

## Checking Ourselves in the DEI Space

The normal human response when someone confronts us about a perceived wrongdoing is to get defensive, or emotional. These initial reactions shut down conversations, allow issues to remain unresolved, and can lead to anger and resentment. If someone points out that something you have said or done was offensive, instead of defaulting to defensiveness, challenge yourself to engage in introspection, reflection, and action. Let's say a student or a coworker approaches you about something that you said, or did that they thought was discriminatory:

1. Introspection: Ask yourself if you would have asked a question, made a statement or responded to a situation in the same way if that person was a part of your same social identity group (your same race, gender, etc.).
2. Reflection: Examine your beliefs and thoughts in situations. Reflect on what experiences might have caused you to ask that question, make that statement, or have that reaction in that way? What narrative exists in your mind that led you to make a conclusion, or act in a certain way?
3. Act
  - a. Correct the narrative in your mind. .
  - b. Think about how you might react differently the next time
  - c. Apologize – I'm sorry IF is not an apology. Apologies begin with I'm sorry THAT.....

For example, I have a friend who is East Indian. She was walking her dog on a hot day and made a comment about the heat as she passed a neighbor. Her neighbor responded "I bet it gets hotter than this back home." If my friend encountered this neighbor again and told him that she was offended by his comment in process might look like this:

Introspection- Would I have said "I bet it gets hotter back home" to a white male?

Reflection- I guess I assumed that she was not from the US. The narrative in his mind is that nonwhite people are not "FROM HERE." She has probably been told to "go back to where you came from," and I made an assumption that she must not be an American.

Action- America is inclusive of a lot of different people, and I should not assume that someone is from somewhere else. "I'm so sorry. I made an ignorant assumption. I appreciate you helping me see that."