

**“WE ALL BELONG HERE” 2021-22 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SB 5044)
NORMS AND SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS**

As WWPS faculty engage in professional development opportunities outlined in SB 5044, it is important that participants do so with a shared set of understandings/norms to help frame their discussions and collective learning. The following strategies, adapted from Singleton’s(2006) work, have become practical, “go to” guidance for healthy school discourse.

[Stay Engaged](#)

- It’s important that you try to stay present/attentive with the group and/or people you are engaging.
- Stay with the topic. If you begin to feel uneasy, it’s natural to want to take the conversation some place different. Resist the urge to change the topic to another.
- One way to stay engaged is to practice asking questions with genuine curiosity. Be curious about different points of view. Seek to understand why the person thinks/believes the way they do.

[Listen for Understanding](#)

- Resist the urge to compare your experiences with another person’s – we each have our own lived experiences.
- Listen without thinking about how you are going to respond.
- If someone is pointing out how what you said left them feeling uneasy, try not to explain or rationalize what you said or why you said it. For example, sometimes it’s necessary to just say, “I didn’t mean to upset you, I’m sorry.” Focus on your impact not your intent.

[Speak Your Truth](#)

- The purpose of having these conversations is to be able to speak our truths about our own experiences and learn from one another.
- We often avoid speaking our truth for fear of what others might say. It’s important that we create an environment where everyone is free to speak openly so that learning and understanding can occur.
- Speaking our truth does not mean judging another’s truth. Before speaking, think about what it is that you want others to know. How can they best hear you? When you speak are you speaking to critique others or are you speaking so that new learning can occur for others in the room?

[Expect to Experience Some Level of Discomfort](#)

- Being uncomfortable at times is to be expected. These can be difficult topics. That’s OK and completely natural.
- Experiencing discomfort does not mean you need to take responsibility or blame for someone else's experience or description of their experience.

[Expect and Accept Non-Closure](#)

- In our society, we often want to feel some immediate sense of closure, regardless of the issue. However, engaging in conversations surrounding these topics means there will likely be non-closure for some time.
- This work takes time to unpack and understand. It may take weeks, months or even years for closure on some of these issues.