How to Facilitate the Diversity Continuum Activity

Goals: Encourage Risk Taking, Willingness to Listen, Respectful Disagreement, Self-Awareness

Instructions:

1. Post the AGREE, NEUTRAL, and DISAGREE signs on the wall

2. Read the “Ground rules” included in this document

2. Ask students to stand along the continuum based upon their answers to the statement below. Notify students that this is a safe space and they will not be judged or evaluated based on their answers.

3. After each statement is read ask participants to volunteer to share why they chose to stand where they are at on the line

4. After students have shared why they chose to stand where they are, ask them to reflect quietly on whether they might have answered differently if able to answer the question anonymously
Ground rules:

1. **TRY ON:** What we mean here is that even if we don’t initially like an idea, activity, suggestion, etc. that we give it a try anyway. We may decide in the end that it is really not for us, but we know because we have tried it, not because we were predisposed against it.

2. **OKAY TO DISAGREE:** In the dominant culture, we are led to believe that one side of any polarity must be right and thus the other is wrong – so we keep at each other until everyone agrees. But disagreement isn’t usually about right and wrong – it is usually about difference. And differences, simply, are.

3. **NOT OKAY TO BLAME, SHAME OR ATTACK (OTHERS OR SELF):** We think there’s enough of this already. Why add more? It does not help us to stay open to the challenge of changing ourselves.

4. **USE A SELF-FOCUS:** Especially when we are working across difference, there can be a tendency to speak for others. Each of us needs to speak for ourselves.

5. **HONOR CONFIDENTIALITY:** When having sensitive conversations, it’s critical to respect every person’s privacy by not taking what was said and sharing it out of context.
Statements:

Comfort Level: Pretty Comfortable
1. As a college student, I feel it's important to meet new and interesting people and learn from their stories.
2. I believe BU is comprised of a diverse group of people (students, faculty, and staff).
3. I believe incoming students should be matched with a roommate they do not know.
4. I believe all BU students should study abroad.
5. I believe college students should be required to learn about and discuss issues of race, socioeconomic class, gender, and sexuality.

Comfort Level: Challenging
1. I believe that international students have an easy adjustment to BU.
2. I believe that first-generation college students have an easy adjustment to BU.
3. I believe BU is accessible to applicants from all socioeconomic backgrounds.
4. I believe a person's success is based entirely on merit and hard work.

Comfort Level: Tense
1. Language such as retarded, ghetto, that's gay, thug, and lame are acceptable phrases to use in everyday conversational slang.
2. I believe racism is overall a thing of the past in the United States.
3. I believe violence can be an acceptable tactic to enact social change.