

Restorative Responses to Harms You've Caused

ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

Listen & Make Space

- Pause, breathe, and resist the urge to defend
- Make space for their emotional response
- Let them share the impact without the burden of having to explain

Express Gratitude for Shared Vulnerability

- Their feedback is a gift
- Acknowledge the risk they take in giving feedback

Acknowledge the Harm You Caused

- Identify your role in the harm
- Name the impact of your wrongdoing
- Focus on the framework that allowed the harm
"I realize my fear of conflict made me overlook that racist comment."

Identify a Plan to Repair & Prevent Further Harm

- "I understand how I messed up and I will _____ to address these issues."
- "Moving forward, I will change _____ and educate myself on _____."

Consult Allies

- Don't put more labor on those harmed
- Research to better understand the issues
- Examine the issues that allowed the harm
Self-reflect and take responsibility for change
- Work through your guilt, shame, or resistance to the feedback

Revisit the Issues

- Repairing the harm often requires multiple attempts to build trust over time
- Check in with others, not just those who identified the harm
- Ask "While I work on addressing the issues, would you like to revisit this?"

Do NOT

- Name your proximity to the harmed
"But I have Black friends!"
- Center your feelings
Cries "I'm so hurt you think I could do this."
- Name all you've done so far
"I'm the first person to..."
- Focus on intent
"That's not what I meant!"
- Focus on your character or evade your (in)action
"I'm not the type of person who..."
- Qualify your apology with "BUT" or "IF"
*"I'm sorry if you feel offended."
"Sorry BUT..."*
- Critique their reaction to the harm you caused
*"If you calm down, I could better understand you..."
"I feel attacked!"*

