

# Welcome!

**Feel free to grab what you need to stay centered today!**

Examples may include:



Something to keep your hands busy!

Paper and something to write with



Something that smells nice

Something delicious



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# Understanding Communication

## Santa Ana Building Healthy Communities

Facilitator:

Mayra A. Serna, MA

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# Who is CCEJ?

- We are the **California Conference for Equality & Justice**, founded in 1963 to serve SoCal & now serve a national audience
- We use a **head, heart, and hands model** to impact knowledge, experiences, and actions
- **In 2020, CCEJ trained over 4,266 people** across 25 Nonprofit/ Community Groups, 27 K-12 Schools, 8 Colleges/Universities, and 5 Companies

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# Who is your trainer?



Mayra A. Serna

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# Training Series

- **Session 1: Understanding Communication (Tuesday, September 6)**
- Session 2: Leaning into Conflict (Tuesday, September 13)
- Session 3: Calling in Harm (Monday, September 19)

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# Today's Objectives

- Assess our individual and collective communication styles
- Strengthen individual and collective readiness to communicate honestly
- Reflect on the role social identities can have on communication about emotions



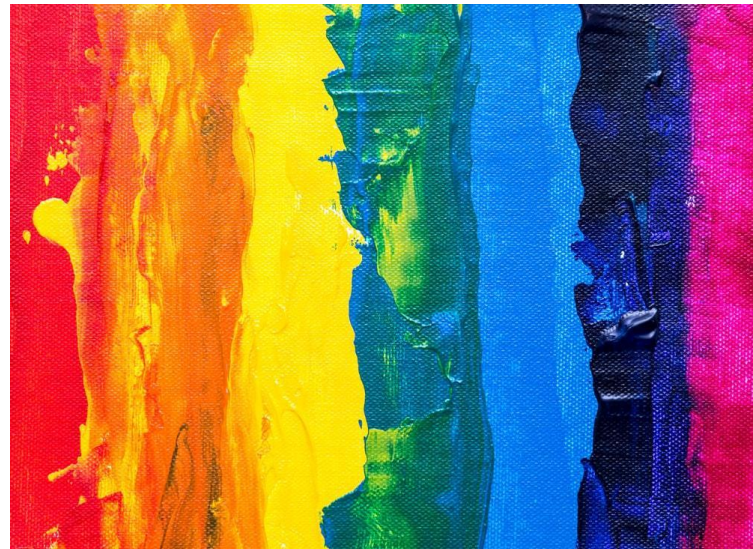
Art by Felipe Baeza





# Why do we share Gender Pronouns?

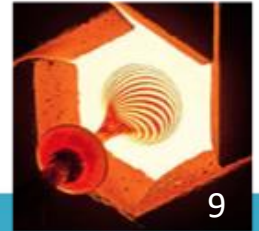
- **We don't want to make assumptions** about how people identify or describe themselves.
- **We want to welcome and share labor with gender non-conforming and transgender people** by normalizing sharing pronouns.
- **We want everyone to be able to show up in their full humanity.** Sharing pronouns is one small way to work toward making that a reality.



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# Which image best represents how you feel today?



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# Restorative Justice Values





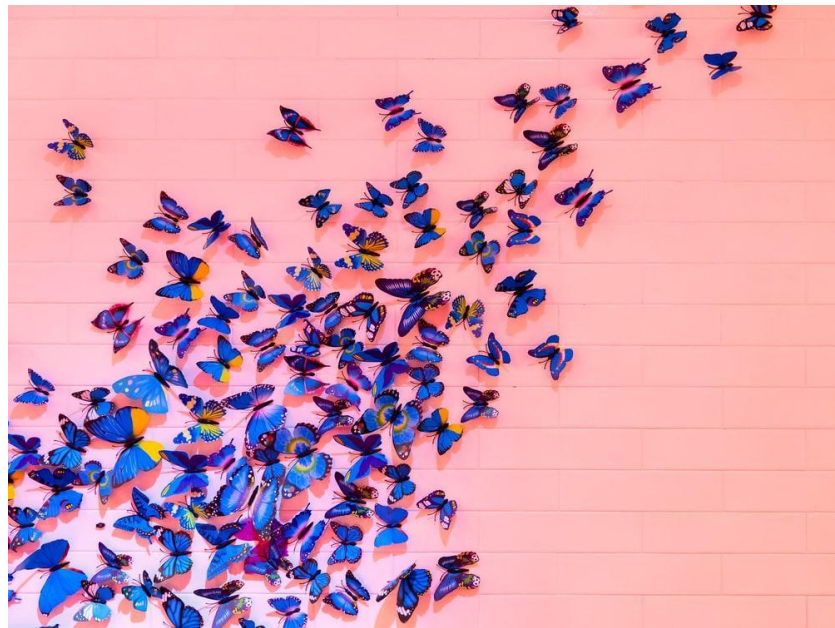
# Communication Guidelines

- Respect
- Speak for Myself
- One Mic
- Make Space, Take Space
- Honesty
- Always Ok to Pass
- Use Correct Gender Pronouns
- Don't Yuck My Yum
- Be Mindful of Time
- Intent and Impact
- Try On
- Be Present
- Confidentiality
- Others?

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# Looking Back Pair Shares

- Name & Gender Pronouns
- In my family, communicating about emotions looked like...
- Growing up, during moments of stress and conflict, emotions I saw people express were...



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# Communication Tree Styles

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# Communication Tree Styles



## Oak

Driver, Leader

### Strengths

- ✓ Likes to be in control of relationships
- ✓ Quick to act
- ✓ Probes and presses

### Growth Areas

- ✓ Autocratic
- ✓ Defensive
- ✓ Pushes others beyond limits
- ✓ Not aware of feelings



## Sequoia

Big Picture, Visionary

### Strengths

- ✓ Sees the big picture
- ✓ Idea oriented
- ✓ Future- focused
- ✓ Develops solutions

### Growth Areas

- ✓ Loss of energy on task
- ✓ Time boundaries difficult
- ✓ Not detail-oriented
- ✓ Lack of dependability
- ✓ Head in clouds

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# Tree Communication Styles



## Cedar

Evaluation, Follow-Up

### Strengths

- ✓ Thinkers
- ✓ Keepers of tradition
- ✓ Relies heavily on data & logic
- ✓ Thorough
- ✓ Methodical
- ✓ Follows systems & procedures

### Growth Areas

- ✓ Stubborn
- ✓ Entrenched in position
- ✓ Collects unneeded information
- ✓ Resists emotional pleas
- ✓ Withdrawn
- ✓ Resists change



## Willow

Process, Relationships

### Strengths

- ✓ Supportive
- ✓ Trusting of others
- ✓ Invites others in
- ✓ Accepting of others at face value
- ✓ Allows others to feel important

### Growth Areas

- ✓ Has trouble saying “No”
- ✓ Assumes blame
- ✓ Easily disappointed if relationships are 2nd to task
- ✓ Easily taken advantage of

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## Small Group Discussion

Why did you choose this tree? What characteristics resonated most? Least?

What are the strengths and challenges of this communication style for you?

What are strengths and challenges you encounter with other communication styles?

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# Large Group Discussion

How does your tree help describe how you act when you're experiencing strong emotions when you are with family and community?

How do you think your identities impact your communication style and how you express your emotions?

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# Take a Break 😊

Try out one of these stretches!





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# What does activation feel like?

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# Activation Word Association: Instructions

- We will click through a series of images designed to elicit responses in us. Some images may be intense for us, others might feel neutral.
- For each round, we will ask you to **share one word in the chat** without spending a lot of time thinking about it. Imagine we're just engaging in word association – *What's the first thing that pops in your head?*
- There is no right or wrong way to feel or respond.
- Although this activity is designed to be activating, we also want you to take care of yourselves. If you need to be off camera or abstain from a round, that's fine.

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# Activation

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# Activation



- How our nervous systems respond to different stimuli with energy, attention, or tension
- Can indicate a need we have that's not being met
- Can be somewhat or completely subconscious
- All of our experiences, socialization, media, lineages, and trauma impact how our bodies react to stressors and stimulation.

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## Activation shows up in our bodies as:

- Sensation
- Emotion
- Temperature changes
- Impulse to move or shut down
- Subtle mood shifts
- Subtle energy shift
- Thoughts firing off
- Tightness, contraction, numbness
- Defensiveness, immediate arguments or excuses forming
- Changes in breath
- Increase in heart rate

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Adapted from Thirdspace Somatics





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# Self-Reflection: Activation

## REFLECT

How does activation show up in your body?

## SHARE

How can being aware of what activation feels like, help you navigate when it happens?



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Art by Hiba Schahbaz



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# Conditioned Responses

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## Conditioned Responses

- When we are activated or stressed, we all have go-to responses that help us survive and/or manage the experience.
- We all practice a mix of responses, and some of us stay really mindful and balanced often.
- Most of us have some stress style habits that can sacrifice connection in the toughest moments.

TOWARD

AGAINST

AWAY

SHUT DOWN

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# TOWARD

Moving towards conflict or problems to fix, or try to make people feel better

“I can fix this by being really nice or performing well”

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AWAY

Moving away from conflict  
or problems, avoidance

**“I don’t have to stick  
around for this BS!”**

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# AGAINST

Fighting back against  
problems, oppositional  
responses

**"You'll need to get it together  
before I get it together for  
you!"**

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# SHUT DOWN

Numbing, daydreaming,  
not feeling anything,  
waiting out conflict or  
challenges

**"Nothing is wrong here  
lalalalala"**

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# What conditioned response do you go to most when you are stressed or activated?



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# Conditioned Response Reflection

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# Conditioned Responses: Reflection in Small Groups

What conditioned response did you identify with most?

In what ways does this style serve you in stressful situations?  
How has it been helpful in your life?

In what ways might this style have a challenging or negative impact on your experience in conflict or on your relationships?

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## Conditioned Responses: Reflection in Large Group

How does your conditioned response relate to your tree communication style, if at all?

What differences exist between your tree communication style and your conditioned response in conflict?

What went into your self-assessment for both your tree communication style and your conditioned responses? What situations were you thinking about?

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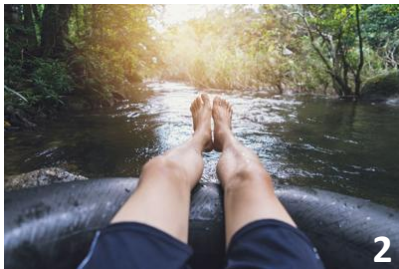
# CLOSING

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# Which image best represents how you feel leaving today?



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