

# **NCTC Courageous Conversations**

## **Ground Rules for Participants**

### **Stay Engaged**

- Give yourself permission to focus fully on the conversation
- Please silence your cell phone, if you must use it step out of the room.
- Share a story, state your opinion, ask a question-risk and grow!
- Continue sharing even if there are disagreements.
- Listen Actively
- Refrain from side conversations

### **Speak Your Truth**

- Value everyone's thoughts
- Start by assuming good intentions
- Speak from your own experience and use "I" statements, as in "I think", "I feel", "I believe", or "I want"
  - I statements allow the speaker to express their feeling without blaming someone or inferring the intent of someone else. The formula for an "I" statement or message is: I feel\_\_\_\_\_ when\_\_\_\_\_ happens because \_\_\_\_\_.
- It's important that we create a safe environment where everyone is free to speak openly.
- Keep in mind that people are in different places in this work. In order for us to grow, people need to be able to share thoughts in a way that's comfortable for them.
- Be aware of non-verbal communication.
- Before speaking, think about what you want others to know. How can they best hear you?
- Mistakes are part of success. Don't be overly cautious about being politically correct-this is a learning process.
- Disagree Respectfully

### **Listen for Understanding**

- Avoid Assumptions and Reserve Judgement
- Listen without thinking about how you are going to respond
- Try to understand where another person is coming from as best you can
- Be careful not to compare your experiences with another person's. This often invalidates or minimizes a person's experiences.
- If someone points out how what you said left them feeling, try not to explain or rationalize what you said or why you said it. Sometimes positive intent is not enough. Sometimes it's
- Use "Yes and" instead of "Yes But" or "However"
- Be comfortable with being uncomfortable

### **Honor Confidentiality**

- What is shared here, stays here

### **Expect and Accept Non-closure**

- Engaging in courageous conversation is ongoing work that does not necessarily leave a person walking away feeling everything turned out the way they hoped. Accept that much of this is about changing yourself, not others.

### **Responsibility to Each Other and to the Courageous Conversation Process**

- Group members will encourage each other to follow the ground rules
- Anger is ok, but express it respectfully, you may leave the room to take a walk

### **Additional Ground Rules Agreed to by the Group**

- Participants are invited to propose additional ground rules for courageous conversations. The group may wish to discuss before deciding whether they agree to abide by additional ground rules. If so, the additional ground rules should be written out for everyone to see.
- Participants who go against the rules will have one warning before they are asked to leave.

# **Be Respectful**