



USC University of
Southern California

Marine and Environmental Biology

URGE POD Code of Conduct

Understanding and changing the problem of racism in STEM requires deep thought and personal conversations. We need trust to have these conversations. To cultivate a safe environment where everyone feels they can share and be vulnerable without fear of judgement or offensive, rude, or otherwise hurtful reactions, we have established a code of conduct for the MEB URGE Pod. All participants are expected to read and strictly adhere to the following ground rules:

1. Be kind, and treat others with the utmost respect: The Golden Rule. We will be discussing challenging topics. Agree that we can be comfortable falling forward.
2. Treat all contributions with respect. Do not dismiss people or their ideas.
 - a. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds and therefore have different knowledge bases and experience so don't judge.
3. Welcome feedback and be comfortable with receiving criticism. Work to avoid getting defensive. It's ok if you need to step away to reflect.
4. The use of positive emoji's as a show of solidarity, empathy, a nod is encouraged. Zoom makes it difficult to perceive facial expressions and gestures of support. A zoom silence after a comment can have a negative impact.
5. Reflection time and silence is ok.
6. Challenge the idea, not the person.
7. Work to be open-minded and not to make assumptions of others.
8. Zoom etiquette:
 - a. Avoid distractions:
 - i. Please eat off camera
 - ii. Mute yourself if there are distracting sounds in the background
 - b. Again, use of positive emojis are welcome and encouraged.
 - c. Give people time to sit with thoughts - embrace the silence
 - i. Use chat if you do not want to speak up.
 - ii. Idea here is not to rush people into speaking
 - iii. Indicate a positive opinion through emoji/chat
 - d. Do not privately message during the meetings

9. All comments and contributions should be intended for learning. Absolutely no mal intended criticism, comments.
10. Don't speak over another person.
 - a. Delays due to zoom make it difficult, but try your best to wait until someone is finished making their point.
11. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing.
 - a. "I experience x,y,z".
 - b. Taking ownership of your own perspectives.
 - c. Avoid generalizations.
 - d. Avoid spinning/editorializing other individuals' experiences.
12. Work to gain understanding, and not to make an idea right or wrong.
13. Step up, step back - be aware of how much space you have been taking in the conversation (e.g. if you've been quiet, step up; if you've been talking, step back)
14. No rank in the room (we leave our power dynamics behind us)
15. Approach discussion with engaged humility
16. Be open to stepping outside of your comfort zone when discussing challenging topics
17. Be an active listener
18. Commit to doing the homework (readings, interviews)!!
19. No back-seat driving
20. No sarcasm
21. No "well-actually's"
22. No subtle -isms (i.e., subtle nods to racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, and other kinds of bias)
23. It is everyone's responsibility to speak up if uncomfortable.

Unacceptable Behavior:

1. Excessive swearing. Excessiveness may be different for different groups.
2. Incitement to violence, suicide, or self-harm
3. Publication of private communication without consent
4. Sustained disruption of talks, events or communications
5. Insults or put-downs
6. Written or verbal comments which have the effect of excluding people on the basis of membership of any specific group causing someone to fear for their safety, such as through stalking, following, or intimidation.
7. Violent threats or language directed against another person