



# Facilitating Necessary Spaces

For inclusive community Engagement

**Ayesha Hall | Office of Innovation | Director of Strategic Partnerships**



# Our Priorities

Inspire **TRUST** in our organization, and in our public education system

Develop, support, and sustain a robust **EDUCATOR WORKFORCE**

Promote **EDUCATION, EXCELLENCE**, and EQUITY for all Maine learners

Ensure **STUDENT** and **SCHOOL SAFETY, HEALTH**, and WELLBEING

Support a **CULTURE OF INNOVATION** and CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Build **HEALTHY** and **COLLABORATIVE** work environment, ENHANCING the potential of the Maine DOE.



Whole Student  
Frameworks

## Mission in Action



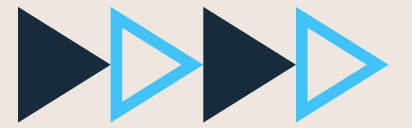
**Promote the best learning opportunities for all Maine students by:**

- Focusing on a whole student approach
- Encouraging innovation
- Respecting and supporting educators
- Providing guidance, professional learning, and resources
- Ensuring equitable funding across schools
- Inspiring trust in our schools

## Shared Vision

- A Vibrant and respected educator workforce that innovates, leads, and inspires.
- Learning environments that are safe and supportive for all.
- Clear pathways to success in school and in life for every student.
- Schools as trusted community centers that foster civic participation and strengthen Maine's economy.
- Schools that nurture the potential for all to lead purposeful lives.





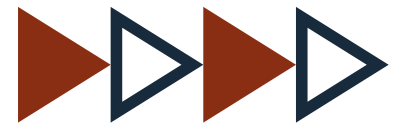
# What You'll Get out of this session

By the end of the session, you will:

- **Experience** facilitation strategies that create safety and courage.
- **Apply** those strategies to real scenarios from Maine schools and communities.
- **Design** your own Necessary Space you can bring back to your SAU, classroom, or partnership tables.



“ Necessary Spaces are where equitable community engagement begins. ”



- Welcome & Framing (15)
- Scenario Lab 1: Real tensions (30)
- Strategies Deep Dive (30)
- Break (10)
- Scenario Lab 2: Complex practice (30)
- Design Your Necessary Space (20)
- Closing Commitments (10)

## HYBRID PD

In-room discussion  
+ online breakouts  
Shared Mentimeter activities  
Real-time synthesis  
visible to all  
Material access  
for later

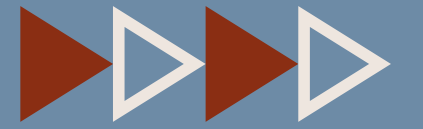


# Today's Agenda





# What do we mean by “Necessary Space”?



*Brave Space-Holding Environments-Public Participation*

...an intentionally designed environment capable of holding necessary conversations—where truth, tension, and the equity of **voices** are honored and **moved** toward action.

The phrase “Necessary Spaces” appears in education and equity literature and practice





# Necessary Spaces-in your words

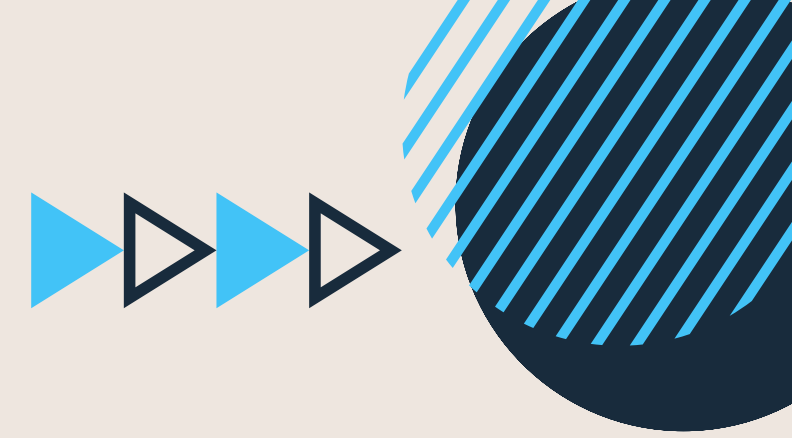
- Think about design, participation, and how tension is held with care & accountability.

Follow the link to the Hybrid Workspace





# Shared Understanding: “Necessary Space” is...



## *Designed With Intention* >

Clear aim, co-created agreements, and access planned (language, captions, timing, tech). Transparent roles and a single shared workspace (QR + link) so in-room and Zoom contribute the same way. (rounds robin, timekeeping, etc) so power is balanced and every voice can enter.



## Inclusive Participation >

Multiple ways to contribute (speak, write, chat). Step-up/step-back, rotated roles, and airtime tracking to balance power so voices are shared —not dominated



## Held with Care + Accountability >

Name tension and protect dignity. and close the loop so input becomes action with clear owners and timelines.



# Shared Agreements

What's one agreement we need to add today to make this a true Necessary Space?

- One shared workspace (QR + link)
- Use chat/hand-raise; captions on
- Interpretation / language access available



## Hybrid notes

- One shared workspace (QR + link)
- Use chat/hand-raise; captions on
- Interpretation / language access available





# ADD One Agreement

What's one agreement we  
need to add today to make  
this a true Necessary  
Space?

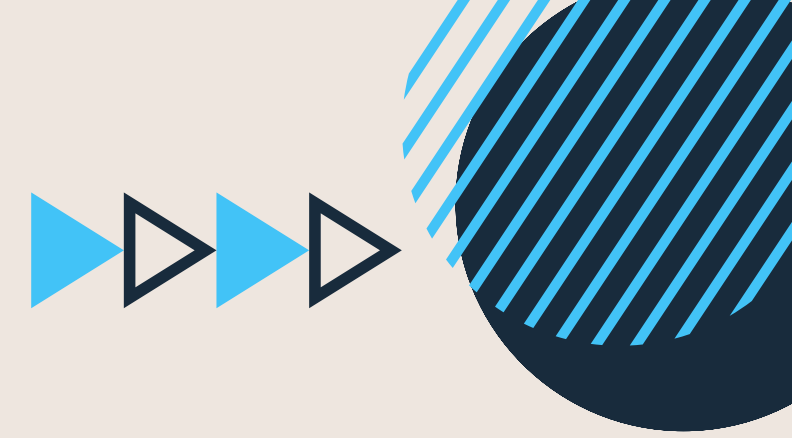


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# Protocols, Moves & Relational Practices



## Protocols (Repeatable Structures) >

- **Structured Round:** 1 min each, no cross-talk
- **Step-Up / Step-Back:** rotate who starts; track airtime
- **Pause & Paraphrase:** "What I heard was... Did I get that right?"
- **Time Checks:** name pacing; extend or park
- **Close the Loop:** summarize input + how it'll be used



## Facilitation Moves (in the moment) >

- **Reground purpose:** "Let's pause to remember why we are here?"
- **Name the moment:** "I'm sensing tension; can we talk through what's happening?"
- **Invite curiosity:** "Can you say more?" "What would success look like for you?"
- **Set/reset agreements:** quick co-creation to proceed equitably



## Relational Practices (Care & accountability) >

- **Repair:** follow up; own your part if needed
- **Acknowledge effort:** "I see how much you care, even if we disagree."
- **Build from values:** "We both want what's best for students."
- **Grace, not assumptions:** focus on impact & invitation





# NECESSARY SPACES

# Scenario Labs

Let's Practice!

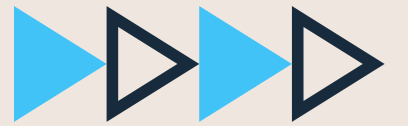




# Scenario Lab #1

## From Design To Practice

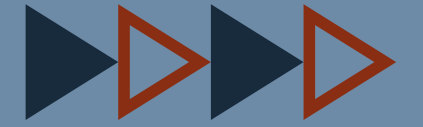
- **What we'll do:** Apply your conditions & structures to a real scenario.
- **Focus:** First facilitation moves → clarify purpose, surface agreements, plan access, assign roles.
- **How we'll guide participation:** Use protocols that balance voices and make room for tension
  - *structured round* · *pause/paraphrase* · *step-up/step-back* · *time checks*
- **Capture:** Record 3 practices + 1 early warning sign
  - Post your one-sentence first move to Mentimeter.



*Intentional by Design · Equitable by Participation · Held with Care & Accountability*



# Equity of Voices: Live Tracker



**Use in every meeting to make participation visible**

## setup

- Roles: facilitator, timekeeper, scribe, airtime monitor
- Purpose named; agreements posted/visible
- Access set: captions on; interpretation as needed; link shared



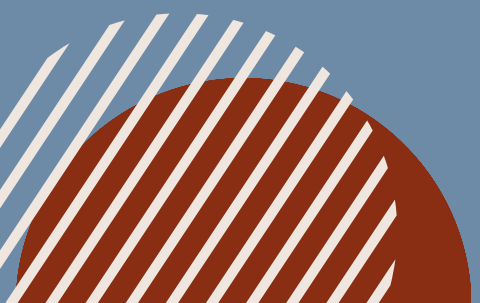
## Decision Integrity

- Input captured in shared space
- “What we heard” summary given
- “How it will be used” named
- Follow-up date set (close the loop)



## Participation

- Unique Speakers
- Airtime Balance
- Who Starts: Rotates (take note of the order)
- MOdes Used: Voice chat, written





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## Debrief:

what is your first  
facilitation move for  
Your  
scenario?

Was there an early  
warning sign to  
look out for?

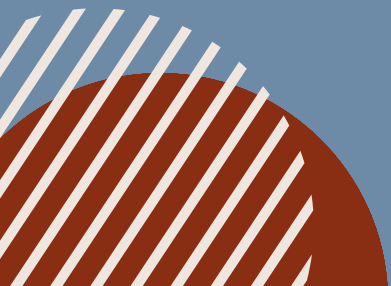
**\*\*Equity Tracker\*\***



# Share out!

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Let's read the  
groups' top 3 moves,  
and open the space  
for group comments  
and questions!







# Break Time

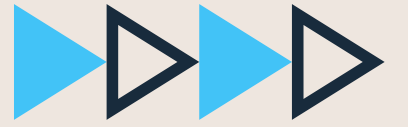
We'll be back in a few minutes





# Scenario Lab #2

## From Design To Practice



### Next Round Same scenario

- Choose 1 protocol
  - (Structured Round / Pause & Paraphrase / Time Checks)
- Add 1 relational practice
  - (Repair · Acknowledge Effort · Build from Values)
  - **Talk/Play it out**



*Intentional by Design · Equitable by Participation · Held with Care & Accountability*



## Debrief:



How would including a Protocol/Relational Practice impact the outcomes?

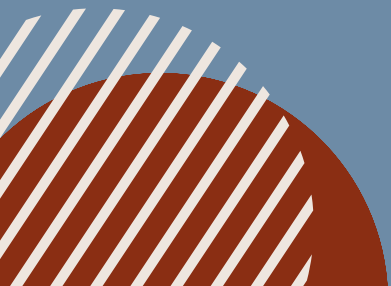
What changes do we expect by including your protocol/relational practice?



# Share out!

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Let's read and discuss some of our responses!  
comments and questions welcome





# Designing Your Necessary Space

Prepare the space so people can engage in the necessary conversation



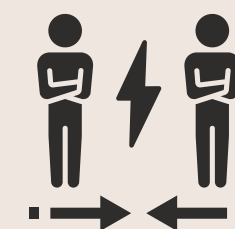
## Setting & People

Where/With whom? (meeting, forum, team)



## Purpose & Outcomes

Why Now? What will be different after?



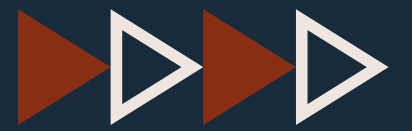
## Tensions to Expect

Power, Pace, History, Access, Role Clarity...



## Practices You'll Use

1 protocol + 1 Move + 1 Relational practice







# Pair/Share

**Partner A shares plan → Partner B**

- **B offers: 1 risk + 1 reinforcement**
- **Switch roles**
- **2 minutes each round**



**2-minute Breakout room sessions will be assigned for our virtual participants.**



**Optional:**

**Add 1 early warning sign you'll watch for and how you'll respond.**



# One Specific Change

- Post one change you'll implement in your next meeting (tangible & concrete).
- **Examples:** "Structured round first 5 min," "Agreements posted," "Loop-close note/email same day"

Follow the link to the Hybrid Workspace







# Close the Loop

Model it before we end...

## Follow the protocol

- What we heard today:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What we'll do next (owner + date)
  - (who) will do \_\_\_\_\_ → by \_\_\_\_\_
- How we'll check back:  
update at \_\_\_\_\_  
(meeting/email)

**Small Groups:** We'll share in groups before coming back to the larger space to hear from some before we end!





# Confidence + Commitments

## PULSE CHECK

**How confident are you about  
preparing & holding a  
Necessary Spaces this week?**

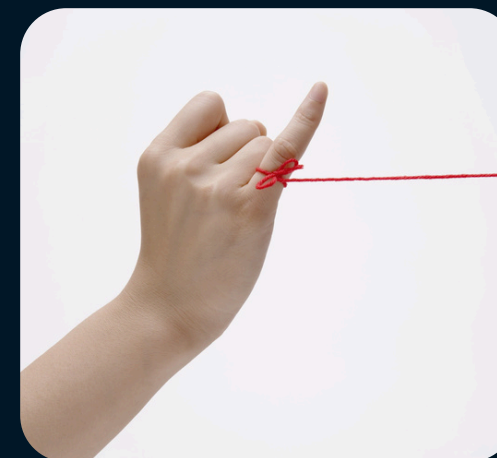


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## POPCORN SHARE

**Name one commitment & when  
you'll do it.**



## INCLUSIVE SHARE

**REMEMBER TO USE THE  
CHAT IF YOU NEED IT!!**





## ENGAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES



**Want to tell us about your Next Meeting?**

**Create your account on EnGiNE, the Maine  
Department of Education's  
Learning Management System.**

**Here, you can ask questions, find resources, and  
connect with educators after the session.**







# Thank You

**Ayesha Hall**  
**Director of Strategic Partnerships**  
**[ayesha.hall@maine.gov](mailto:ayesha.hall@maine.gov)**

