



Civility Glossary

We offer working definitions that help us think about what civility is and what it requires, responds to, and advances. This is not a comprehensive list; however, this is a start to creating shared language as a community.

Active listening is about making a conscious effort to hear and understand someone else. When we actively listen, we demonstrate concern, limit our interruptions, and ask open-ended questions. We commit all our attention to the speaker and establish an environment of trust and judgment-free engagement (Younger, 2023).

Belonging is mutual power, access, and opportunity among all groups and individuals within a shared community (such as a society, organization, club, etc.). Operationalizing belonging requires that all groups and individuals can contribute to and impact the community to which they seek to belong. Their contributions and impact may entail a profound transformation of the community itself, beyond the mere inclusion of individuals within them (CMU Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging).

Brave spaces are learning environments in which the primary purpose of the interaction is a search for the truth, rather than support for a particular group, even insofar as some of the discussions will be uncomfortable for students, or other participants (Palfrey and Alberto, 2017).

Civility is the foundation of interpersonal interactions and experiences at CMU. It is the ability to engage others with respect and dignity even in the face of differences or disagreement. To do civility well, we must be community-centered and historically conscious, engage in cultural humility, and be in constant pursuit of knowledge and healing.

Conflict can be a misstep in collaboration and community building (Mediators without Borders). Other working definitions:

- ▶ 1. Conflict can be a lack of acceptance of ourselves that we project onto others, blaming someone else for what we perceive as failures in our own lives—diverting attention from our mistakes (Mediators without Borders).
- ▶ 2. Conflict can represent a boundary violation, a failure to value or recognize our own integrity and therefore the personal space of others (Mediators without Borders).
- ▶ 3. Conflict can be the sound made by the cracks in a system; the voice of the new paradigm calling for change in a system that has outlived its usefulness (Mediators without Borders).
- ▶ 4. Conflict is an opportunity and a request for authenticity, acknowledgement, intimacy, empathy, understanding, growth, or learning; in other words, a request for a better relationship (Mediators without Borders).

Conflict transformation is a comprehensive approach that addresses personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of conflict, using the potential for conflict as a catalyst for positive change in all these areas. Instead of seeing conflict as a problem to be managed and resolved, the process of conflict transformation evokes, embraces, and explores differences (Beyond Intractability).

- ▶ 1. **Conflict transformation** is the art of turning animosity, hatred, and domination into...

...a spirit of collaboration, creativity, and community (Beloved Community).

Community guidelines—also known as aspirations, norms, ground rules—give each group member a framework for respecting and understanding each other's opinions and lived experiences (The Program on Intergroup Relations).

Cultural competence is...1) Knowledge, awareness and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, and responsiveness to cultural differences and the interactions resulting from them. The particulars of acquiring cultural competency vary among different groups, and they involve ongoing relational process tending to inclusion and trust-building. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity) 2) A process of learning that leads to the ability to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of social cultural diversity in a defined social system. (The National Multicultural Institute).

Cultural humility is the ongoing commitment to self-reflection and self-critique, examination of one's own beliefs and identities, and intentional engagement in learning from, with, and about others (University of Oregon Division of Equity and Inclusion).

Debate is a competitive, two-way conversation. The goal is to win an argument or convince someone, such as the other participant or third-party observers (Schmidt and Pickney, 2022). Discourse is the practice of listening and speaking on a topic of shared interest or concern with intention to promote understanding, knowledge-building, and community engagement (Schmidt and Pickney, 2022).

Dialogue is a cooperative, two-way conversation. The goal is for participants to exchange information and build relationships with one another (Schmidt and Pickney, 2022).

Empathetic listening takes active listening to the next level because it requires us to make an emotional connection with another person and search for common ground that will enable us to...

...respond in a meaningful way (Younger, 2023).

Evaluative listening is when we make a judgment about what another person says. This active listening style requires us to compare what we're hearing with what we already know or believe to be true and make careful inferences as a result (Younger, 2023).

Global listening is when listeners are aware of multiple things in the room, notice how others respond, and pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues and engagement (The Program on Intergroup Relations).

Healing is capacity building: when we attend to healing, we expand our ability for ourselves, our organizations, and our movements to evolve and grow, and it ensures that change is sustainable, grounded, and rooted in community needs, desires, and dreams (National Equity Project).

High conflict is a conflict that becomes self-perpetuating and all-consuming, in which almost everyone ends up worse off. Typically, an us-versus-them conflict (Ripley, 2021).

► **1. Paradox No. 1 of High Conflict:** we are animated by high conflict, and we are also haunted by it. We want it to end, and we want it to continue (Ripley, 2021).

► **2. Paradox No. 2 of High Conflict:** no one will change in the ways you want them to until they believe you understand and accept them for who they are right now (and sometimes not even then) (Ripley, 2021).

Historical consciousness in the context of civility, it is the awareness of past frameworks of exclusion that are still shaping the present realities for members of our community. Historical consciousness also acknowledges the critiques of civility and how it has been used to silence minoritized populations (Woodson, 2018).

Inclusion is the notion that an organization or system is welcoming to new populations and/or identities. Each new presence is not merely tolerated but expected to contribute meaningfully to the system in a positive, mutually beneficial way...

...inclusive processes and practices strive to bring groups together to make decisions in collaborative, mutual, and equitable ways (CMU Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging).

Intergroup dialogue is a sustained, structured process focused on exploring specific social identity category (race, gender, etc.). Members from two or more social identity groups (people of color, white people, etc.) meet regularly over a period of time to explore new perspectives and ways of understanding with the goal of addressing issues of discrimination, oppression, and social inequity (The Program on Intergroup Relations).

Interpersonal healing is facilitated by storytelling, listening to, and believing in one another. It is a conscious intention to reconnect to our ancestors, to Mother Earth, to one another and to ourselves (National Equity Project).

Institutional healing involves an intentional, shared, and explicit commitment to creating a more loving, just and resilient system. Healing at the institutional level is about acknowledging harm and restoring agency throughout the system (National Equity Project).

Power of binary is the dangerous reduction of realities or choices into just two. For example: Black and White, good, and evil, Democrat and Republican (Ripley, 2021).

Psychological safety means feeling safe to take interpersonal risks, to speak up, to disagree openly, to surface concerns without fear of negative repercussions (McKinsey & Company).

Reflective listening is a communication strategy involving two key steps: seeking to understand what another person is saying and then repeating what we think we heard back to them to confirm that we understood correctly (Younger, 2023).

Restorative practice is a field within the social sciences that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. (International Institute for Restorative Practice).

Voice refers to the ability to engage in meaningful conversation, to make a difference through what one says, and to have a say in key decisions (Beyond Intractability).

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