



SAFE INTRODUCTIONS

Lived-living experiences disclosure is the communication process in which persons who have a specific life experience may divulge details or personal information about an event, experience, or situation. This is a common occurrence in mental health, recovery, substance use, suicide prevention, and across social fields, but just because it is common, it does not indicate a best practice approach to how or what we disclose and when.

In public, professional, or less intimate spaces, individuals should be mindful of the impact their personal sharing may have on others. In introductory settings, lived-living experiential narratives can sometimes feel abrupt, “out of the blue”, overwhelming, and/or emotionally heavy. This can leave some participants navigating their emotional wellbeing while trying to mentally process information and present themselves in a professional manner.

While disclosure is a strong connective process that can create a sense of shared understanding and trust, it is important to be able to differentiate when to disclose what information, especially when considering the wellbeing of those with whom you are interacting.

QUICK TIPS

- Hosting or facilitating persons or organizations should decide before meetings what the purpose of the conversation is and set appropriate boundaries for introductions.
- When meetings or conversations are more “technical”, hosts may prefer to introduce participants by focusing on technical expertise and brief titles. This provides general context without oversharing information that could steer the conversation away from the meeting’s purpose.
- If a meeting or gathering is more relational or engagement-focused, hosts or facilitators may want to model a limited safe disclosure that highlights key areas of lived-living experiences without detailing specifics or personal information.
- Modeling happens best when team members first explain the expectations, then demonstrate them by sharing as individuals, and finally by allowing other hosts or facilitators to follow suit before handing introductions over to external or non-informed participants.
- Hosts or facilitators can limit overdisclosure or unsafe disclosure by creating time limitations around introductions.
- Hosts or facilitators can limit overdisclosure or unsafe disclosure by clearly outlining key sharing that might help participants better understand who is participating and what their backgrounds may be.
- Before introductions begin, be sure to set expectations around anonymizing the names of others or organizations to avoid sharing personally identifiable information.



QUICK TIPS

- Meeting expectations should not be that participants cannot disclose, but that it is important to understand potential impacts of personal disclosure.
- Should a participant overshare concerning information, it is important not to negatively respond to or dismiss the information.
- Hosts or facilitators can express emotional support for the participant who shared and follow up with this individual in a supportive way at the end of any meeting or conversation to model person-centered care.



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Remember, when hosting, facilitating, or convening, setting up how the space operates and how people can show up is a key consideration. When cultivating spaces where people with lived experiences may be present, hosts should remember the responsibility they have for creating safety and ensuring participants are able to be their full selves while also fostering wellbeing. Consider how you can check on your group as participants share and engage. Provide all participants access to appropriate resources and are give them opportunities to connect, should they feel the need.

Safe disclosure isn't about censorship or limiting what people share, but ensuring that everyone who is interacting has a chance to learn what works best for the overall group and each individual's needs. As we get to know one another, we learn where our sharing boundaries can be expanded because we grow together intentionally.



SAMPLE SCRIPTS

MODELING TECHNICAL MEETING INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone, we are excited to be sharing space with you all today to talk about our project and how each of us can contribute to this work. Before we begin, we'd like to take a moment to set some expectations around the purpose of this conversation. One thing to keep in mind is that the meeting today is focused on achieving a working goal. As such, we'd like to learn a bit more about each of you and the technical expertise you are bringing to this collaboration.

If you feel comfortable, please share your name, where you work, and how you envision your expertise enhancing the work we hope to accomplish together.

As you share, we'd also like to remind everyone that we all bring a variety of backgrounds and experiences to this table, and while we look forward to getting to know each of you more as we work together, we do want to ensure we introduce ourselves using safe-disclosure practices for the purpose of this conversation.

MODELING RELATIONAL MEETING INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone, we are excited to be sharing space with you all today. We are excited to learn more about each of you and what brings you to this conversation today.

If you feel comfortable, please share your name, a brief highlight, and one thing you might be hoping to gain from this conversation.

As you share, we'd also like to remind everyone that we all bring a variety of backgrounds and experiences to this table, and while we look forward to getting to know each of you more, we do want to ensure we introduce ourselves using safe-disclosure practices for the purpose of this conversation. We ask that as you introduce yourself, you be mindful of what you may share and how it might impact the people in the room. We encourage you to bring forward anything that feels comfortable, while also keeping in mind how what you share might affect anyone who is here today.

