



Ready  
Set  
Teach

## 2.1 Community Guidelines

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Education Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies



# Welcome

# ACCESS CHECK

Access is a shared responsibility among everyone in this space, and we have worked proactively to remove barriers to participation.

- Technology
- Resources
- Pace

Please feel free to stop me at any time if you have any comments or suggestions to make our environment more inclusive.



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.



# COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

## **Brave Space Principles: Sharing, Learning and Growing**

**Mindfulness:** Listen with your body, mind and heart and be willing to engage with challenging ideas

**Distinguish Safety from Discomfort:** Allow yourself to lean in, explore and embrace discomfort as a necessary component of growth

**Personal:** Share your lived experiences using "I" statements rather than presenting personal views as universal facts and/or truths.

**Embrace Self-reflection:** acknowledge your positionality/perspective, as opportunities for growth

**Accountability:** Own your intentions and its impact and be mindful that regardless of your intentions, your words can have an unintended impact on others.

(Adopted from: Arao & Clemens, 2013; Carnegie, 2021; Experiences Canada, 2019)





# Introductions

- Name
- Department

**How does your teaching philosophy influence your classroom culture? and/or**

**What values or beliefs guide the way you interact with students and shape the learning environment?**

*(share as much as you're comfortable with)*

# Session Outcomes:

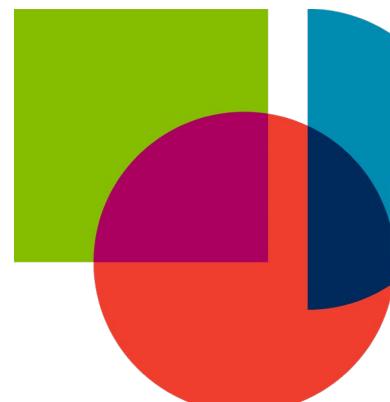
**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

- Understand how community guidelines foster inclusive, brave learning spaces
- Recognize the impact of guidelines on student engagement and classroom dynamics
- Connect your teaching values to community agreements
- Begin drafting equity-centered guidelines for your classroom



# Community Guidelines: Academic Perspective

Have you ever used or experienced community guidelines or agreements in a learning space, like a course, workshop, or meeting? If so, was there anything about them that stood out to you, either in a good or not-so-good way?



# What are Community Guidelines? An Academic Perspective

## Definition:

- a shared living document that articulates ground rules for interactions within the classroom environment or learning community.

## Why co-create community guidelines?

- Foster ownership and accountability
- Promote Belonging and psychological safety



Source: Adapted from *University of Iowa – [Handbook for Teaching Excellence](#)*

# What does this look like in Pedagogical Spaces?

## **Seminars or Tutorials:**

- Students brainstorm norms in small groups, write ideas on sticky notes

*Impact: Students see themselves as co-owners of the classroom space.  
Encourages mutual respect and responsibility.*

## **Co-Creation Rubric for Group Work:**

- Class or group makes a rubric together: What do you need from your team to feel successful?

*Impact: Students have a clear, shared standard of behavior they created.  
Reduces conflict and increases follow-through.*



# From “Safe spaces” to Brave Conversations

Critiques or criticism of Community Guidelines?

## The Critique:

**Sensoy & DiAngelo (2014)**

- Traditional “**safe space**” guidelines can unintentionally prioritize comfort over learning.
- Avoiding discomfort may prevent students from engaging deeply with issues of power, privilege, and oppression.



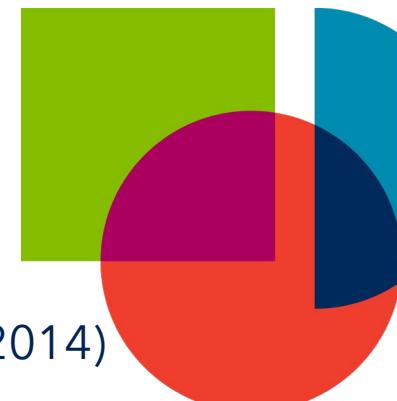
Source: Sensoy & DiAngelo (2014)

# From “Safe spaces” to Brave Conversations

What is a ‘brave space’ framework?

## **A Brave Space Approach**

- Create guidelines that prepare students to **lean into** hard, or emotional conversations.
- Normalize discomfort as part of the learning process



Source: Arao & Clemens (2013); Sensoy, & DiAngelo (2014)

# Reflection Activity



# Review-Reflect-Design

## **Review (5 minutes)**

Independently review the sample community guidelines shared today.

- What resonates with you?
- Where do you see gaps, based on your own teaching values or classroom goals?

## **Reflect in Pairs ( 6 minutes):**

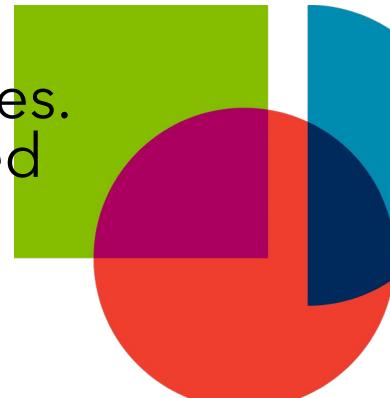
Pair up with a partner and share your reflections.

- Which guidelines align with your values?
- What's missing or could be added?

## **Design (5 minutes):**

Together, draft 1 new community guidelines that reflects your teaching values, especially ones that may not show up in typical classroom guidelines.

- Think about what students need to feel respected, engaged, and included in the context of your classroom.

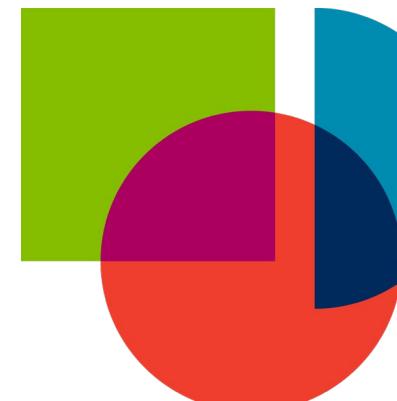


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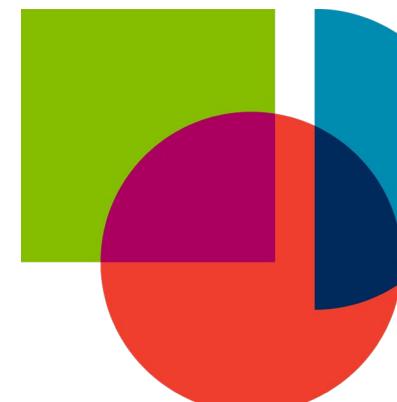


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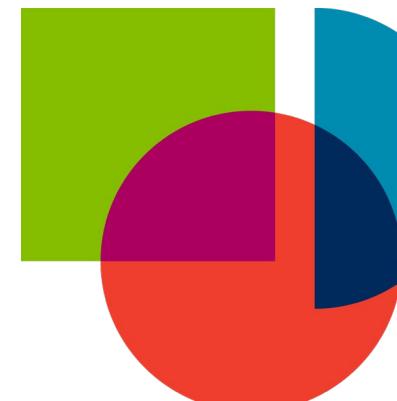


# Design (5 Mins)

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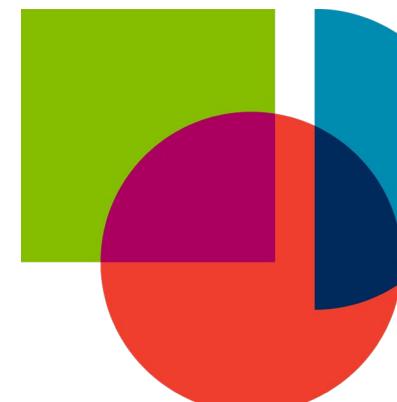
Together with your partner, draft 1 or 2 community guidelines that reflect your shared teaching values.

- Think about what students need to feel respected, engaged, and included in *the* context of your classroom.



# Share Your Design

- Anyone want to share what they drafted with their partner(s)?

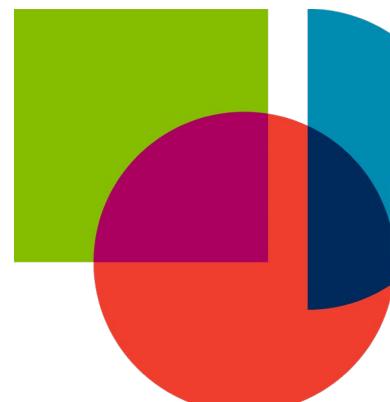


# Independent Reflection



# Independent Reflection: Draft 1-2 Community Guidelines

Take the next 7 minutes to begin reflecting on the kind of classroom you want to create, one that reflects your teaching values and supports all learners. Then, draft 1 or 2 community guidelines that could help set that tone from the start of the term.



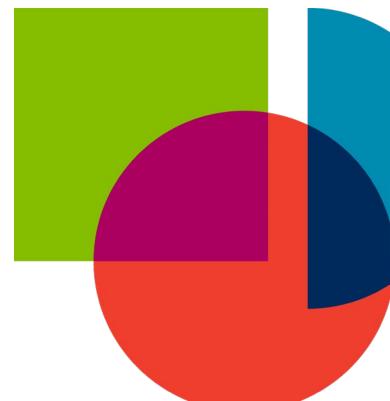
# Independent Reflection: Draft 1-2 Community Guidelines

## **1. What core values shape how you teach?**

(e.g., *respect, curiosity, belonging, participation, care, accountability*)

## **2. Which one or two of these values feel most important for setting the tone on the first day of class? Choose 1-2 values you want students to feel or experience right away.**

(For example: Do you want them to feel safe to participate? Encouraged to take risks? Respected in their identities?)



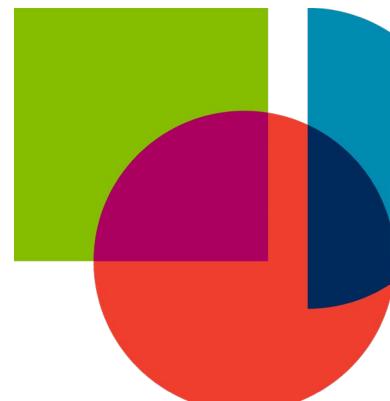
# Independent Reflection: Draft 1-2 Community Guidelines

**3. What kinds of behaviour, communication, or interaction would help students experience that value?** *This is what your guideline should support.*

*(For example: “We listen actively and without interruption” helps build respect.)*

## **Example:**

- Value:** Belonging
- Student experience:** Everyone feels seen and respected
- Guideline:** “We share responsibility for creating a learning space where all students feel included, valued, and able to participate fully.”



# How to Implement Community Guidelines:

## 1. Start with a conversation

: *"What helps you feel safe and respected while learning?"*

## 2. Write them visibly and collaboratively

Document the agreed-upon points on a shared doc, slide, or classroom space

## 3. Integrate into your course culture

Normalize using them as a tool—not a rulebook.

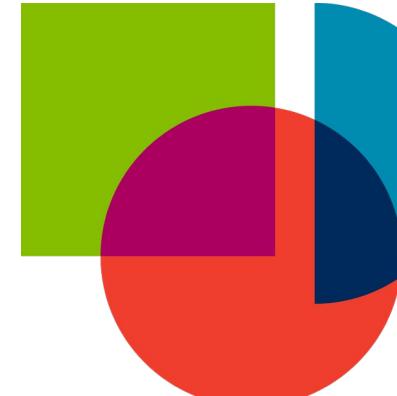
## 4. Check in regularly

*"Are these still working for us?"* Adjust if needed.

## 5. Model the behaviour yourself

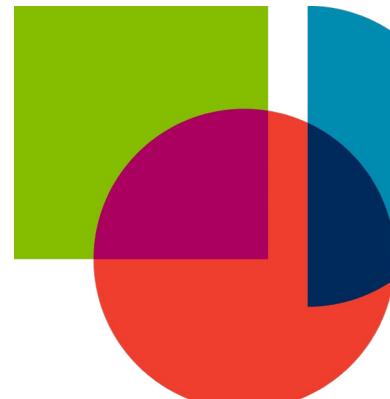
Demonstrate respectful dialogue

## 6. Link to course values and brave space principles



# LEAF Grant Opportunity

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education and the School of Graduate Studies welcome proposals for a special [Learning & Education Advancement Fund Plus \(LEAF+\)](#) funding stream focused on civil discourse. This stream supports projects focused on fostering civil discourse in curriculum and classroom settings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in all divisions.



# RGASC Programming Fall of 2025

- Anti-Racist Pedagogies Learning Series: From Intention to Meaningful Action
  - Session 1: **What Is Anti-racist Pedagogy? Naming, Reframing And Reflecting**
  - Session 2: **Teaching With Integrity: Naming And Addressing Antisemitism And Islamophobia In The Classroom**
  - Session 3: **Anti-racist Pedagogy In Action: Rethinking Your Syllabus**
  - Session 4: **Teaching With Intention: Positionality, Power, And The Work Ahead**

**Starts: Tuesday, October 7, 2025**

**Registration Opens: September 9, 2025**





HERE  
TO  
SUPPORT  
YOU.

# HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.

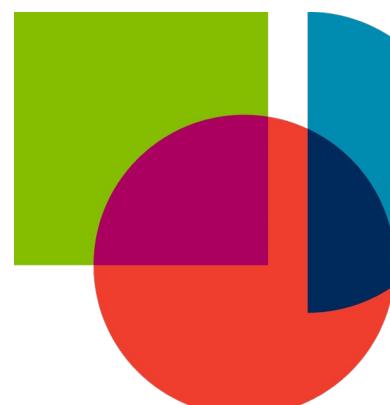
## ROBERT GILLESPIE ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTRE

- Confidential one-on-one consultations about teaching
- Resources
- Workshops
- Teaching observations
- Teaching dossiers
- Pedagogical reading groups (each semester)

Email: [eddev.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:eddev.utm@utoronto.ca)



# Questions?



# References

Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. M. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp. 135–150). Stylus Publishing.

Sensoy, Ö., & DiAngelo, R. (2014). Respect differences? Challenging the common guidelines in social justice education. *Democracy and Education*, 22(2), 1.

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# Thank You!

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