Discussion/Communication Guidelines

1. **Speak from your own experience** – Recognize the difference between your truth (with a little t) and the idea of the Truth (with a big T). Speak from little t. Be respectful that my experiences may be different from yours.

2. **It’s a process.** Remember that not everything is obvious to everyone. We may be on a similar journey, but the journey is not linear and we are all at different points. Not everything we say has to be perfectly well formulated.

3. Consider that issues may be both/and rather than either/or.

4. **Step up** – Take risks to grow and push past your barriers.

5. **Step back** – Share speaking time and try to speak after others who have not spoken.

6. **Listen** and hear actively, but **discuss** civilly and sincerely.

7. Expressing **strong feelings** is okay, and when strong feelings are expressed, work at not taking it personally. It is okay to ask for a few moments of personal **time to regroup** when you are experiencing strong emotion or hurt.

8. **Impact** matters more than intent.

9. Be open to **notice and explore** moments when defensiveness and denial emerge and be willing to be engaged about these moments.

10. **Allow that biases** aren’t our fault. They don’t reflect our character, just the messages we’ve consumed.  
    
    (adapted from Tochluk 2009)