

Tools for Standing In Curiosity

Standing in curiosity is a foundational tool for creating mutual respect and accountability, and resolving conflicts. Here is a quick overview of this approach, and a brief introduction to a few tools that follow and support the curiosity approach.

- **Mutual respect is grounded in curiosity** – wanting to know/understand the other person, not assuming you know what is happening for them, or that a behavior means the same thing if they are doing it than it would if you were doing it.
- **Remember that “I don’t understand” means you need more information**, or a different perspective; start from there.
- **Let go of judgment** (of others and of yourself) – focus on learning and on finding creative solutions, not on figuring out who is right and who is wrong.
- **Try asking “what” questions rather than “why” questions** when you are noticing what appears to be disrespectful, defensive, stuck, or unproductive/shut down behavior. (See related handout.) If you are uncertain what to ask, perhaps start with:
 - What were you intending?
 - What is hard about that for you?
 - What would make this easier/better? Or What would work better for you?
 - What had/has your attention?
 - What do you need?
 - What are you concerned about?
 - What are you thinking/what is your opinion/perception?
 - What are you assuming?
 - What do you want?
 - What would make it fun?
 - What would make it easy?