

World Cafe: Race, Diversity and Inclusion in a Pluralistic University GFM National Staff Conference 2016

Description: This World Cafe will offer an opportunity to engage in one of the important conversations happening right now in many universities across the U.S. about race, diversity, and inclusion. We will explore how universities are navigating the challenges of fostering a respectful learning community in the midst of systemic racism, while also holding to its ideals of protecting the free and open exchange of ideas. We will discuss how we might encourage students and faculty of color, and how students/faculty might foster shalom on campus in the midst of these challenges.

Readings:

The Coddling of the American Mind, by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. From the Atlantic Monthly, September 2015 Issue.

Race, speech, and values: What really happened at Yale. by Kathrin Lassie. From Yale Alumni Magazine, Jan/Feb 2016 Issue.

The Callousness of Erika Christakis' #Yale Intellectualism. by Morgan Guyton. From Mercy Not Sacrifice: The Blog of Morgan Guyton. November 11, 2015.

Questions for discussion:

1. "Is it possible to have free speech and 'safe spaces'?" [Yale's president] Salovey says, "We can do both." Why do you think these two values have become pitted against each other in the university? What might it look like to do both in the university?

2. Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt argue that universities are perpetuating a culture of victimhood by censoring speech on their campuses and that, in doing so, they are contributing to the mental/emotional fragilization of their students.

What do you think about the authors' critique of micro-aggressions and trigger warnings in the university? Do you think a cognitive behavioral approach is a helpful way forward as students and faculty encounter differences, racism, and offense in the university? Why or why not?

3. GFM's Vision statement expresses our desire to see students and faculty become a redeeming influence among the people, ideas, and structures of the university. How might we (students, faculty, GFM staff) make a redemptive contribution to these important conversations and challenges in the university about race, diversity and inclusion?

How could we encourage and learn from students/faculty of color as they seek to be a redeeming influence in the university?

Details: 3 rounds of conversation; 20 minutes per round.

Round 1: discuss all 3 questions. Your group may choose to focus on 1-2 questions in-depth.

Round 2: share highlights from round 1 with your new group, and discuss further.

Round 3: share highlights from round 2 with your new group, and discuss further.

For each round:

- Each person takes a turn being the talker.
- The other three people serve as listeners.
- After each person in the group has had an opportunity to respond to the question/s, take the rest of the time for group discussion.

World Cafe Guidelines:

Speak with your mind and heart

Contribute your thinking

Focus on what matters

Listen to understand

Have fun!

Play... draw... doodle...

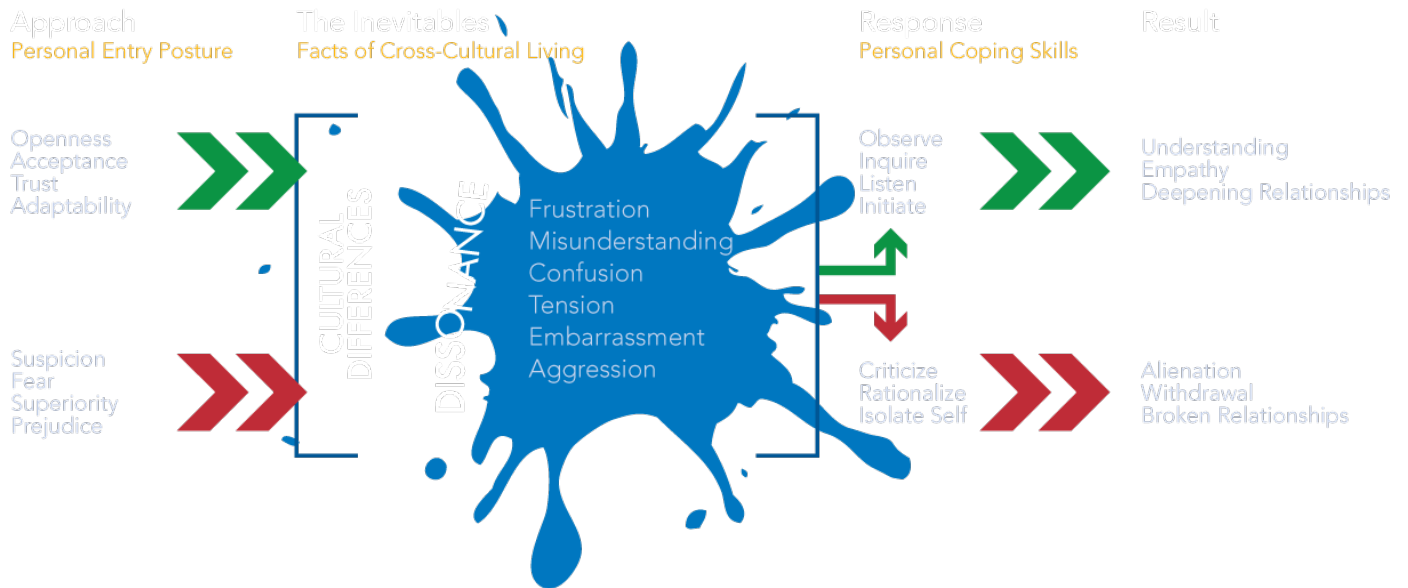
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper connections

Link and connect ideas

Slow down... so you have time to think and reflect.

InterVarsity's Approaching Differences Diagram:

APPROACHING DIFFERENCES



This diagram is available as a bookmark through the InterVarsity Store at daycoz.blmkl

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Some guidelines for healthy discussion:

- 1) Avoid language that generalizes others.
- 2) Opt for cultural learning versus "color-blindness."
- 3) If you think it might be an offensive term, avoid it.
- 4) Gently correct if you are offended.
- 5) Give yourself grace to learn (and make mistakes).

Some wisdom from Vinoth Ramachandra to IFES ENGAGE on 2/26/2016:

"The real anger, hurts, disappointments, resentments are often suppressed. If the topic of dialogue is, say, "religious discrimination" or "racism", surely somebody who experiences the humiliation of it from morning till night every day cannot be expected to speak with the same urbane, detached tone of voice as an academic who is well-paid, tenured, and has never experienced any form of discrimination in his or her life."