

COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

CALLING PEOPLE IN

In times of polarization, organizations must navigate complex internal and external landscapes. Employees may bring their stress and opinions around current events into the workplace. Dialogue is a potential catalyst for growth and understanding and can lead to productive outcomes. Use the recommendations below to navigate these conversations with optimism and respect – and see your teammates more clearly.



Set expectations for your organization.

Effective guidelines don't seek to limit dialogue around social issues but reduce disruptions and maintain a culture of respect. Remind employees that everyone should feel safe, welcomed and respected in the workplace.

Leverage your organization's purpose to communicate shared values and common ground among employees.



Harness the power of taking a pause when brought into a tough conversation.

A pause provides space to check in with your emotions and allows for additional information to be considered before forming a conclusion. You can shift from reaction to response mode and engage in more constructive and respectful conversation.



Lead with "I" statements when engaging with others.

Sharing your experience can help others understand their own. Try something like "I have been feeling really overwhelmed by everything going on and at a loss of what to do. What has _____ brought up for you?"



Be curious and look beyond assumptions.

In the workplace, we may only know each other's "professional self" and be prone to filling in the gaps with assumptions or stereotypes – especially in hybrid and remote settings. Curiosity and open questions can move teams and individuals to a deeper understanding of each other. Learn more about the power of personal stories with [StoryCorp's One Small Step Initiative](#).

An open-minded approach builds connection and empathy among teams, and individuals are more likely to seek clarification when confusion arises.



Have a productive conversation by calling people in, not out, creating space for growth.

Questions to call people in: Tell me more. How did you determine that? Why do you feel this is the best way to proceed?

You can also call on people to hold them accountable. Pause and ask them to re-explain their stance and clarify their meaning.

This resource references work from: [AWARE-LA | Building Unity: How Corporate Purpose Can Guide Companies Through Polarizing Times](#), [Carol Cone On Purpose | The Power of Positive Intent](#), [Emergenetics | Don't Call People Out – Call Them In](#), [Loretta J. Ross | How to Manage Political Discussion in the Workplace](#), [SHRM](#)
Thank you and credit to the above authors.

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