



**Objective: Create and promote a safe and inclusive environment in all settings (office, clinic, school, others).**

It is essential for organizations within the AUCD Network to maintain safe spaces. In the Toolkit team information-gathering process, many respondents recommended cultivating safe and effective spaces for cultural conversations to support the needs of all stakeholders. Safe spaces are environments created for people to feel comfortable having authentic dialogue. Team members are encouraged and enabled to engage in passionate, creative collaboration, spirited discussion and execute the organization's vision. Key components include recognizing that all knowledge and opinions are equally valid, judgements are suspended, the mistakes and emotions of humanity are allowed, and dialogue is consensual (Berkeley Student Cooperative). When cultivating a safe space, team members should be led to acknowledge and, when applicable, respond to the realities, world views, biases, and impact of historical trauma of others and themselves. Furthermore, team members should be encouraged to listen attentively, acknowledge the contributions of others, show willingness for personal growth, and avoid talking negatively about others. Bullying is not to be tolerated (Peters, 2003), and grievance and conflict resolution processes are to be clear and culturally competent. Staff, faculty, individuals and families, trainees, advisors, and volunteers all bring different perspectives, experiences and cultures, gifts and strengths. Creating safe and inclusive environments in the workplace, classroom, and service locations allows space for diverse perspectives to be shared, acknowledged, respected, and valued.

**Strategies:**

1. Leaders at every level should promote diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence as a priority. Leaders motivate others, and model acceptance and inclusion both internally and externally, through their formal authority (position, title, pay grade, administrative or executive authority, etc.) and informal authority (influence, advocacy, relationships and social networks, etc.).
2. Self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation are essential. Deliberately and intentionally explore unconscious biases and attitudes. Always ask what can be approached and delivered better, both individually and organizationally.
3. Obtain information from people and grassroots news sources that are trusted in diverse communities to understand the perspectives of people living in those communities.
4. Recognize that when engaging with others, the culture you bring is a collection of social constructs (process of socialization), attitudes, knowledge, behaviors and values of what cultural group(s) you grew up with and what you experienced throughout life. Recognize and

acknowledge the inherent bias you bring, and value the different life experiences and perspectives of others.

5. Address diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence in values and attitudes within own organization. Develop definitions and value statement(s) collaboratively with all members of organization, including the “collective intelligence” of other external partners.
6. Build an environment where self-disclosure is welcomed and valued, if people choose to self-disclose race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or any other cultural considerations. Leaders can self-disclose to set examples.
7. Incorporate creative activities addressing issues that are otherwise uncomfortable. Ensure time and opportunity for participants to process the discomfort. Identify and utilize conversation starters and icebreakers to open discussion on this topic.
8. Engage in activities to explore and identify organizational values related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence, and how to put those values into action.
9. Offer on-site support to people with disabilities to ensure their access and participation in all activities and conversations. Provide allies, mentors, cultural brokers, or learning partners who can support participation in meaningful dialogue and reflection.
10. Break down barriers preventing personal engagement in the workplace. Identify areas of shared interests and experiences to build connections between individuals while respecting differences and diverse perspectives. Do this within teams and across teams so all staff have an understanding of each other. Increase adventure, team projects, and personal communications to discover and make publicly known the talents, interests and perspectives of all individuals. Tap into the resources each person brings. Seek to understand the cultural perspective of others through case scenarios, stories, vignettes, and opportunities for cultural immersion activities, events, and initiatives.
11. Increase teamwork to ensure everyone’s voice is heard and understood, so all have a chance to be a leader in different situations and to present their work and progress to others.
12. Practice cultural humility.
13. Be aware of nonverbal body language, ensure clarity of information, and provide support for people to engage. Learn the non-verbal communication styles of various cultures. Check in with others to ensure their nonverbal cues are being understood correctly. Allow others the time needed to express themselves. Teach these skills to all staff, volunteers, faculty, and trainees.
14. Encourage people to share their perspectives at the time they are ready, as forced communication tends to increase discomfort.
15. Obtain training in facilitation and/or group conversation.
16. Focus on individual and community strengths and resiliencies. Address the disparities and disproportionality within diverse communities. People of color and people with disabilities are

often discussed in a pathological way. Factors that contribute to resiliency are critical to explore and bolster as disparities, disproportionality, and inequities are being addressed.

17. Intervene when issues of bias arise. Step in and speak up when seeing or hearing someone being culturally insensitive. This is everyone's responsibility. Create a climate where people feel comfortable to challenge one another on attitudes not in support of diversity. Create culturally appropriate grievance and conflict resolution processes.
18. Support multiple diverse and young staff to attend AUCD conference and other meetings, participate in Councils and SIGs, and run for AUCD's Board of Directors.
19. Implement quality improvement initiatives related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence; this indicates a priority for others.