

## **ISM Conversation Guidelines**

2021-2022

During the 2020-2021 academic year a set of communication parameters were developed by a group of ISM students, faculty, and staff to foster a welcoming and respectful environment and to encourage the sharing of different perspectives and opinions when the ISM community gathers for Colloquium or other educational events.

Every community member bears responsibility for taking these guidelines to heart in our community conversations.

1. Be present. Avoid distractions, listen actively and engage in good faith, including when discussion moves into debate.
2. Make space and be open for different kinds of conversations. Communicate directly, with respect, and ask for clarification when needed. Allow for conflict and non-resolution within this space.
3. Let different voices be heard. This may sometimes mean being quiet; it may sometimes mean speaking up. Be open to challenge and vulnerability, but take care of yourself, too.
4. Speak from the “I” perspective. Remind yourself to speak from your own perspective and lived experience while allowing others to do the same. Be mindful to flag whether you are or are not speaking representationally.
5. Listen to understand, not to respond. Notice your own defensive reactions and attempt to use these reactions as entry points to deeper understanding and self-knowledge.
6. Acknowledge if you may have said something that was hurtful or insensitive to someone else. No matter your intention, you also bear responsibility for your impact.
7. When you are unsure about how to engage with someone on a topic, listen, reflect, or simply ask them questions to understand better. We all have things to learn about how to treat each other.
8. There are often power dynamics and imbalances in our interactions. Listen intently for the signs of this in yourself and others. Be aware of your own social positionality as you engage with others. Make space for others to feel more psychologically safe in the room.

*~ Updated August 2021 based on input from Town Hall discussion on April 26, 2021.*