



## **Race, Gender, and Identity Training #1: Holding Space**

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Volunteers will learn what “holding space” means, particularly as it applies to their work as tutors.
2. Volunteers will learn what a brave space is.
3. Volunteers will learn how to call in the language and behavior of both volunteers and students, and they will learn about being comfortable with discomfort.

Time	Activity
1:15 10 min	Welcome, Introductions
1:25 10 min	Let’s create some ground rules for the conversation
1:35 5 min	Brave Space
1:40 30 min	Define holding space
2:10 5 min	Break
2:15 30 min	What are you worried about circle?
2:45 10 min	Debrief and circling back to holding space

**In this packet:**

- **Ground Rules**
- **Definition: Brave Space**
- **Definition: Holding Space**
- **Activity: What are you worried about?**
- **Additional Resources**

## **Ground Rules**

What are some ground rules we have established in the past?

- Using “yes AND”
- No interrupting
- Use I statements
- Mutual Respect and support
- Accepting people on their own terms
- Welcoming and inclusive
- Assuming best intent
- No judgement
- Treat everyone equally
- Use people’s preferred pronouns
- Use compassionate language
- Don’t be afraid of asking

What are some ground rules you hope for today and in future conversations?

## **What is a Brave Space?**

### Definition

A brave space is a space where folks are comfortable speaking from their own perspective, sharing their experiences, and being comfortable with discomfort. We recognize that talking about privilege and difference can bring up emotions and feelings that take time to process, and we want to use this space to name and explore those sometimes uncomfortable emotions. In a brave space, we do not shy away from those feelings of awkwardness--we ask questions, admit when we don't know something, and speak from our position. We believe that in questioning *why* we feel comfortable or uncomfortable and in listening to each other's individual experiences, we can make our space safer and freer for everyone's creative expression.

*Use this space to free write, if you would like, on what a "brave space" means to you--why it is important and what it might look like for us and our students.*

## **Definition: Holding Space**

(Courtesy of Heather Plett, “What it Really Means to Hold Space for Someone”)

“It means that we are willing to walk alongside another person in whatever journey they’re on without judging them, making them feel inadequate, trying to fix them, or trying to impact the outcome. When we hold space for other people, we open our hearts, offer unconditional support, and let go of judgement and control.”

### 8 Tips to Help You Hold Space for Others

*You can use the space between to brainstorm ways we hold space as mentors in our programs.*

1. Give people permission to trust their own intuition and wisdom.
2. Give people only as much information as they can handle.
3. Don't take their power away.
4. Keep your own ego out of it.

5. Make them feel safe enough to fail.

6. Give guidance and help with humility and thoughtfulness.

7. Create a container for complex emotions, fear, trauma, etc.

8. Allow them to make different decisions and to have different experiences than you would.

**Activity: What Are You Worried About? Circle**

(Courtesy of Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis, *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative Community*)

What gives you hope?
How can you tell if someone else is worried or very stressed?
What can you do to relieve the stress of your worries?
Tell us more about what brings you hope, especially when you are worried.

## **Additional Resources**

*More about Brave Space:*

- [Creating a Brave Space for Dialogue](#)
- [Safe Spaces and Brave Spaces: Historical Context and Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals](#)
- [Communication Guidelines for a Brave Space](#)

*More around circle activities:*

- [Circle Forward](#)
- [The Circle Way](#)