**Checklist: How to Respond When You Feel Attacked in a Conversation Related to Diversity**

1. Make sure that your safety isn’t compromised before continuing the discussion. If the individual used profanity, threatens you or raises their voice, it suggests that they are not in the right frame of mind to have a meaningful conversation. If you feel unsafe, remove yourself from the conversation by saying something like, *“I can tell that we both feel triggered by this conversation and it might not get us very far to keep discussing this issue. Let’s table this conversation for another day.”* It’s okay if you feel uncomfortable because discomfort helps us grow. Assuming that you feel safe, proceed with the remainder of the checklist.

 2. Ask: “Is this a good time to talk?”

 3. Be sincere and vulnerable to diffuse the situation: “I too am working on growing myself, particularly in building my tolerance and/or understanding in this area of DEI. While I don’t know exactly how to navigate this conversation, I am willing to try because I commend your courage for talking with me."

 4. Address possible situation:

* 1. If someone said something to offend you: “Something you said/did doesn’t sit right with me but rather than becoming defensive, I think this could be a teachable moment for both of us.”
  2. If you are accused of offending someone: “I know that I said/did something to upset you and I want to understand.”

 5. Ask permission to ask questions so that the person doesn’t feel like you’re interrogating them.

 6. Gain clarity by asking open ended questions:

*“Can you help me to understand how I upset you?”*

*“How could I have said it differently?”*

*“When you said X, this is what I heard. Is that what you meant?”*

 7. Listen to understand how you and the other individual are similar. While your positions might differ, what common interests do you share, particularly related to DEI? It’s important that you listen closely to find the commonality because this will help you to humanize them.

 8. Thank them for their courage in sharing.

 9. Avoid gas lighting statements like:

*“Why didn’t you come to me [sooner]?”*

*“What evidence do you have?”*

*“Don’t you think you’re being too sensitive?”*

 10. Validate the person’s feelings rather than focusing on agreeing or disagreeing.

a) Share where you were coming from (note: this is not to get them to agree with you or to justify yourself).

b) Tell them what you heard them say by paraphrasing.

b) Relate to what they shared and how they feel to your own experiences.

c) Share the commonality the two of you share concerning the larger issue. Commit to leaving the discussion and thinking about what they said.