



## DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS COPING STRATEGIES LIST

These strategies can be used to help you regulate your emotions and be productive in conversations when you find yourself experiencing difficult emotions.

### STRATEGIES TO CALM YOUR BODY:

- Focus on your breath: Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 7 counts, and exhale for 8. (Repeat at least 3-5 times.) Or try square breathing. Imagine tracing a square while you inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, and hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Tense your muscles, count to 5, and then release. Repeat, as needed.
- Get out of your head and into your body. Touch objects around you and notice the sensations—put your hand on the table; feel your feet on the ground; notice where your legs are resting on the chair.
- Excuse yourself to take a quick break. Go to the bathroom; splash cold water on your face; step outside briefly walk down the hall; take a sip of water, etc.
- Set an intention. Ask yourself—“What really matters in this moment?”
- Engage your 5 senses. What can you hear? What do you smell? What do you taste? What do you feel? What do you see?

### STRATEGIES FOR PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS:

- Call people “in” not “out.” If someone offends you, tell them what is offensive to you and how it makes you feel.
- Use “I Statements.” Share what you feel and believe, instead of what you think the other person feels and believes.
- Turn to empathy. Let the other person vent and focus on just listening rather than proving that you are right.
- Be intentional about your language. Think about both the intent (what you mean) and the impact (how it is experienced and understood by others) of the language you use.