

Strategies to Interrupt Difficult Dynamics

Strategy	What it looks like	Why it helps
Paraphrase	<p>“So, it sounds like you think...”</p> <p>“You’re saying...You believe...”</p>	<p>Paraphrasing demonstrates our listening.</p> <p>This provides the other party with a chance to listen to what you took from their words.</p> <p>This provides an opportunity to inform the communication.</p>
Inquire	<p>“Say more about that. I’m not sure I fully understand where you are coming from.”</p> <p>“Can you elaborate on your point?”</p> <p>“It sounds like you have a strong opinion about this. Tell me why.”</p>	<p>Questions can open the conversation. Sometimes words are imperfect and people misspeak. Or, what the other party said does not actually convey the meaning we think. As they try to elaborate, they may find problems in their own logic. At the very least, we will gain more information about where they are coming from.</p>
Use I statements	<p>“I felt _____ (feelings) when you said or did _____ (comment or behavior), and it _____ (describe the impact on you).”</p>	<p>This is helpful if you do understand where the other party is coming from and you disagree or want to share how their words had an impact on you. Using I statements rather than “you” statements can help center your perspective.</p>
Reframe	<p>“Let’s reframe this...”</p> <p>“Could there be another way to look at this...”</p> <p>“What would happen if....”</p>	<p>This can be helpful if you and the other party have entered into a “dead-end” argument. This strategy can help you both to step out of your positions and see the issue another way. This can be especially useful if you are an observer and wish to defuse a heated conversation.</p>

This handout was adapted from [this original resource from UCSC](https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_InterruptHO_2014_11_182v5.pdf).

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