“Our Community” Conversations—Tips for one’s personal and community spheres of influence

This is a categorized and anonymous list of self-care and community-care techniques that MSU colleagues shared at the four “Our Community” facilitated conversations in February and March, 2018.

Personal Sphere of Influence

Physical activity
- Make time for physical health
- Exercise or go to the gym
- Do yoga
- Go for a hike, walk or run
  - around our beautiful campus
  - with the dog
  - with a friend

Nutrition
- Drink more water
- Eat healthy foods in alignment with your dietary and nutritional needs

Take time to rest and relax
- Breathe, pause and take calming breaths
- Get enough, good quality sleep
- Find ways to decompress
- Unplug from electronics at least once a week
- Write in a journal
- Watch movies
- Find ways to laugh more
- Meditate, center yourself and/or block out quiet time
- Use vacation time
- Try a hobby, event or other activities that you enjoy
- Practice self-care during the work day
  - Do not eat lunch at your desk or in your office
  - Enjoy music
- Practice mindfulness and be present
- Allow yourself to grieve and let emotions surface
- Bake for your colleagues, friends or family

Treat yourself
- Get a massage or book a spa day
- Date night with your significant other
- Buy yourself flowers or other special treats
- Travel for pleasure or go on adventures
Find your strength
- Never underestimate your opportunity and ability to lead in change
- Find and use your voice
- Ask for help
- Speak up about injustices
- Take risks
- Lead more and take action
- Learn to manage your time
- Be an example
- Take action
- Take pride in your own work
- Work with your supervisor on positive solutions and open staff discussions
- Continue to support your colleagues
- Work on a diversity and inclusion committee or project
- Support students in any way you can – they are the change-makers
- Be timely in follow up to students and staff on concerns raised
- Anticipate how your actions and words may impact others
- Promote/maintain a safe space for those around you
- Speak up and speak out

Find ways to connect
- Volunteer more
- Talk to students
- Spend time with friends, family or others who uplift you
- Gather with others with shared values
- Collaborate with others
- Attend sessions and share what you learn with others
- Help others and look out for your team
- Have an open mind
- Forgive
- Be accountable and hold others accountable
- Reach out to youth in the community and get involved in supporting them

Focus
- Focus on your own work, projects and goals
- Stay away from the rumor mill
- Consider how much time you spend watching the news obsessively
- Focus on things you can change/influence
- Focus on students

Get help
- Ask for more resources, educational meetings and training to do your job
- Ask for help and counseling when needed
Set boundaries
- Don’t say “yes” to everything
- Reduce the use of social media
- Acknowledge disappointment and look for ways to move forward
- Give yourself grace when you can
- Realize that sometimes you will need a break

Learn
- Keep learning new things and educating yourself and others
- Read and research for fun
- Embrace new opportunities, committees, service projects and training programs
- Attend sessions offered
- Learn more about university policies and structures
- Seek out resources

Stay positive
- Think positively, look for positivity in others and avoid negativity
- Use encouraging self-talk; minimize criticizing and condemning
- Find and write down one to two things to be grateful for every day
- Say five good things about yourself every day
- Celebrate successes
- Be the change you wish to see
- Encourage others to participate
- Laugh at the office
- Remind yourself that you have great co-workers

Communicate
- Speak up and share
  - Speak up for myself and others
  - Talk with co-workers
  - Talk with support system
  - Talk about feelings
  - Express concerns and challenging conversations in a constructive manner
  - Ask questions
  - Listen to others’ feelings
  - Take risks and speak up in meetings
  - Seek to build understanding
- Facilitate conversations and mentor students to help them feel hopeful, and remember you do make a difference
Community Sphere of Influence

Encourage and show compassion / Treat yourself
- Care and show respect for others
- Say a kind thing to a stranger
- Empower students and be more responsive to student concerns
- Empower those around you with hopefulness for a brighter future
- Say “thank you”
- Be an ally
- Be honest and authentic
- Be open minded; avoid judgement
- Support others and encourage others to do the right thing, participate and speak
- Ask for input in decisions that affect them
- Allow people to share frustrations
- Listen and ask others about feelings and opinions
- Let others know that they matter
- Surround yourself with those who truly care for you
- Provide more time and space to listen

Get involved / Take action
- Motivate yourself and others
- Set a good example
- Speak up even when it’s uncomfortable
- Participate in discussion forums and turn discussions into action steps
- Lead and engage in efforts for inclusion and diversity
- Volunteer or get involved in a group, organization, coalition, event or community
- Use your talents
- Donate money
- Imagine new community-oriented projects
- Engage

Connect
- Make new friends
- Join in open dialogue and events with colleagues and friends
- Collaborate and connect with colleagues from other disciplines
- Share a meal with others
- Ask others about items important to them
- Help others as you are able
- Rally together

Focus
- Keep showing up and focus on your work
- Be present
- Offer the best version of yourself
o Be an example of integrity and model ideal behavior; make decisions with integrity
o Start with the assumption that the intention of others is good
o Challenge yourself and those around you to do the right thing
o Small changes also have an impact; think about steps for actions to be realized
o Be aware

Learn / Educate
o Help others understand inclusive practices
  o Bring resources to faculty about inclusive classroom
  o Developing new training on inclusive community
o Research
  o Research proven methods to improve
  o Build research group focused on MSU policies & processes
o Provide resources
  o Share resources and spread awareness
  o Share information/resources
o Be curious and stay informed
o Learn and teach others
  o Volunteer to train others/students on appropriate behavior
  o Attend APA sessions
  o Do a UAB event for students
  o Get certifications to improve your ability to help
  o Keep teaching service learning
  o Mentor someone
o Spread knowledge, not extremism on social media
o Go to meetings/events of groups you wouldn’t usually attend to get new perspectives

Stay Positive
o Be positive and share positive experiences
o Dream and share the dreams
o Seek positive conversations about the state of MSU
o Have an outstanding outlook for the future

Communicate
o Tell people stories – both hopeful and disappointing parts
o Write/publish about inclusion
o Open dialogue with action plan
o Host open office hours/study hours
o Listen
  o Listen to people’s stories
  o Listen more; talk less
  o Listen with intent so that people feel heard
o Let the community hear your voice/opinion
o Offer transparency always
o Create opportunities to talk/connect at work
- Attend events to facilitate discussions
- Take advantage of feedback sessions
- Provide opportunities for critical conversations
- Expand MSU dialogues

- Speak up
  - Speak up; challenge when you see something that is not right
  - Speak your values to administration
  - Share info and ideas
  - Talk to administration and trustees
  - Promote accountability/transparency at all campuses, not just MSU
  - Interrupt: bias; injustice; flawed thinking

- Ask
  - Ask questions
  - Ask for others’ opinions
  - Ask others to imagine the MSU of our dreams

- Share
  - Be open and honest about issues and concerns
  - Talk to people in your religious group, family, friends or organization
  - Have one-on-one conversations
  - Talk to Community Mental Health
  - Show solidarity with others