

# Intergroup Dialogue: A Model for Facilitating Difficult Conversations



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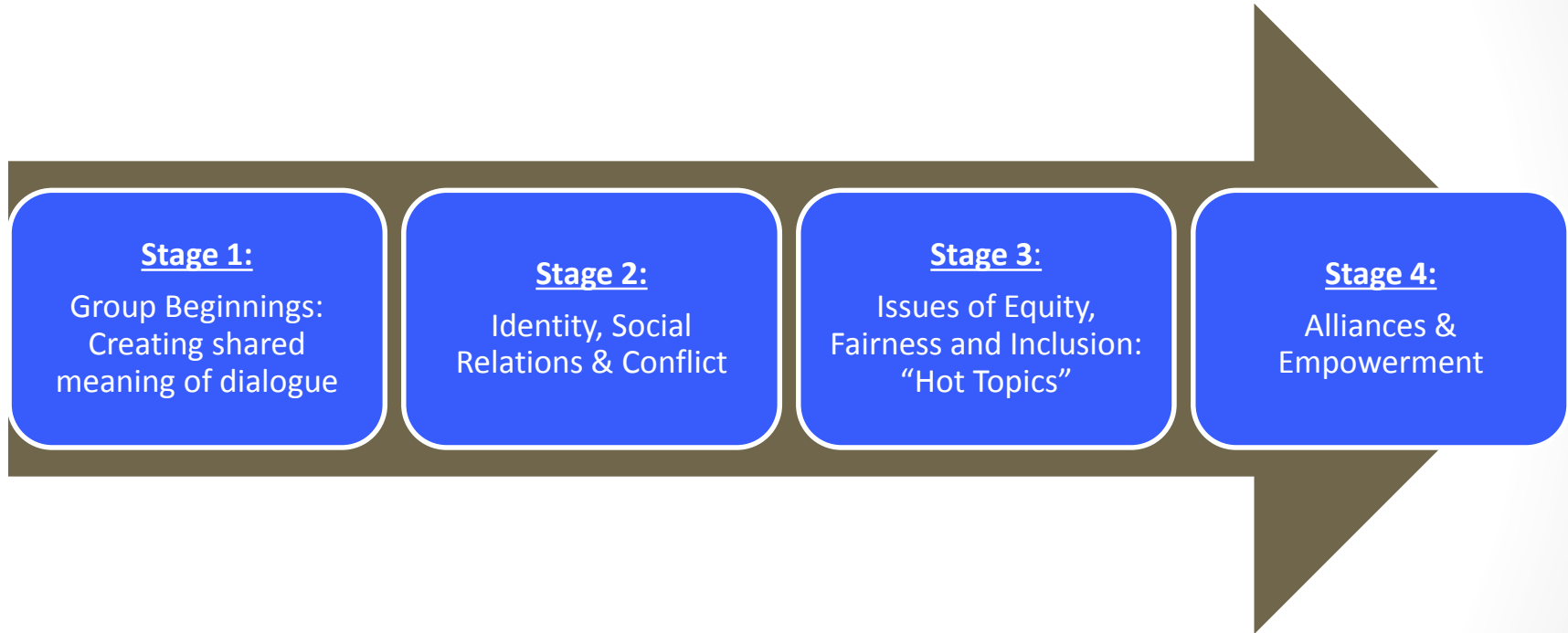
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# Intergroup Dialogue - General Definition

- *Facilitated*, face-to-face meetings between individuals from two or more social identity groups
- A communicative process emphasizing issues related to social justice, social identity, and positionality (privilege and oppression) of groups
- Co-facilitated by two persons, one from each social group represented, who have been trained in dialogue techniques
- Typically 14-16 participants with rough parity in representation of the two social groups
- Sustained: 10-14 meetings as part of course (Current staff/faculty prof. development model: 4 full-day sessions)

# 4 Stage IGD Model:





# Defining Dialogue:

Debate:	Discussion:	Dialogue:
Win!	Present ideas	Broaden our perspective
Stress disagreement	Provide answers	Find places of agreement among many
'Right' v. 'Wrong'	Share information	See connections between parts
Justify assumptions	Defend assumptions	Inquiring into assumptions
Search for flaws in logic	Give answers, gain agreement	Discover collective meaning
Persuading	Telling & selling	Learning through inquiry & disclosure
Either/or	Either/or	Both/and



# Behaviors that Support Dialogue:

- Listen to understand
- Share your story
- Be aware of assumptions and stereotypes
- Be open to differing opinions and experiences
- Acknowledge places of disagreement

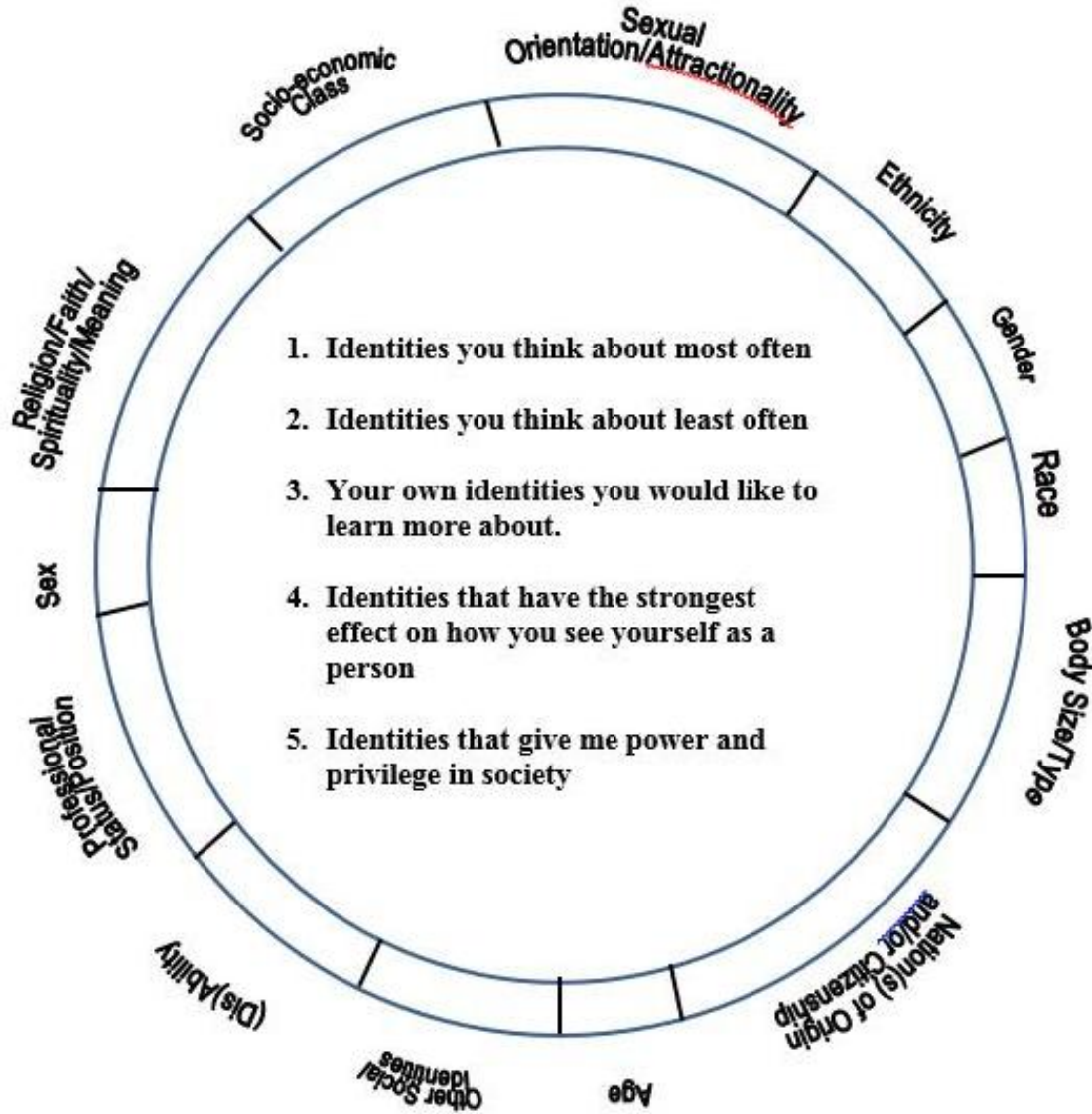
# Defining Social Identities...

- Based on physical, social and mental characteristics of individuals
- Sometimes obvious and clear (Example: Race), sometimes unknown to others (Example: Sexual orientation)
- Others can be claimed but unknown outwardly (Example: Religion)



# Examples:

Race	Gender	Disability/ Ability	Religion/ Spirituality
Socio-economic status	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Body size/Type
Class/status (Position, Title)	Educational background	Age	Other?







# Power and Privilege:

- Target groups: Social identity groups that are discriminated against, stigmatized or otherwise disadvantaged in society
  
- Agent groups: Social identity groups that are privileged, preferred or otherwise advantaged in society

# Learning through Listening:

## ➤ Pair up

## ➤ One speaks first, one listens:

### ➤ Speaker:

- Which social identity (or identities) have the strongest effect on how you see yourself?

AND/OR

- Which social identities give you power and privilege in society?

### ➤ Listener:

- Use active listening, relate to dialogue as opposed to debate/discussion, make it about the other person, not you
- As clarifying questions
- Use empathetic responses (“You feel that..,” “You think...”)

## ➤ Each person will take a turn with each role

# Discuss...

- Did you feel heard?
- What did your colleague do to demonstrate true listening?
- As the listener, what was challenging?
- How can you apply this simple exercise back at work?

# Behaviors that Challenge Dialogue:

- Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007).



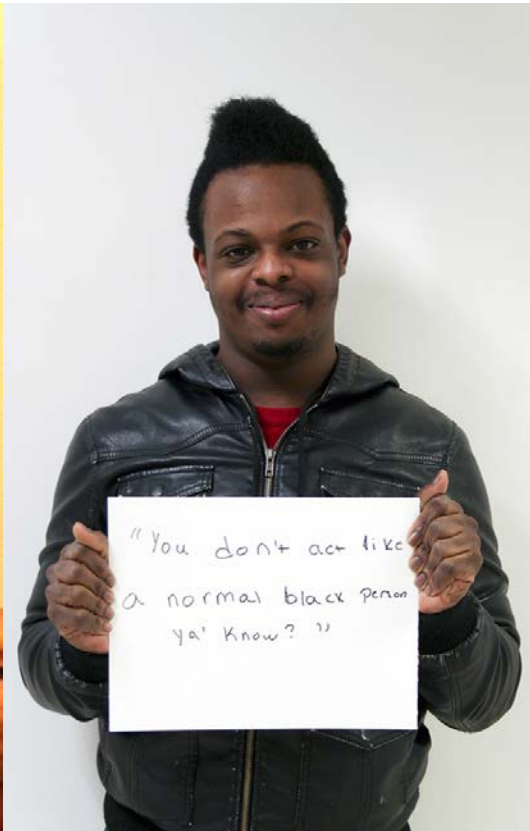
*You're Really  
Pretty...*  
FOR A DARK  
SKIN GIRL



"So, like,  
what are  
you?"



"Courtney  
I never  
see you as  
a black girl"  
#swine  
#OPENYOUR EYES!



# Watch for Triggers

- Trigger: Statement or action by others that make us feel diminished, offended, threatened, stereotyped, discounted, or attacked. Triggers often leave us feeling psychologically threatened.
- Triggers can cause an emotional response. The emotions can include: anger, fear, hurt, confusion, embarrassment, etc.

# Responses to Triggers

Leave: We physically remove ourselves from the triggering event.

Avoid: We withdraw emotionally from people or situations that trigger us.

Silence: We do not respond to the triggering situation, though we are upset about it. We endure without saying or doing anything.

Ignore: We notice the trigger but choose to let it go. We do not respond.

Deflect: We change the subject, or respond in an unexpected way, such as through humor

Give in: We concede, often with statements we don't mean, such as "that's okay," "it doesn't matter," "I don't mind," etc.



# Responses to Triggers

Attack: We respond with an intent to hurt whoever triggered us.

Argue: We argue over the other person's points without wanting to acknowledge their potential validity

Debate: Argument escalates as we seek to defeat the other person's arguments and possibly attack his/her character.

Shock and confusion: We express surprise at the trigger, pronounce it offensive, and indicate we don't know how to respond.

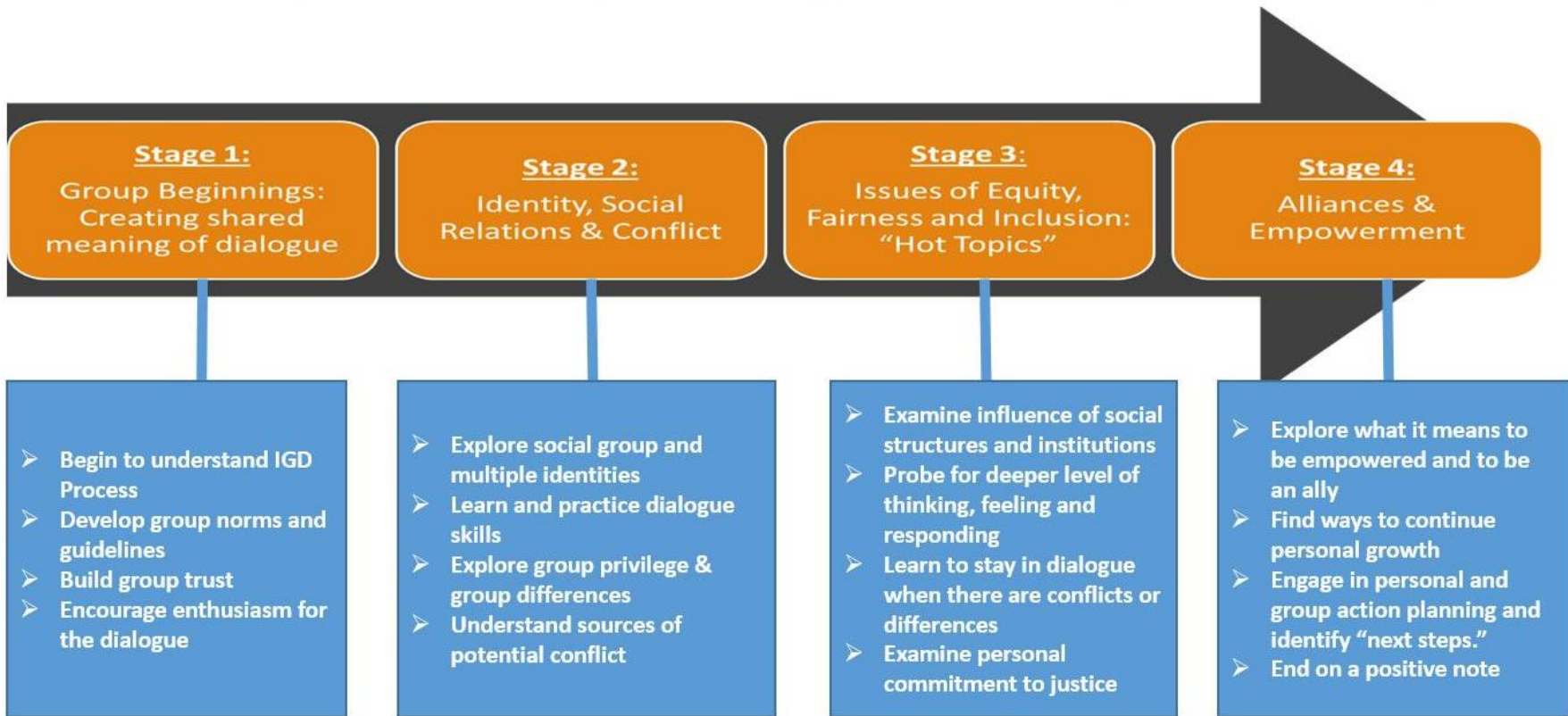
Label: We describe the other person's behavior or statement, or the person, in less than flattering terms.

# Positive Responses to Triggers:

- Recognize it.
- Pause, allow a break
- Separate yourself from the trigger
- Ground yourself
- “I’m noticing you’re speaking with a lot of energy and emotion.”
- “I’m wondering if you are feeling triggered right now”
- Think about your options
- Dr. Maura Cullen: B.A.R: Breathe, Acknowledge, Respond

Obear, K. (2007).

# Intergroup Dialogue- 4 Stage Model:



Adapted from: University of Michigan, Office of Intergroup Relations

# Applications

- Numerous staff/faculty dialogues have been facilitated on campus, including:
  - Numerous dialogues on race
  - Gender dialogues, including one among executive leaders
  - Dialogue on sexual orientation
  - Dialogue on class, rank, status
  - Unit specific dialogues
- IGD/CC Office:
  - Partners with Student Affairs to engage students in dialogue processes
  - Leads initiative to support faculty in development of curriculum that incorporates IGD pedagogy and practices, including development of a cross-disciplinary certificate
  - Facilitates public forums that incorporate IGD principles

# IGD and the IUPUI Strategic Plan (Faculty/Staff Development)

IGD can support faculty/staff development through the following Strategic Actions:

- Promote and Inclusive Campus Culture: Increase IUPUI's commitment to cultural competence and social justice literacy by educating and learning from campus and community stakeholders; and by developing, implementing, and institutionalizing initiatives that support ongoing improvement of faculty and staff members' cultural literacy. (Strategic Initiative: Promote an Inclusive Campus Culture, Strategic Action #2)
- Develop Faculty and Staff: Establish a tradition of communication among staff, administration, and faculty to encourage open dialogue among all members of the campus community; to educate members of the campus community about campus, division, and school policies, practices, and procedures; to foster staff and faculty advocacy and communication with campus administration; and to ensure a welcoming, safe, diverse, and inclusive environment across the campus. (Strategic Initiative: Develop Faculty and Staff, Strategic Action #10)

# IGD and the IUPUI Strategic Plan (Curriculum Development)

IGD can support curriculum development through the following Strategic Actions:

- Promote an Inclusive Campus Culture: Require all students to engage in high-impact curricular and co-curricular experiences designed to enhance cross-cultural knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills as well as awareness of social justice issues and civic responsibility. (Strategic Initiative: Promote an Inclusive Campus Culture, Strategic Action #3)
- Strengthen Internationalization Efforts: Continue to expand study abroad, international service learning, and international internship opportunities for IUPUI students . . . Make it possible for any IUPUI undergraduate or graduate student to have at least one meaningful international experience during his or her IUPUI career. . . . (Strategic Initiative: Strengthen Internationalization Efforts, Strategic Action #2)

IUPUI Strategic Plan: <http://strategicplan.iupui.edu/>

# Find and Follow us...



Intergroup Dialogue at IUPUI

A screenshot of the website for the Office for Intergroup Dialogue and Civil Community. The header is dark brown with the organization's name in white. Below the name are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The main content area has a light beige background with the text "What Happens in Intergroup Dialogue?" in a typewriter font, enclosed in large green curly braces. At the bottom, there is a dark blue section with a circular profile picture of a woman, a quote, and a "Read More" button.

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What Happens in Intergroup Dialogue?

"I believe IGD is a wonderful model moving to a "me to we" teaching/learning climate. I support this application wholeheartedly."  
— Khadija Khaja, Ph.D, IU School of Social Work

[Read More](#)

Website: [www.igd.iupui.edu](http://www.igd.iupui.edu)



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