



DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

Contributing to a more inclusive campus

When we celebrate our plurality, we create an inclusive environment that encourages mutual respect and empowerment.

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind when planning meetings/events in order to create a space that is both inclusive and respectful.

DO

- Use gender neutral language when addressing the group (i.e: “hello everyone” instead of “hey guys”/ “ladies and gentlemen”, “partner’ instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend”).
- Encourage everyone to introduce themselves with their preferred name and personal pronouns, and ensure that those pronouns are respected.
- Ask someone’s preferred name pronunciation if you do not know.
- Set ground rules before a dialogue or discussion.
- Try and use “Where did you grow up?” or “where is home?” when asking about an individual’s background. Consider the information the other person shares to be enough and do not probe further with questions such as, “Where are you really from?”



DO

- Make sure the venue/space you are using is accessible for people with mobility aids (i.e. are there a lot of stairs? Is there a lift or ramp? Can a wheelchair be arranged if needed?)
- Consider dietary restrictions of everyone when ordering food (halal/kosher/vegetarian, vegan, allergies)
- Make a gender neutral washroom available, in addition to male and female specific washrooms.
- Ensure that an individual can easily excuse themselves to pray in case the event coincides with prayer times.
- Ensure the activity or event is financially accessible to everyone -- if it is not, are there ways of making financial assistance available?



DO

- Establish that silence is comfortable if this is a sharing session/dialogue -- individuals from different backgrounds engage in conversation differently, and not speaking much/at all does not mean a lack of engagement.
- Ensure that an individual have clear channels to reach out to in case of any discomfort.
- Help out in crowded/noisy environments if individuals seem to be uneasy.
- Use a variety of ways to engage such as small groups, pair shares, and big groups.
- Pay attention to people's communication styles. Some may communicate directly while others will communicate indirectly.

DO NOT ASSUME

- Disabilities are always visible.
- A individual whom you know identifies as queer is out to everyone.
- An individual's ethnicity is the same as their nationality.
- An individual's race, ethnicity, or nationality. It is best to ask where is home and not ask any follow up questions or probe or guess further.
- An individual's partners/family/marriage situation.
- Anybody in the group is heterosexual or cisgender.
- An individual's class background and financial standing. Take care to ensure that money, shopping, or travel is discussed in a way that does not assume everyone comes from the same financial baseline.

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Remember that people come from various social and cultural contexts and will therefore have different personal boundaries.

- Try and use distance while speaking.
- Try to avoid commenting on another person's appearance (hair, skin, body size, and body etc.).
- Do not assume everyone is comfortable with the presence of pets.
- Do not assume everyone is comfortable shaking hands or physical touch of any sort (hands, hair, body, etc.).