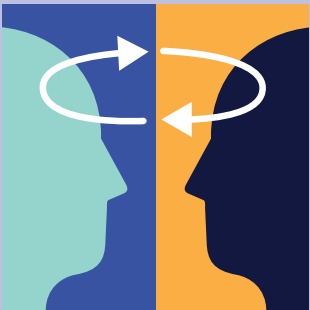


UNIT 11

Stay in the Conversation

**“Nobody’s free until everybody’s free.”
—Fannie Lou Hamer, from Dr. Hillary Potter’s Presentation**

If a conversation is difficult, it might be one worth having. Silence is rarely an effective strategy for social change, and can often lead to complicity in perpetuating additional harm.



Sincere and meaningful listening can create the space for empathy. Effective communication is a life skill that we all need to develop, for our personal relationships and our engagement/cooperation as global citizens.

Practice with one of the following tools this week.



TOOL 1

Practice Deep Listening and Courageous Questioning

Allowing people to be heard in a profoundly deep way creates space for a new civility.

Begin by meeting the moment with awareness: go into research versus react mode.



Build your ability to empathize by trying on another world-view, or putting yourself in someone else’s shoes.



Also, in a difficult conversation, remember that you can pause and take deliberate steps towards modeling behaviors that will plant seeds of understanding, even if resolution seems unlikely in the moment.

Use the tools of diplomacy. Select one of the “do” tools listed on the following page, to practice intentionally this week. Notice when you are using a “don’t” and intentionally switch to a “do.”

Diplomacy Tools

✘ The Don'ts

✔ The Do's

TELL PEOPLE THEY ARE WRONG	ASK PEOPLE WHAT VALUE OR EXPERIENCES LED THEM THERE
ASK HOW SOMEONE COULD EVER BELIEVE SOMETHING	ASK WHEN A PARTICULAR BELIEF FIRST STARTED FOR THEM
INTERUPT PEOPLE	GIVE A MOMENT TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE DONE
INSTEAD OF "YEAH, BUT, WHAT ABOUT..."	TRY, "COULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME MORE..."
ASSUME YOU KNOW THEIR MOTIVES	ASK ABOUT THEIR GOALS AND HOPES
BLAME THEM FOR YOUR ANGER OR FRUSTRATION	EXPLAIN YOUR ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT
ALLOW AUTOPILOT REACTIONS TO DIRECT YOUR THOUGHTS TOWARDS DEFENSIVENESS	ALLOW PAUSES, SILENCE AND PRACTICE WAITING. INCREASE YOUR CAPACITY FOR PATIENCE



TOOL 2

Evaluate When Not to Listen

There may be times to step out of the conversation.



If you sense ongoing engagement will put you in harm's way, it's time to leave the interaction, reach out for support, intervention, help, or mediation.

Tracking your own emotions during an argument is just as important as building your diplomacy skills. Identify some signs that it is time to step away or out of a conversation.



TOOL 3

Learn From Others



As Dr. Carroll says in his lecture, **"For Indigenous communities, elders are keepers of knowledge, language, and lived wisdom whom we look to for guidance and who pass their teachings to our future generations."**

Members of disenfranchised groups are not always able to provide tutorials and orientation sessions while managing their own distress, so taking responsibility for our own learning can ease the burden for all.

We stand on the shoulders of millions of scholars, elders, and activists who have given us a wealth of writings and resources. Learn from them. Identify some sources from the lectures this week that will help you learn more.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



What changes did you notice in your experience when practicing with the **Tools of Diplomacy** to stay in important conversations?



Did you notice challenges while practicing with this tool? If so, what did those challenges feel like in your mind and body?



What are some signs for you that it is time to step away or out of a conversation?

