

Teaching Sensitive Topics

Dr. Audrey Thompson and Rachael Valentz, MSN, RN

Steps for preparing to teach sensitive topics

- Spiritually prepare
- Identify personal values (self-awareness)
- Pre-class disclaimer
- What is the intent? Impact or knowledge building
- Understand *there are other* perspectives – attempt to create safe learning environment.
- Expect emotional distress
- Be willing to self-disclose

Strategies to use in the classroom

- Establish environment of respect with reminders throughout class(ground rules or guidelines for conduct)
- Identify a clear purpose for discussion of topic
- Faculty awareness of audience with sensitivity to emotion
- Allow flexibility with participation
- Demonstrate active listening
- Collect relevant data during discussion
- Acknowledge unresolved question
- Provide unscheduled breaks
- Be sensitive to use of humor
- Provide opportunity for reflection (directed and undirected)
- Actively facilitate
- Summarize

How to manage “hot moments”

The OTFD steps

- **Observe:** Concrete, factual observations of situation
- **Think:** Thoughts based on observation (yours and/or theirs)
- **Feel:** Emotions using “I statements”
- **Desire:** Specific request for desired outcome

Ideas for Guided Reflection

- How does your point of view affects others?
- What are points of agreement?
- Are you impacted from opposing points of view?
- How are you impacted from opposing points of view?
- How do you maintain respect for peers with opposing points of view?