

In order to serve our students, in order to support them, Ohlone College needs to engage in the issues that confront our students and the society at large. Changes are needed that require shifts in how we perceive and do things. Moving forward requires that we critically examine what we currently do and have done in the past. The discussions that are needed to lead to productive change require a framework where we can be more open, inclusive, and honest.

We, as the Leading from the Middle team for 2020-2021, look to the idea of having **Brave Conversations** as the framework within which this can happen. We deconstruct the idea of Brave Conversations into the following parts. Brave Conversations require **Brave Spaces**. Brave Spaces are not necessarily **Safe Spaces**. For the members of Ohlone College to engage in a brave conversation, agreement on a common set of **Community Agreements** for those conversations will help to establish those Brave Spaces. Brave Conversations also rely on gatherings that are predicated on the qualities of any **Good Meeting**.

First, some definitions.

A. A Brave Space is:

1. Mutually determined – you agree to the guidelines set by the community
2. Honest and authentic – you bring your real self to the space, not a construct to simply comply or challenge
3. Courageous – you say things that may hurt others, yet you own them
4. Vulnerable – you may hear things that hurt you, yet you stay engaged
5. Respectful – you acknowledge the humanity of all those in the space and treat them as you would wish to be treated; you actively listen; you allow others to speak
6. Purposeful – you commit to making productive change

B. To have brave conversations within a brave space, it is essential that the principals of any **Good Meeting be followed:**

1. There is a clear purpose – there is a clear agenda and timeframe.
2. A facilitator(s) guides the meeting and makes sure all have a chance to contribute.
3. The participants commit to being present, prepared, and engaged.
4. There is clarity at the end of the meeting as to what happens next.

C. It is important to note that a Brave Space is not the same thing as a **Safe Space**.

Safe Space...	Brave Space...
has a feeling of being accepted, protected, and affirmed;	requires respect and ownership of what one says, but a participant may be hurt or offended by the words of others;
promotes inclusion and welcome; and	requires that one be open to other viewpoints, but the focus of the work of a brave space is productive change ;
asks one to engage as far as one is able to and to disengage if needed .	needs one to stay engaged even when uncomfortable or in disagreement.

We are asking your group to endorse a set of Community Agreements as a part of the broader endorsement by the entire College community. We present the set of Community Agreements below for discussion. This is difficult work. Any set of community agreements should be reviewed annually so that they move us forward. Once endorsed, they are not set in stone.

Community Agreements for Brave Conversations

1. You are honest, but you take ownership of your honesty.
2. You are authentic, but you take ownership of your intentions and impact.
3. You are open to the different viewpoints of others.
4. You are not afraid to challenge viewpoints, but you do so with the goal of productive change.
5. You do not challenge viewpoints simply to challenge.
6. You recognize that you may not always like what you hear.
7. You commit to staying in the conversation.
8. In all interactions, you recognize that we are a community and that all its members should be treated with respect and civility.
9. You understand that a brave conversation may engender feelings of discomfort that persist, even after you leave the space.
10. You leave your title and authority at the door and agree not to use any power you hold against those with whom you disagree.