

TIPS FOR NAMING, INTERVENING AND ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC POWER

THINGS WE CAN DO WHEN WE CAUSE HARM

Move From Defensiveness & Guilt And Toward Action

I notice and let go of feelings that interfere with my ability to listen to what you are saying.

Seek More Information

I ask questions to make sure I understand your reaction. I read. I attend workshops. I talk with other agent group members.

Receive Feedback As a Gift

I welcome the information and believe it to my benefit to receive it.

Take A New Perspective

I try to understand your perspective by thinking about one of my own target group memberships.

Problem Solve

I take responsibility for identifying ways that you might change my actions, not assuming that you should or will help me.

Integrate New Behavior

I choose different behaviors in the future because I believe it is important for me to do so, not just be because I am afraid of being confronted again.

Adapted from: Agent Responses to Harm: Pat Griffin, University of Massachusetts,

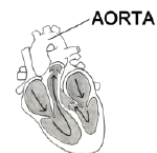
THINGS YOU CAN DO AS A CO-OP

Use A Code Word

Institute an understanding that when someone is harmed by oppressive behavior they can say one word (like "ouch" for instance"). The responsibility is on the person/s who caused harm to follow up when the person targeted is ready.

Develop A Support Team

Who are folks you can trust to help with hard conversations?



Make Space For Ongoing Development

Could be built into the management's job description to organize trainings/study circles, or a change team who is involved with the larger arc of your process of support a culture that challenges oppression.

Institute Regular Check In Spaces

Could be built into meetings. Container space happening regularly – taking 45 minutes to talk about hard things that have come up and people get to work on them. Could use caucuses.

Institute Exit Interviews With Space To Reflect On Power And Privilege

Questions like: Are there things about your co-op (policies, day-to-day practices, specific incidents) that prevent you from bringing your whole self, cause you to feel tensions, to feel unsafe? What are they? Are there conversations you are not having at the co-op (specifically around race, class, culture, ability, gender, power dynamics)? Are there things you would like to bring up, but find it hard to do so? What are they?

THINGS WE CAN DO AS FACILITATORS AND MEDIATORS

There are no “cookie-cutter” responses in these situations – timing is everything. Here are some suggestions.

Holding Multi-Partiality

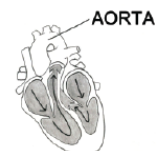
Acknowledge power is always in play in any social dynamic. How is it showing up? Be partial to everyone and try and see yourself in that person's position. Be partial to yourself. Knowing there are moments when you are triggered, have trauma responses, or get heated. Knowing there are moments to acknowledge that you have social power, or a lack of direct experience. I.e. Facilitating a conversation between two people of color, if you are white.

Name It When It's Happening

“I'm noticing that there's a lot of interrupting happening, and that it's happening along gender lines. I want us all to work to become more aware of that and change that.” “I'm noticing there was a lot of silence after that statement”.

Give Yourself Permission To Switch Strategies

Communicating effectively can mean different things in depending on the moment and the group composition. Will the group be better served by a quiet conversation



after the meeting? As a change agent the question is – “what is my goal”? Is it to state your truth? Inspire change? Both? Folks often hear “racist”, “sexist” “ableist” etc. as name-calling. You can say: “What you just said is hurtful” Or ask questions.

Ask Questions To Support Self Inquiry

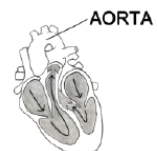
Like: What makes you say that? Where did you hear that? What do you mean by that? Can you tell me more about that?

Support The Leadership Of Those Targeted.

Allow people to respond on their own behalf. Either way make sure its covered. Synthesize. “What I heard from this person is this....”

Create Space For Those We Are Not Hearing From

“I’m going to take a moment to see if anyone who hasn’t spoken in a while has something to say. “ We’ve been hearing from a lot of (cis-gendered) men. Let’s take a moment to see if any of the other folks in the room have something to say.



SCENARIOS

- Pick One – Don't spend forever choosing!
- Try saying your response like you were really talking to those involved

1. Alex who lives above the kitchen is complaining about noise levels. Inez is cooking in the kitchen late at night, making a lot of noise and waking them up, they have to get up early. Inez is working a full time job after classes, finishes late at night and comes home hungry, she has to get up early too, and she needs to eat. What do you do?

2. A member comes to you after a conversation with another member. She is queer, and is really upset by something another intern said to her. In conversation, the other intern found out she had a girlfriend, and their response was: "But you'd look so good in a dress, any guy would want to date you."

To her, the comment was rude, inappropriate, and offensive. She didn't know how to respond in the moment, and because she knows the person was not being intentionally offensive and hurtful, she doesn't know how to bring it back up to them. She has not spoken to them about it, but has instead come to you to talk about what happened.

3. Dan, is consistently playing music with sexist/misogynist lyrics in common space, or loudly coming out of his room. It is deeply upsetting and disturbing to Doria. Dan says that its just music, that's its just the way things are today, and she is taking it way too seriously. Dan doesn't want to have to change the things that make him who he is. What do you do?

4. Two cis-gendered women, both white, have repeatedly complained a about a Leon, cis-gendered man, who is black, they say he is aggressive, large and intimidating, and his behavior feels threatening. They have had enough, and they want him to leave. Leon says that they don't like his communication style and they are frightened of him, because they are racist. What do you do?

