Let’s have open, honest, & healthy conversations about COVID-19 and the vaccines.

Together, we can create opportunities on our campuses to help faculty, staff, and students speak freely about their thoughts, fears, and concerns surrounding COVID-19 without feeling stressed, uncomfortable, or judged.

#NoJudgmentTN is a campaign designed to reduce the anxiety and stress associated with talking about COVID to others.

NOTES
Using the “Tips for a Judgment-Free Conversation”, think of a conversation you have had before and write down what you would say to this person now.

Conversation Answer Key

Conversation 1: Answer: A
Everyone needs to feel they’re being heard, and that their fears and concerns are valid. Repeating and summarizing their concerns non-judgmentally shows you’re listening to them.

Conversation 2: Answer: A
Asking curious, open-minded questions about someone's thoughts/opinions is a good way to get a non-judgmental conversation going.

Conversation 3: Answer: B
It’s always helpful to show areas of agreement—that you both were nervous about the same thing. Asking to share something in the context of what helped YOU also feels like less pressure.

Conversation 4: Answer: C
Gently highlighting if there is a part (even a small part) of what someone is saying that shows they might be open to change is helpful and can encourage reflection.

LET’S KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING!

WE INVITE YOU to visit our website to learn more, gather resources, and get started.

NOJUDGMENTTN.ORG

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Tips for a Safe, Judgment-Free Conversation

You can create opportunities to help your colleagues, friends, and family speak openly about COVID-19 without feeling anxious, stressed, or uncomfortable. Remember, we’re all in this together! Let’s take care of each other.

Start by Listening
Listen fully and empathetically to what the other person is saying, without immediately offering solutions or judging.

Reflect Back What You Heard
Reflect back what you heard to ensure that whoever you’re speaking with knows you’ve been listening and that they have been understood.

Seek to Understand
Don’t assume you understand someone else’s fears or beliefs - ask them genuinely! Understanding where someone is coming from is a key starting point.

Share Personal Stories
Personal stories told authentically have huge power. Although someone might disagree with your opinion, no one can argue with your experience! Look for ways to highlight stories from your own life.

Highlight Areas of Opening and Agreement
We often agree on more than we realize. Always look for and highlight areas of unity. If it feels okay, try gently pointing out areas where someone might be open to change (even a little).

Ask What Could Help
A simple approach, asked with genuine curiosity, is often the most helpful tactic. If someone is dealing with a tough decision, try asking what could help them feel understood or supported.

Explore Resources Together
It’s almost always better to learn with someone, rather than lecturing them as if you know better. Look for ways to discover resources together as a team.

Lead with Support Over Persuasion
Instead of trying to change a person’s mind, offer support in ways that invite the person to consider and think about their beliefs.

Be Patient, Not Pushy
Most complex topics will take time for people to think through, understand, and feel comfortable discussing. Don’t push - this can backfire! Most people need time and space to marinate on tough topics.

Let’s Put What We’ve Learned Into Practice!
Review these sample conversations and select the best responses.

CONVERSATION 1
>> Hey! How are you? I just got my booster. I know you haven’t been on board with the vaccine. How are you feeling about it now?
<< Hey! Still the same. I’m young and healthy. Even if I do get COVID, I probably won’t get very sick.

WHICH RESPONSE DO YOU THINK IS BEST?
A: I hear you, and you’re right. The likelihood of a healthy, young person being hospitalized, or even dying, if they get COVID is pretty low.
B: Stop being so selfish! Don’t you know that, even if you don’t get really sick, you might infect someone else?
C: Do you even know what the actual numbers are? Young people have been put on ventilators too!

CONVERSATION 2
I rarely get sick. Why should I risk getting the vaccine when it might not even be safe?

WHICH RESPONSE DO YOU THINK IS BEST?
A: Wow! You’re lucky you don’t get sick a lot. I’m always catching something. I’m curious why you think the vaccine may not be safe.
B: The vaccine is safe and effective. COVID vaccines have had some of the most intense safety monitoring of any vaccine in history. What am I missing?
C: Where are you getting your news? Always check the sources when you read things online. I’ll send you some reliable articles.

CONVERSATION 3
I just don’t want to jump into anything unsafe. There are so many posts about this. How do we know they didn’t cut corners when they were so rushed?

WHICH RESPONSE DO YOU THINK IS BEST?
A: Yeah, but there are people with advanced degrees working on this. We just have to trust that they are doing their jobs!
B: Totally agree - I was nervous about that, too! It’s something so new you’re putting in your body. Can I share one thing that helped me feel okay about it?
C: But how much do we really know about most stuff we put in our bodies?

CONVERSATION 4
Have you seen all the people complaining about side effects from the vaccine? Some say it’s worse than actually having COVID! Plus, the vaccine was developed so quickly. Obviously, I don’t want to get sick, but I just don’t know about these shots.

WHICH RESPONSE DO YOU THINK IS BEST?
A: Well, actually it wasn’t that fast. They started working on a similar vaccine in 2003 when SARS happened.
B: Honestly, I get that you’re scared. But part of me wishes you would just suck it up and get the vaccine. We’ll never get to herd immunity at this rate.
C: That makes sense, but it sounds like part of you would be okay with the vaccine but another part of you thinks it’s scary and not worth it. What would make you feel better about getting the shot?