

BRAVE SPACES

NAVIGATOR TOPIC GUIDE

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What is a brave space?

A brave space is an inclusive environment in which all team members feel they belong and actively participate. Establishing a brave space allows team members to express themselves and challenge one another in positive ways.

A 15-minute meeting?

The Journey for Teams educational modules are designed for a 15-minute block because veterinary workplaces are busy! We recognize that 15 minutes is not a ton of time to discuss brave spaces in depth. After the meeting, we hope the team will be inspired to explore this topic further as a team or individually. We invite everyone to check out Dr. Cary’s recommended resources at the end of this guide.

Let’s begin!

Refer to the [Navigator Handbook 1.0](#) and the steps below to help you lead and facilitate discussion about brave spaces.

1 To begin the meeting, welcome everyone to the room by name.

2 Remind the group that the culture of a Journey for Teams meeting embodies engagement, open-mindedness, respect, and compassion.



ENGAGED



OPEN-MINDED



RESPECTFUL



COMPASSIONATE

3  Play the “Brave Spaces” video.

- 4 Read aloud the 3 take-home messages from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide:

Everyone plays a part in creating a brave space.

While leadership endorsement and support are critical, everyone can help create a brave space. When challenges, situations or opportunities arise, we are ALL either part of the solution or part of the problem.

These 5 “ingredients” are foundational to brave spaces.

- Authenticity & vulnerability
- Empathy
- Getting comfortable with being uncomfortable
- Growth mindset
- Radical candor

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

If you don't stretch beyond your comfort zone, you aren't open to growth beyond your current world view. Lean into the discomfort and have tough conversations to develop new perspectives, ideas, and approaches.

- 5 Ask for 1-2 comments on the take-home messages. Try to keep it brief to respect the 15-minute time commitment.

- 6 Read aloud the 2 questions from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide.

Question for the team:

What can we continue to do, or do differently, to ensure that all team members feel that they belong and are valued? These ideas can be big picture, but they can also be small things that make a difference in your workplace on a day-to-day basis.

Spend a maximum of 5 minutes discussing the team question.

Question for individual self-reflection:

No need to share answers or thoughts with anyone.

When is the last time you felt uncomfortable? Identify something that you learned from the situation that helped you expand your understanding or change your perspective.

The most important part of the meeting

7 As a team, decide on **1 actionable and measurable behavior change** to implement in your workplace. Consider 1 from the list below, or come up with your own idea.

- Search the web for a “workplace inclusivity assessment” that would work best for your team. Ask everyone to confidentially answer questions about your current workplace environment. Discuss the results as a group and agree on some changes to improve inclusivity.
- Take a closer look at how you conduct meetings. Consider: inviting all team members to contribute agenda topics, taking turns facilitating the discussion, having a stated meeting purpose, ending the meeting on time, and ensuring everyone knows who will do what by when.
- Include the topic of inclusivity as a standing agenda item at monthly staff meetings. What are we doing well as a team, and what can we do better?

Our actionable idea

8 Invite the team to self-reflect. Team members have the option to consider and commit to **1 personal behavior change** (no need to share them with anyone).

- Do something that is out of your comfort zone (volunteer in your community, introduce yourself to someone you see regularly at the gym, share something personal with a coworker). Think about what you learned by doing something new and a bit uncomfortable.
- Choose to be purposely empathetic by listening to others and providing support without feeling the need to always offer a solution.

9 **Thank everyone for contributing, and congratulate yourselves on how much you accomplished in 15 minutes!**

RESOURCES

AVMA Brace Space Certificate Program:

<https://axon.avma.org/local/catalog/view/product.php?productid=125>

Brown, B., & Guillen, B. (Hosts). (2022, November 17). Building brave spaces [Audio podcast episode]. In *Dare to Lead with Brené Brown*. Brené Brown, LLC.

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/building-brave-spaces/>

Cary, M. (2021, August 31). How inclusive is your workplace?

<https://caryconsulting.com/inclusiveworkplace/>

Praslova, L. N. (2022, June 2021). *An intersectional approach to inclusion at work*. Harvard Business Review.

<https://hbr.org/2022/06/an-intersectional-approach-to-inclusion-at-work>

Radical Candor. (2016, August 15). *Radical Candor – improve your in person, impromptu feedback* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFquOnOHCcE>

RSA. (2013, December 10). *Brené Brown on empathy* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

Twill. (2015, December 7). *Why mindfulness is a superpower: an animation* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>

The inclusion of resources by this author does not imply or constitute an endorsement by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the Veterinary Medical Association Executives.