



Brave Space Guidelines

What Is a Brave Space?

A community space where different points on a journey of learning and growing are supported and engaged.

Community members engage in critical dialogue through conscious questioning and active listening. While all are expected to make their best effort to be respectful, there is an understanding that someone may say something that results in unintentional offense and hurt feelings for those around. A primary assumption of brave space is that everyone speaks with the positive intent of seeking greater knowledge and understanding. The Women's Center at UMBC is regarded as a brave space where all members of the UMBC community are welcome, and where people with different life experiences and ideas are encouraged to learn from one another.

This is not a comprehensive list of guidelines, but rather a roadmap to keep in mind when using this space to help keep it a place where all members of the UMBC community can come to learn, grow, and be.

Challenge Yourself:

- Recognize that your experiences, values, and perspectives are unique to you. Strive to learn about experiences other than your own, and seek permission to ask questions about other people's experiences (e.g. "Would you be willing to tell me more about...").
- Avoid language that implies that all people belong in a majority group and abstain from stereotyping. If you don't know how someone identifies, and you need to know, ask them instead of making assumptions and labeling them. (e.g. ask "How do you identify?" instead of "You're gay, right?")
- Recognize and respect the range of emotions that you and others may experience in the Center. Please be thoughtful about how your emotions and behavior may impact others based on their experiences.
- Intent is important, but it does not trump impact. Recognize and own the impact of your words and actions. Also, practice forgiveness and generosity: remember that this is a space where we are all learning and growing.

Respect Others:

- Be respectful of privacy and/or confidentiality when requested. If you are not certain it is for consumption beyond this space, DO NOT share another's private story—even if you omit names and details. Be careful not to "out" others and be particularly

mindful of how you might unintentionally out someone when you see them outside of the Women's Center.

- Remember that this is a shared space: be mindful of your noise level and how much space you occupy, and consider how it impacts others' ability to meet, study, work, or otherwise enjoy the Center. Be welcoming, create community, and try to include others in the conversation.
- Listen to and acknowledge the ideas, feelings, and/or experiences of others and avoid attacking or debating the validity of someone else's experiences. Be supportive of people who interrupt or respond to comments that are perceived to be hurtful or offensive.
- Be mindful of sexually charged and/or drug/alcohol related topics, language, and perceived behavior, which can be potentially triggering and we all have different boundaries. Keep in mind that this is a university and a workplace.

Cultivate the Community Space:

- It is everyone's responsibility to hold ourselves and others accountable for maintaining a clean community space. Throw away/recycle your trash, wash your dishes, clean up projects before you leave, and return furniture and borrowed items back to its original place before you leave the Women's Center.
- Check out the sign in the front office for the times when the lounge will be closed during the week and plan your use of the Center accordingly. Use and availability of the space is at the discretion of Women's Center staff.
- If you do not identify with the Women's Center groups that are meeting, respect and support these groups by exiting the Center during closed meetings and attending any of the groups' community events.
- We encourage you to look through the Women's Center's library and resources, and ask that you please see our staff for assistance if you wish to check out any of our materials.
- Ask for assistance from Women's Center staff as needed, particularly for support in peacefully addressing conflicts or referring people seeking additional resources.