steps to Engage in Difficult Dialogues

1. Get grounded in positive intentions ~ The DESTINATION:

- Create a teachable moment
- Stir cognitive dissonance
- Demonstrate respect and dignity
- Leave them feeling whole...
- Plant seeds...Influence hearts and minds...
- Help person(s) explore the impact of their behavior, understand the reasons their behavior has a negative impact on others/building an inclusive community
- Re-establish the boundaries for civil discourse
- Do no harm!
- Make a human connection; build the relationship for future dialogue
- Support those impacted by the comments/actions

R.A.P.S. ~ Skills to Engage

R: RELATE to others, their comments

A: ASK questions to explore

P: PAN the environment, yourself ~ as data to diagnose; name your pan as an intervention

S: Share, use self-disclosure as your response

2. Relate to the person who made the comment (Reflectively)

- How are you just like this person? Were just like them? (search in other categories of difference)
- When have you said or done something similarly?
- When might you say or do something like this in the future?

3. R: RELATE to the person or their comment/behavior

- I relate to what you're saying, I...
- I have felt the same way...
- I remember a time when I...
- I did the exact same thing...
- How do others relate to that comment?
- Who can relate?
- What you're saying seems to relate to what so-and-so just said...

4. A: ASK about the specifics behind the person's comment or behavior

- Gives you time to center, better understand the comment, choose a response
- May help the person hear themselves and reflect on what they said, the impact...

5: A: ASK clarifying questions

- I want to make sure I understand your point...you think that...
- Are you saying that...
- Help me understand what you meant by that?
- I don't understand your point...
- What do you mean when you say...
- Come again? Or Can you repeat that?

6. A: ASK questions to gather more information

- Could you say more about that...Tell me more...
- Can you give us an example of what you're saying...
- Help me understand what you disagree with...find frustrating...
- Help me understand how you got to that conclusion?
- What has been your experience that led you to that conclusion?
- What readings or research are you referencing?

7. A: ASK questions to get them to reflect on their comment

- When was the first time you heard that?
- How do you think others could be impacted by your comment? Behavior?
- Why might others disagree with your comment?
- What if I gave you a convincing argument and data that was counter to your perspective? What might that mean for you?
- How do you think others will view you when you make similar comments?

8. A: ASK questions to explore their intention

- What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Help me understand your intent when you said...
- What did you mean to say with that comment?
- What is underneath your comment/question?

9. Based on what you PAN, engage others in the conversation

- I noticed that....I overheard your conversation and thought I heard you say....
- I notice that folks were laughing...I'm curious what that's about?
- I noticed how quiet everyone just got...I'm wondering what is going on for folks?
- It seems some people were impacted by that statement.
- I'm noticing you're speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- We've had some comments from this side of the room, what are your thoughts and reactions? (looking at the other side of the room)
- I'm wondering if people are feeling triggered right now?
- The energy in the discussion seemed to shift after...

10. Give the “benefit of the doubt” if you directly confront their comment

~ a face saving tactic

- I trust/know you didn't intend this... I
- You're probably not aware of the impact of your comment...

11. S: SHARE: “Put a Face on the Issue”

- Share a personal example or one you have heard from a credible source
- Invite others to share personal examples and stories ~ verbally; in writing
- Offer to share resources, articles so they can review different perspectives
- Offer to meet with them and talk about your life experiences on and off campus
- Ask them to talk with 2-3 other people in the near future to hear their experiences and stories

12. S: SHARE: Share about yourself ~ self-disclose with a story or example; your feelings in the moment; the impact of a comment or behavior, etc.

- My heart aches as you tell that story...
- As a ____, I... (tell a story, give an example)
- I'd like to share the impact of your comment...
- I'm feeling uncomfortable with what you're saying...
- I'm noticing I'm feeling ____, anyone else?
- I notice I feel triggered right now....
- That's a trigger word/phrase for me...
- I need to stop a moment and talk about what just happened. I...

Engaging Skills

Skill	Examples/Descriptions
Ask the person for more information ~ seek to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me more... • Can you give me an example... • Can you give me some background on this situation... • What do you mean when you say... • Help me understand what you disagree with...find frustrating... • Help me understand how you came to that conclusion? • What were you feeling when...? • What's your perspective? • What led you to that conclusion?
Paraphrase the person's comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So you're saying that... • So you feel that... • So you think that... • Are you saying that... • So from your perspective...
Explore their INTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help me understand your intent when you... • What had you wanted to communicate with your comment? • What was your intended outcome? • What is underneath your comment/question?
TRACK/PAN the person's body language, tone, and comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice you had a reaction to what I just said... • I don't believe she was finished with her comment... • I notice you just got very quiet...looked away...shook your head... • I'm noticing your tone of voice... • I'm noticing your body language...
Explore the IMPACT on them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems my behavior had an impact on you... • How did that impact you? • What were you feeling when...
Acknowledge and validate their points as much as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hear that you feel... • I can see that from your perspective you think... • I'd probably feel ____, too...
Explore possible solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think we can do? • What do you see as the next steps? • One thought could be to...what do you think? • Might it be possible to...
State your desired outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is what I suggest we do... • I want to...I need...
Summarize the dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the dialogue without stating opinions or judging the dialogue. • So we've discussed...we agreed to...

Helpful Tactics

1. Gather more information

- Help me understand more about what you mean?
- I'm curious when you first heard that term or phrase?

2. Clarify what you "heard"

- I want to make sure I understand your point...you think that...
- Are you saying that...
- So you feel...
- You believe that...

3. Ask the person to walk you through their thought process so you can better understand how they came to their assumptions and conclusions

- Can you help me understand how you came to that conclusion?
- What has been your experience that led you to that conclusion?
- What assumptions are underneath your conclusion?

4. Focus the discussion on the PROCESS of the discussion

- I noticed that we tend to spend more time talking about these issues, and far less time talking about these other ones...
- I'm noticing that the only time we talk about ___ is when I bring it up...
- It seems that whenever we start talking about ___, someone changes the topic back to something else.
- I've noticed that when we are discussing ____, a number of folks look down, start writing notes...I'm curious what others have noticed?

5. Name the group's process or dynamic and shift the focus to be more inclusive

- We've talked about how this policy could impact people of color and white women....I'm wondering how it may impact GLBT employees across gender and race?
- I'm noticing that whenever we talk about race, whites turn and ask a question of one of the people of color. I'd like to hear from some of the whites in the room: What do you notice that whites, as a group, tend to say, do, and feel around issues of race in the workplace?
- This has been a great discussion about the chilly climate for women and men of color. I don't want to move off this too soon, and I also want to make sure we have time to have a similar conversation related to dynamics of age and length of service in the organization...

6. Give the "benefit of the doubt"

- You probably already thought of this... You probably noticed that...
- An unintended outcome of that idea could be that...

- I know you didn't intend this, but when you have a side conversation while I'm speaking....

7. If you think someone misunderstood or is misrepresenting what you said

- I believe I said something different than that...What I said was...

8. Recognize comments and behaviors that help create greater inclusion before you give further feedback

- I appreciate the several best practices you've gathered for us to review, and I was wondering if there also were some that more specifically address...
- I appreciate your working to be inclusive in your language...and I understand the term "GLBT" to be more inclusive and current than "homosexuals"

9. Acknowledge the accumulative impact of what you are experiencing

- I know I'm having a strong reaction to what you said....and this is only one of many times I have heard similar comments recently....OR .and, as you know, this seems to be a pattern we keep running into that creates an obstacle...

10. Ask questions to raise their awareness

- When did you decide/choose to be heterosexual?
- What are some of the ways that Christianity is embedded in the way we interact and in the policies and practices of our nation? Organization?

11. Invite others to get engaged in the dialogue

- I'm curious what others are thinking? What other ideas do people have?
- Name your reaction and test to see where others are: I'm feeling unsettled about this possibility, is anyone else?
- Ask if others feel differently than what is being proposed: This is one way we could proceed. Does anyone have a different suggestion?
- Ask others to take the "pulse" of the situation and reflect on the process: I'm curious what people are noticing about our group dynamics?
- Ask if others have heard and experienced the situation as you did: That scene in the video hit me as Islamophobic...What do others think?

12. How to Confront Repeated Inappropriate Behaviors...1st, 2nd, 3rd time...

1st time:

- Describe the behavior you observed
- State what you want to be different
 - * I'd appreciate it if you'd...

2nd time:

- Describe the behavior: I believe this is the 2nd time we've talked about this...This is the IMPACT when you do that....I need you to change your behavior

3rd time: Give clear consequences if they continue this behavior: This is the 3rd time I've asked you to...If you do this again...

13. Questions to explore possible and unintended (hopefully) exclusionary practices and attitudes in planning and decision-making discussions:

- Do we have the full breadth of social identity groups and perspectives at the table? Involved in the process?
- Does our process seriously consider the input and perspectives of a broad range of group memberships?
- How might our unconscious attitudes and assumptions about ____ be playing out in this decision?
- What could be the impact of this on students, staff, and faculty from various and multiple privileged and marginalized groups?
- How might this inadvertently advantage some and disadvantage others?
- How can we make this inclusive for members of various and multiple group memberships?

14. Partial List of Social Identity Groups

ableness/disability	geographic region	religion/spiritual practice
age	gender identity/expression	sexual orientation
athleticism	hierarchical level	skin color; physical features
biological sex	job function	size/appearance
citizenship status	marital/relational status	use of English (fluency, accents)
economic class	national origin	veteran status
educational level	parental status	years of experience
ethnicity/culture	race	

15. Diagnosing Privileged and Marginalized Group Dynamics

Use the following prompts to diagnose the potential privileged and marginalized group dynamics as you analyze a recent situation, case study, etc.

1. What are the various group memberships of the people involved, and which privileged and marginalized group memberships seem central to this situation?
2. What are the probable perspectives and feelings of each party?
3. How might unconscious attitudes, assumptions, and bias be playing out in this situation?
4. What are the possible privileged and marginalized group behaviors and dynamics in the situation?
5. What organizational issues are relevant in this situation, such as formal and informal policies, norms, procedures, organizational practices, etc.
6. What are the probable outcomes if this situation is left unaddressed? For members of marginalized groups? Members of privileged groups? For the team? For the organization?
7. Given your diagnosis, what and/or who should be the focus of a response and why?
8. What might be some effective ways to respond? And by whom?

16. Different Communication Styles

a. Direct

- I think that...I need...
- It's important that....We need to...

b. Pose possibilities

- It might be useful...
- I'd suggest we consider...
- One way to proceed could be....

c. Competing style

- State your thought or opinion right after another person, no connection
- I think...Well I think....My idea is to...this is how we should proceed...

d. Debating style

- Reference the other person's ideas in order to negate them or disagree with them

e. Connecting style

- Acknowledge what was said by others
- Connect your comment to theirs
- Build on what has been said, i.e., Connected to what you're saying; Building on that thought; Similar to what she said, I think; I like your idea and another way to go about this is...

f. Engaging style

- If a direct statement is made, ask a question to gather more information, deepen understanding, gain time to respond...
- Tell me more..
- Can you give me an example?
- What's your intended outcome? your intent behind that?
- How might that impact others?
- What's your thinking behind how that helps us meet our goal?

Developed by Kathy Obear, Alliance for Change, kobear@earthlink.net