Navigating Difficult Conversations Around Bias

Leading
WITH VALUES

Goals of this Seminar:

- Identify and discuss common challenges members face in difficult conversations surrounding identity.

- Discuss key ideas related to unconscious bias and microaggressions in the chapter member experience.

- Apply Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework and related tools to conversations around bias and microaggressions.

Fraternity Values:

- Honor & Respect

- Personal & Intellectual Growth

- Sincere Friendship

Suggested Facilitator:

- Vice President Inclusion

- Director Community Inclusion

Room Setup/Materials Needed:

- Projector and computer to display graphics and videos.

- Programming space that accommodates discussion groups of 4-5 members

Getting Started:

- The facilitator should review all components of the seminar prior to facilitating to ensure they are comfortable with the content, including the resources below.

  - Inclusive Language Guide | Pi Beta Phi Resource Library (Resource)

  - [An Introduction to Intersectionality](#) | *To The Point* (Blog Post)

  - [Project Implicit](#) | Harvard University (Self-Assessment)

  - [Bias is Natural...](#) | *The Conversation* (Blog Post)

  - [Finding Confidence in Conflict](#) | Kwame Christian via TEDxDayton (Video)

  - [How to Have the Hardest Conversation of Your Life](#) | Ramit Sethi & Sheila Heen (Video)

- Talking points are wrapped with quotation marks (❝ ❞). Use these as speaking guidelines but feel empowered to use your own voice to make the presentation authentic.

- Facilitation instructions are indicated by *italicized font*. These are tips and tricks you might find helpful when facilitating the content but shouldn't be said aloud.

- Most importantly...have fun! The more excited and engaged you are, the more participants will be.

Part 1: Introduction to Challenging Discussion around Identity, Inclusion and Belonging

Part 2: Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions in the Chapter Member Experience

Part 3: Understanding the Challenges of Difficult Conversations

Part 4: Using Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework

Part 5: Final Recap & Wrap Up

Part 1: Introduction to Challenging Discussion around Identity, Inclusion and Belonging

Introduction to Challenging Discussion around Identity, Inclusion and Belonging

❝Welcome! Today, we are going to focus on navigating difficult conversations around identity, inclusion and belonging.

Our goal as members is to foster an environment where we all feel we have voice, are valued, feel validated and can fully participate in the Pi Phi member experience—no matter your role, member class or background. We know with this will come mistakes, but the way we respond to mistakes is critically important.❞

Objectives

❝Our objectives are to...

- Identify and discuss common challenges in having difficult conversations around identity and inclusion

- Understand key concepts, such as unconscious bias and microaggressions

- Apply Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework to these conversations.

We know this topic can be challenging to discuss and want to assure you there is no expectation for any of us to be experts. The true expectation is for all to be open and active in the discussion. Today's conversations will cover some important topics, and to make the

most of our time together, we will lean on our values of Honor and Respect to engage openly.

The following shared commitments are important to ensure this discussion is valuable and engaging for all.❞

Shared Commitments

❝Our shared commitments are…

- **Lessons leave, stories stay:** We will carry forward insights from today but honor the fact that personal stories shared aren't our own. Therefore, we should not share specifics of anyone else's story beyond this room.

- **Embrace openness and honor varying perspectives:** Everyone is coming forward with unique lived experiences that may not align with our own, and that is OK. We are here to listen and learn.

- **Assume positive intent:** As learners we are likely to make mistakes, and that is understood. We expect everyone here wants to strengthen our Pi Phi community, so we will offer each other grace in this experience.

Now, let's kick things off with a brief activity to get our brains activated!❞

Social Identity Wheel Activity

❝Social identity is how the world sees us and how many of us view ourselves. It is a part of our self-concept that comes from our membership into certain social groups, cultural backgrounds, age and what we may do as a hobby—to name a few examples.

Understanding our social identity helps us navigate our social world more effectively. It also influences our relationships, our values and even our goals. Social identity wheels are tools that can help us better understand ourselves and provide helpful language when discussing identity and inclusion.❞

Ask each member to pair up with a partner and review the identities on the social identity wheel depicted in Identity Wheel graphic.

Instruct the pairs to share identities on the wheel that are most important when describing themselves, as well as one challenge they have personally faced in a conversation about identity or inclusion. Give some examples, such as mistakenly assuming something about someone's identity or a tough conversation about a difference in opinion rooted in your identity.

Provide 5-7 minutes for members to pair up and discuss. Facilitate a short discussion where members share key takeaways as they are comfortable. Offer to share your example first to help set the tone.

The wheel contains the following identity categories (clockwise from top): Ethnicity, Socio-Economic Status, Gender, Sex, Sexual Orientation, National Origin, First Language, Physical, Emotional, Developmental (Dis)Ability, Home Town, Visible Piercing/Tattoo, Home Structure, Social Media Followers, Size, Age, Religious or Spiritual Affiliation, Race, Education, Gender Expression.

Processing Question

Allow time for responses. Remember, it is ok if no one has anything to share and affirm that it is ok to your group!

- What are some challenges we've faced surrounding identity?

❝One thing we all have in common is that conversations about who we are come up for everyone. Whether you're in the salon, at the gym, at work or maybe in your membership in Pi Phi, these conversations naturally emerge when we talk to people!

Now that we've heard some initial thoughts about identity and challenges that sometimes come with those conversations, let's discuss how biases and microaggression can creep into

those conversations.**”**

CONTINUE

Part 2: Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions in the Chapter Member Experience

Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions in the Chapter Member Experience

❝Inclusive language is an important part of understanding others and demonstrating our readiness to empower one another.

Pi Phi's Inclusive Language Guide is a resource for members to assist in personal understanding and development. Let's take a few minutes to define two terms that will help us explore this next concept.❞

Defining Microaggression & Unconscious Bias

Microaggression ―

Microaggression is verbal, non-verbal or environmental insults—regardless of intention—that communicate hostility or negativity to the targeted group—commonly groups that are marginalized.

- Example: "You speak so well for someone of your background!"

- Example: Choosing to not sit next to someone or make eye contact because of their appearance

Unconscious Bias   —

Unconscious bias—or implicit bias—is automatic, unknowing attitudes, behaviors and actions that are prejudiced in favor of or against one person or group compared to another.

- Example: Unconsciously assuming someone's ability based on their appearance or background

"Another way to look at unconscious bias is understanding that we are fighting our brain's natural need to categorize information. Categorizing information is an important aspect of how our brain functions; and without it, we wouldn't be able to navigate the world around us.

We are inundated with information all day every day, and our brains only consciously process a small percentage of that information. These shortcuts our brains make unconsciously can be helpful; but sometimes, like in cases of unconscious bias, we must stop and ask ourselves why we've made that association that is biased toward a specific group or person.

Let's watch this quick video that gives us an example of this."

Processing Questions

Allow time for responses. Remember, it is ok if no one has anything to share and affirm that it is ok to your group!

- Can you think of an unconscious bias that you've personally experienced or witnessed?

- Have you ever experienced or witnessed microaggression? How did it make you feel during and after?

- Have you ever been told you committed a microaggression? What was your reaction?

- Why is it important for us to recognize and address unconscious biases and micro aggressive behavior?

Scenario Activity

❝Both unconscious bias and microaggression communicate negative and hostile messages and are important to recognize to prevent from occurring in our chapter experience.

For some, it may be challenging to identify occurrences of bias or microaggression. This could be because the behavior is common—or because it hasn't been called out. This next activity will allow us to review scenarios that help us better understand what this could look like in our chapter.❞

INSTRUCTIONS	SCENARIO 1: APPEARANCE & PERSONAL EXPRESSION	SCENARIO 2: LANGUAGE & INCLUSIVITY	SCENARIO 3: SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCE

Present the scenarios and allow five (5) minutes for review and processing.

Depending on time allotted for your workshop, you may choose for all members to review all scenarios or assign scenarios to groups of 4-5 members.

INSTRUCTIONS	SCENARIO 1: APPEARANCE & PERSONAL EXPRESSION	SCENARIO 2: LANGUAGE & INCLUSIVITY	SCENARIO 3: SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCE

During a recruitment event, a senior member makes a comment to a Potential New Member about their choice of hairstyle, stating, "Your hair looks so exotic! It must be a lot of work to maintain."

Despite the senior member's well-meaning intention to compliment the PNM, the comment unintentionally exoticizes their appearance, reducing them to a stereotype rather than appreciating their individuality and personal style.

INSTRUCTIONS	SCENARIO 1: APPEARANCE & PERSONAL EXPRESSION	SCENARIO 2: LANGUAGE & INCLUSIVITY	SCENARIO 3: SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCE

During a casual discussion about campus involvement, a member remarks to another member who is an international student, "Your English is so good! How do you manage it all?"

This seemingly benign comment unintentionally otherizes the international student's experience, revealing a lack of awareness and cultural sensitivity among peers.

Pi Beta Phi prides itself on promoting inclusivity and sisterhood among its members, but recent discussions have revealed challenges related to socioeconomic diversity within the chapter. During a chapter meeting focused on upcoming philanthropic activities, the topic of fundraising for a local community literacy project arises.

Sophie, a sophomore member whose family struggles financially, suggests organizing a low-cost button sale on campus to maximize profits. She emphasizes the importance of affordability to ensure participation from students with varying financial backgrounds. However, some members express concerns about the perceived quality of items sold at a lower price, fearing it might reflect poorly on the sorority.

Meanwhile, Emma, a senior member from a more affluent background, proposes hosting a gala event at an upscale venue, highlighting the potential for higher donations from wealthy campus alumni and community members. She argues that a more prestigious event would elevate the sorority's reputation and attract larger contributions, despite acknowledging the higher costs involved.

As the discussion unfolds, tensions surface regarding differing perspectives on fundraising strategies influenced by socioeconomic status. Members from less affluent backgrounds advocate for inclusive and accessible events that prioritize community engagement over financial prestige. In contrast, those from more privileged backgrounds emphasize the potential for larger donations and social prominence through upscale events.

Processing Questions

Allow time for responses. Remember, it is ok if no one has anything to share and affirm that it is ok to your group!

- What bias or microaggression is present in your scenario(s)?

- Are these scenarios similar to something that you've witnessed or heard in your Pi Phi experience?

"From these scenarios, I think we can all agree that both bias and microaggression are difficult to address, even if it is something we've all experienced both in our sorority experience and everyday lives.

Keep these scenarios in the back of your mind. We will revisit these later."

CONTINUE

Part 3: Understanding the Challenges of Difficult Conversations

Understanding the Challenges of Difficult Conversations

❝We've agreed that conversations about identity, bias and microaggressions can be challenging. What makes these conversations difficult?❞

Common Challenges

Fear of saying the wrong thing... —

Example: A member hesitates to speak up during a sensitive discussion about race because they worry about unintentionally offending someone.

Not knowing how to respond... —

Example: Someone is unsure how to comfort a friend who just experienced a significant loss and ends up saying nothing due to feeling inadequate in providing the right support.

An unpleasant previous experience... —

Example: A student avoids participating in discussions about mental health because they were once ridiculed for sharing their own struggles openly.

Deeply personal feelings are involved... —

Example: A colleague remains silent during a brainstorming session about workplace improvements because the topic touches on their experience of workplace discrimination, which is emotionally charged for them.

Processing Question

Allow time for responses. Some examples might include differing perspectives about an issue, assumptions around intent, unresolved feelings and focusing on blame.

- What other challenges and examples can we add to this list?

Small Group Discussion Activity

Next, we are going to break into small groups and have a discussion that helps normalize the challenges and feelings associated with difficult conversations.

INSTRUCTIONS | DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Encourage participants to form groups of 4-5 and allow five (5) minutes for review and processing.

INSTRUCTIONS	DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Think about a time when you've witnessed or participated in difficult conversations around identity, microaggression or instances of bias.

- What made that specific conversation(s) challenging?

- How did you or others approach the conversation(s)?

- What actions were taken and words shared?

- What lessons did you learn from the conversation(s)?

"Conversations around identity and bias are challenging because they often require us to think outside our comfort zone and listen and consider perspectives that may differ from our own. Acknowledging we all have experienced challenging discussions is an important step.

Now, we will discuss strategies that will help us as we continue to grow in our ability to navigate challenging conversations."

CONTINUE

Part 4: Using Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework

Using Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework

❝Challenging conversations, especially about identity, inclusion and belonging are difficult. They can be even more difficult without the knowledge and tools needed to listen and engage responsibly and respectfully.

Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework takes best practices from industry leaders and positions them in a way for us to use when faced with any type of conversation—but especially difficult conversations.

Let's review the components of Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework.❞

Pi Beta Phi's Listening Framework

Listen   —

Ask: Actively inquire about others' thoughts, feelings and experiences to gather information and insights.

- Example: Asking open-ended questions like, "What are your thoughts on this issue?" encourages deeper responses.

Hear: Pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal cues to understand the message being communicated.

- Example: Noticing someone's body language and tone of voice can provide clues about their emotional state.

Be Receptive & Responsive: Create an environment where others feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and concerns.

- Example: Having an open-door policy for leaders or regular feedback sessions fosters a culture of openness.

Learn   —

Analyze: Evaluate the information gathered to identify key points.

- Example: After listening to viewpoint(s), analyze common threads or areas of divide to gain insight.

Contextualize: Understand the background and circumstances that influence others' perspectives.

- Example: Considering historical events or personal experiences that shape someone's viewpoint

Seek to Understand   —

Empathize: Put yourself in others' shoes to appreciate their emotions and viewpoints.

- Example: Acknowledging someone's feelings by saying, "I understand why you feel that way," demonstrates empathy.

Familiarize: Educate yourself about different perspectives and cultural contexts to broaden your understanding.

- Example: Learning about cultural practices or social norms helps in appreciating diverse viewpoints.

Engage   —

Acknowledge: Validate others' contributions and perspectives to show respect and appreciation.

- Example: Recognizing someone's input during a meeting by saying, "That's an important point, thank you for sharing," encourages further engagement.

Communicate: Clearly convey your own thoughts and actively participate in discussions.

- Example: Expressing your ideas succinctly and listening to others' responses fosters constructive dialogue.

Participate: Take proactive steps to contribute to meaningful exchanges and collaborative efforts.

- Example: Engaging in group activities or volunteering for projects demonstrates commitment to shared goals.

“This framework is shown as a continuous loop because effective listening requires consistent commitment. This framework has already been used to strengthen the Fraternity's communication skills and will continue to inform our work moving forward.”
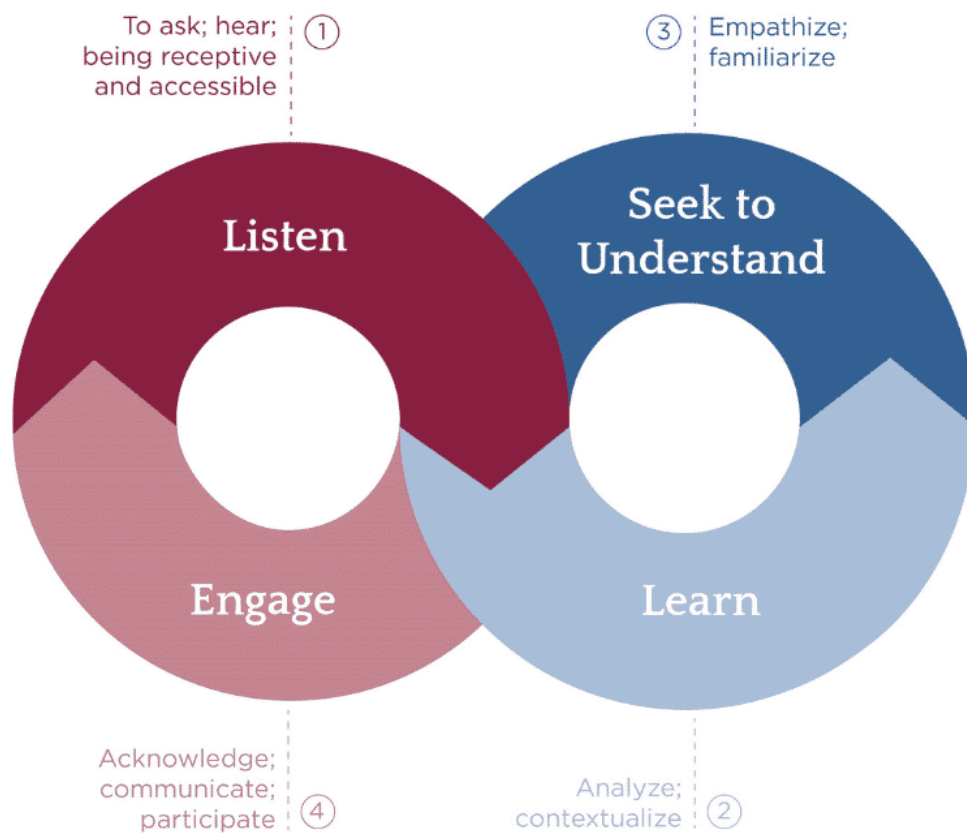
Scenario Activity Revisited

❝So, what does this really mean in action? And how can we use this when approaching challenging discussions around instances of bias and microaggression?

Let's revisit our scenarios from earlier today.❞

INSTRUCTIONS	SCENARIO 1: APPEARANCE & PERSONAL EXPRESSION	SCENARIO 2: LANGUAGE & INCLUSIVITY	SCENARIO 3: SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCE	D

Reintroduce the scenarios and allow five (5) minutes for review and processing.

If small groups were utilized for the initial activity, encourage those groups to re-form.

Then, read the discussion prompts aloud.

INSTRUCTIONS	SCENARIO 1: APPEARANCE & PERSONAL EXPRESSION	SCENARIO 2: LANGUAGE & INCLUSIVITY	SCENARIO 3: SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCE	D

During a recruitment event, a senior member makes a comment to a Potential New Member about her choice of hairstyle, stating, "Your hair looks so exotic! It must be a lot of work to maintain."

Despite the senior member's well-meaning intention to compliment the PNM, the comment unintentionally exoticizes her appearance, reducing her to a stereotype rather than appreciating her individuality and personal style.

INSTRUCTIONS	SCENARIO 1: APPEARANCE & PERSONAL EXPRESSION	SCENARIO 2: LANGUAGE & INCLUSIVITY	SCENARIO 3: SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCE	D

During a casual discussion about campus involvement, a member remarks to another member who is an international student, "Your English is so good! How do you manage it all?"

This seemingly benign comment unintentionally otherizes the international student's experience, revealing a lack of awareness and cultural sensitivity among peers.

Pi Beta Phi prides itself on promoting inclusivity and sisterhood among its members, but recent discussions have revealed challenges related to socioeconomic diversity within the chapter. During a chapter meeting focused on upcoming philanthropic activities, the topic of fundraising for a local community literacy project arises.

Sophie, a sophomore member whose family struggles financially, suggests organizing a low-cost button sale on campus to maximize profits. She emphasizes the importance of affordability to ensure participation from students with varying financial backgrounds. However, some members express concerns about the perceived quality of items sold at a lower price, fearing it might reflect poorly on the sorority.

Meanwhile, Emma, a senior member from a more affluent background, proposes hosting a gala event at an upscale venue, highlighting the potential for higher donations from wealthy campus alumni and community members. She argues that a more prestigious event would elevate the sorority's reputation and attract larger contributions, despite acknowledging the higher costs involved.

As the discussion unfolds, tensions surface regarding differing perspectives on fundraising strategies influenced by socioeconomic status. Members from less affluent backgrounds advocate for inclusive and accessible events that prioritize community engagement over financial prestige. In contrast, those from more privileged backgrounds emphasize the potential for larger donations and social prominence through upscale events.

Using the Listening framework, how would you approach the situation outlined in the scenarios?

- How would you Listen, Learn, Seek to Understand and Engage in the scenarios?

- Was there any aspect of the framework that felt challenging to apply to the scenario? What felt comfortable?

- Is there anything else you would add to how you may approach navigating difficult conversations like these?

- Are there other types of situations this framework may be helpful to use?"

❝ These are examples of how complex discussions around identity can be with sisters, and using the Listening Framework allows us to navigate them with increased confidence.❞

CONTINUE

Part 5: Final Recap & Wrap Up

Final Recap & Wrap Up

❝Thank you for participating today. Though these conversations can be difficult, we can lead by example in confronting these challenges. By fostering awareness, promoting inclusive practices and encouraging open dialogue, we can strengthen our chapter and create an environment where all members feel heard, valued and respected.

Remember, no one is exempt from bias. We all have a chance to continue to learn and grow.

Taking proactive steps to address unconscious bias and microaggression, while using our Listening Framework as a tool, not only enhances our personal bonds but also reinforces Pi Beta Phi's commitment to building a strong and inclusive and sisterhood.❞

Post-Program Survey

Provide the following link to four members of your chapter—one from each class. You and those four members will complete the Leading with Values seminar survey to provide feedback to Pi Beta Phi.

🔗: pibetaphi.org/lwvfeedback

FINISH