



**OMBUDS OFFICE**  
**RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO INCIVILITY**

Sharing the expectations of civility and the consequences of incivility can create a safe space for healthy dialogue.

“Say what you mean and mean what you say without being mean.” - Meryl Runion

**Reflective Questions**

- Why am I feeling so angry / upset / agitated / disrespected?
- What do I want to change about this situation?
- What do I need in order to let go if this feeling?
- Is my need realistic and will others perceive my need as fair?
- Whose problem is this really? How much of this is mine? How much is theirs?
- What is the message I am telling myself about this situation? (eg. They don't like me; they don't respect me.)
- How old is this thought?

**Clarifying Questions**

- “It seems I may be missing something...can you fill in this gap for me?”
- “What did you mean by....?”
- “Can you give me an example of...?”
- “Help me to understand...?”
- “Is there more you'd like to share...?”
- “How can I assist or support...?”
- “How does this sound, when I reach out to “X”, I will share “Y”?”

**Helpful Responses to Incivility or Disruptive Behavior**

- “Excuse me X, I wasn't finished speaking.”
- “My emotions and my response are appropriate for this situation.”
- “I don't think you have all the necessary information here.”
- “I believe I am missing critical information to make an informed decision.”
- “I would appreciate if you could use a polite and gentle tone when you address me.”
- “The way you are behaving is making me really uncomfortable. Please stop.”
- “Ouch, that is harsh.”
- “I am not comfortable hearing personal stories about others and don't believe that information is yours to share. Please stop sharing such things with me.”
- “Your truth and my truth can be coexistent. There is no right or wrong.”
- “I prefer to share my opinion when I have all of the information.”
- “How I interpret what you say is...”
- “It seems that I have shared some new information with you and I want to give you time to reflect. When is a good time to reconnect?”