

# Systems Practice Guide:



## DRIVE

Diversity, Representation and Inclusion for Value in Education

[www.umassmed.edu/DRIVE](http://www.umassmed.edu/DRIVE)

## Tips for Teaching: Preparing Boundary- Setting Phrases

### Background/Rationale

- Each of us helps set the tone of what is appropriate in a specific setting. Others look to us to set expectations.
- Microaggressions or inappropriate comments often catch us off-guard; it can be hard to react in the moment.
- These moments can be opportunities to learn and teach.

**Practice makes it easier** – find phrases that work for you and practice saying them out loud.

Some suggested phrases are on the next page.

**Prepare for multiple settings** – Imagine a variety of settings. Do you need to protect yourself? End the conversation? Invite others into a "teachable moment"?

**Consider verbal and nonverbal responses** – Sometimes a nonverbal gesture, such as crossing your arms or stepping back, can convey as much as a spoken phrase.

**Be conscious of power dynamics** – If you hold a position of implied power, be aware that a mild rebuke may be interpreted more sternly than your intent.

**Share your success!** – Tell us about phrases you have used that we should add to our list: use the QR code below.



Questions? Support? Suggestions for improvement?  
Contact [drive@umassmed.edu](mailto:drive@umassmed.edu) or use the QR code to share  
compliments and concerns



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### Some statements you may consider building in your toolbox

#### **Broadly useful –**

- That hasn't been my experience
- I am not the right person to talk to about that
- Can you please share a bit more about what you meant by \_\_\_\_\_

#### **To invite others into conversation –**

- I want to acknowledge that what just happened (or that language) made me uncomfortable.
  - shall we take a few minutes to discuss it together?

#### **To protect yourself –**

- I can see we're not going to agree on this today, let's plan to move forward together

#### **Upstanding –**

- I believe you meant well, but are aware of how \_\_\_\_\_ might be interpreted?
- I'm not sure if you're aware that is not a preferred term.

#### **To park a conversation –**

- That is an important topic, and I believe it will require more time than we have right now. Let's put this conversation on hold and plan to return to it on \_\_\_\_\_, or when we have had more time to consider and invite others to participate.



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For additional resources, see:



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