

Respectful Conversations

Resources

- [Kid President Is Over It](#) video (5:09)
- [Respectful Conversations](#) video (4:05)
- [Respectful Conversations \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)

Identities & Themes

- Friendship
- School success

Summary of Resources

This lesson will help students understand how they must work together with you and each other as a community of learners in order to:

- have their needs met in the classroom.
- create a brave space for them to bring their whole selves to class and to the AmazeWorks discussions.

The Invitation to a Brave Space poem (original words by Beth Strano, adapted by Micky ScottBey Jones) can be a great way to start conversations about how to create a brave space where students can have respectful conversations. It helps to unpack the difference between a brave space and a safe space when establishing the norms/guidelines for respectful conversations in your classroom.

While both videos are lighthearted and use humor, they discuss some important guidelines/tips for discussion, and students will likely be able to relate to the scenarios portrayed.

[Kid President Is Over It](#) video (5:09) - In this video, Kid President gives some tips for how to disagree with people in a discussion.

[Respectful Conversations](#) video (4:05) - In this video, improv actors use humor to model important agreements to consider when having discussions with others.

Before You Teach

The difference between a Brave Space and a Safe Space

- Identity safety means that a person is safe to bring their full selves and identities to a space.
- Safety does not necessarily mean comfort. These discussions will push students out of their comfort zones, and that is okay! Students can and must rise to the challenge of engaging in honest dialogue about identity, difference, and bias.
- In a brave space, students are willing to stretch out of their comfort zones in order to grapple with new perspectives and ways of interacting with and thinking about their peers and the world around them. Students must be brave in order to be vulnerable and honest.
- In a brave space, students own their intentions and their impact.

(from [“From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice”](#) by Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens.

It is important for educators and students to keep in mind that building a brave space in your classroom is a year-long process. It is also important to talk with your students about how to repair relationships and the learning community when harm is done, regardless of intent.

Teacher Reflection Questions

- Can you think of a time when you were brave in being vulnerable in a conversation or discussion about identity, difference, and bias? How did this feel? What helped you to be brave?
- What might be holding your students back from stretching out of their comfort zones and being vulnerable? Which of your students might feel unsafe in class discussions?
- How can you be brave through your own discomfort during these discussions with your students?

- Who can you reach out to for support when responding to your discomfort or worries?

Materials Needed for Lesson

- [Respectful Conversations \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- [AmazeWorks Brave Space Discussion Guidelines](#)
- Ability to project a video/slideshow

Process of Implementing

- Project the [Respectful Conversations \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#).
- Introduce the lesson.
- **Slide 2:** Read the poem, “Invitation to a Brave Space” out loud.

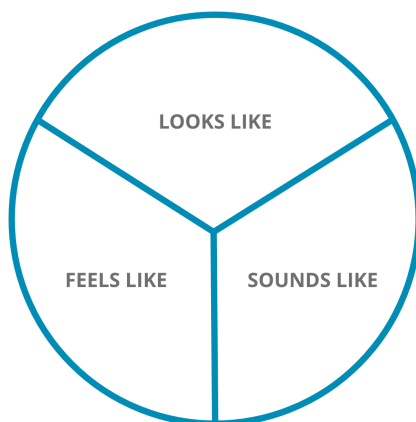
Invitation to a Brave Space

Original words by Beth Strano, adapted by Micky ScottBey Jones

Together we will create brave space
Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”
We exist in the real world
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.
In this space
We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,
We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,
We call each other to more truth and love
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.
We will not be perfect.
This space will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
But
It will be our brave space together,
and
We will work on it side by side

- *Ask: What is the difference between a safe space and a brave space for discussing the topics of differences, bias, prejudice, stereotypes, and identity?*
 - Identity safety means that a person is safe to bring their whole selves and identities to a space.
 - Safety does not necessarily mean comfort. These discussions will push students out of their comfort zones, and that is okay! Students can and must rise to the challenge of engaging in honest dialogue about equity, identity, and diversity.
 - In a brave space, students are willing to stretch out of their comfort zones in order to grapple with new perspectives and ways of interacting with and thinking about their peers and the world around them. Students must be brave in order to be vulnerable and honest.
 - In a brave space, students own their intentions and their impact.
- **Slide 3:** Show the [Kid President Is Over It](#) video (5:09)
 - Ask:
 - *What are some tips from Kid President that might be useful in a disagreement?*
 - *When it comes to creating a brave space for discussions, why is it important to pay attention to how we disagree with others?*
- **Slide 4:** Show [Respectful Conversations](#) video (4:05)
 - Ask:
 - *How do the agreements in the video reflect the difference between a safe space and a brave space?*
- Create two Y-charts or tables on the white board, interactive white board, or poster paper, or project the image on **slide 5**.
 - *Ask: What does respect look, sound, and feel like to you **at home**?* Record student responses on the first chart/table. You may need to prompt students more here. Perhaps ask them to think about respect between kids and adults/elders or between siblings and cousins, or give students some examples to get them started.
 - Then ask, *What does respect look, sound, and feel like to you **at school**?* Record student responses on the second chart/table.

Respect LOOKS like...	Respect SOUNDS like...	Respect FEELS like...



Discussion Questions

*Essential questions are in bold.

- **What similarities and differences do you notice about respect at home compared to respect at school?**
 - **How and why might respectful ways of interacting vary depending on the situation and environment?** (Classroom vs. school lunchroom vs. at home vs. at church/mosque/temple/religious institution)
 - How might respectful ways of interacting vary depending on our backgrounds, families, or cultures? Why is it important to recognize this?
 - **What are ways we can challenge each other or disagree in a respectful way?**
 - **What are ways that we can respectfully respond to challenges, disagreements, and hurtful impacts?**
 - What is the difference between a challenge and an attack, especially since both can elicit defensive reactions?
- We will be looking at, thinking about, confronting, and discussing some challenging topics and ideas about differences, bias, prejudice, stereotypes, and identity. Some of these topics may bring up tough things for us personally, and we need to create a safe space that invites people to bring their full selves to the class and a brave space so we can have open, honest dialogue and challenge ourselves to take risks. We must be willing to change our perspectives and ways of thinking about ourselves and others.

- *Let's brainstorm some classroom discussion guidelines for our discussions.* As the teacher, you can either suggest ideas based on themes you see or have students generate their own ideas. Next, pass out the [AmazeWorks Brave Space Discussion Guidelines](#) and review them with students. Your class can choose to adapt or adopt the AmazeWorks Discussion Guidelines or keep the guidelines they created together.
- *These are the AmazeWorks Brave Space Discussion Guidelines. Do you want to adopt these or stick with what we've come up with on our own?*
- Post the AmazeWorks Brave Space Discussion Guidelines in your room, and refer to them regularly, especially in the first weeks.

Follow-Up Activities

- Invite students to engage in a practice conversation about a fun topic, like the second video. You could set up a "fishbowl" in which volunteers engage in the conversation while other classmates observe and offer feedback/suggestions at different points in the conversation. Refer back to the Y-charts created earlier.
- Ask students to compare the two videos in pairs, identifying which conversation tips were the same and how the two different videos approached them. Providing a graphic organizer for comparing (like a Venn diagram) might help.

Condition for Belonging: Relationships

ABE Connection

Empathy and Understanding

You as an adult learner will:

- Increase your ability for perspective-taking by being responsive to another person's feelings and frames of reference.
- Foster positive social connections between students and their families across all differences.

Students will:

- Expand their capacity to understand, name, and process their own emotions.
- Increase their ability for perspective-taking by being responsive to another person's feelings and frames of reference.
- Foster positive social connections with peers across all differences.

Healthy, Complex Identities

You as an adult learner will:

- Increase awareness and understanding of your own social identities and cultural contexts, both past and present.

Students will:

- Explore their varied social identities and lived experiences.

*Language borrowed and adapted from Derman-Sparks et al. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020.

SEL Connection

Self-Awareness

Demonstrate & practice:

- Perspective taking
- Listening & communication skills
- Relationship between feelings, thoughts, behaviors, & judgements/bias

Social Awareness

Demonstrate & practice:

- Awareness of strengths in self & others
- Reflective listening
- Recognizing family, school, community resources & cultural competence

Relationship Skills

Demonstrate & practice:

- Building relationships with diverse individuals & groups
- Listening & communication skills