DEI COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

INTERRUPTING BIAS AND DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES FOR EQUESTRIANS

OCTOBER 25, 2021
Board of Directors approved the USEF Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan

10 strategies harness our strengths and address challenges in an impactful, sustainable way

Quarterly DEI Community Conversations

www.usef.org/about-us/diversity-inclusion
Session is being recorded & will be available on-demand on the USEF Learning Center

- [www.usef.org/join](http://www.usef.org/join)
- Promo code: inclusion21

Use Q&A function to submit questions for the panelists

Questions submitted in advance will be prioritized

Additional options for feedback & questions:

- [www.usef.org/compete/feedback](http://www.usef.org/compete/feedback)
MEET THE PANELISTS

Hadley Zeavin (she/her)
Director of Service Learning and Experiential Education, La Jolla Country Day School, and USHJA Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Committee

Dr. Caroline Prijatel-Sutton (she/her)
Executive Director, Coalition for Family Harmony

Ashland Johnson (she/her)
President and Founder, The Inclusion Playbook

Twitter: @inclusionplaybk
“To bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible.”

As US Equestrian members and supporters, we all have the opportunity and responsibility to make our sport as welcoming as possible. We are here to talk about some accessible ways we can all take action to make this a reality.
WHAT DO I DO IF I HEAR OR OBSERVE AN INSTANCE OF BIAS? C.A.R.E.! 

- **C - Call It Out (or In)**
  Speak up and ask questions when you see discrimination and bias in the equestrian community

- **A - Acknowledge Bias**
  Hold yourself accountable when you notice your own biases

- **R - Report Incidents**
  Reach out to USEF to report discriminatory or unsportsmanlike behavior

- **E - Educate Yourself**
  Find opportunities to learn about other people’s lives, experiences, and cultures to overcome the biases we all hold
INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to difference, and promotes equal opportunities. It is trauma-informed, centers people, acknowledges various identities, and shapes thinking.
Inclusive Language: Ask Yourself…

Is it “Person-First”?
A person of color, rather than a Mexican man

Who Might It Leave Out?
Rather than: “Is your husband here today?”
Try: “Does your spouse watch you compete?”

Is It Factual?
Rather than: “Ask your mom and dad if you can have a lesson at 2 p.m.”
Try: “Ask your caregiver.”
**CALLING IN** VERSUS **CALLING OUT**

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<tr>
<th>Calling In:</th>
<th>Calling Out:</th>
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<td>• When we are seeking to learn more and have deeper conversation to find mutual understanding across difference.</td>
<td>• When we need to let someone know that their words or actions are unacceptable.</td>
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<td>• When we want to imagine different perspectives, possibilities, or outcomes and encourage paradigm shifts.</td>
<td>• When we need to interrupt in order to prevent further harm.</td>
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<td>• Focused on reflection, not reaction. Does not have to happen in the immediate.</td>
<td>• Allows us to hit the “pause” button and break the momentum.</td>
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WHAT DOES IT LOOK AND SOUND LIKE?

**Calling In: You can say…**

- I’m curious, what was your intent when you said “______”?

- What is the connection between _____ and _____?
  Ex: What is the connection between [his gender] and [his class win.]

- Can you explain why ______ bothers you?

- I am feeling really emotional about what just happened, but I need us to talk about this later.

*Think about how we can call out the behavior while calling in the person*
INTERRUPTING BIAS AND DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES FOR EQUESTRIANS

WHAT DOES IT LOOK AND SOUND LIKE?

Calling Out: You can say…

• I need you to stop right there. [or] Let’s not go there.
• That is not [USEF, our barn’s, our discipline’s] culture, those are not our values.
• That word is offensive, please use a different one.
• Is [race/gender/sexual orientation/etc.] relevant in this context?

Remember, it is very powerful for the target of oppression to hear these words from an ally!
If you feel comfortable, enter in the chat what you might say or do in a given situation or what you think the best response might be.
A QUICK NOTE ON IDENTITY, POWER, EXPERIENCE, AND SAFETY

Think
- Explore your understanding of the situation
- Ensure safety
- Pause and do an emotional self check-in

Ask yourself what you want to accomplish
- Act
- Address your concerns
- Engage in respectful dialogue

Maintain Dignity
- Accountability
- Safety
- Avoid making assumptions
You and a barn mate are watching a Western seat equitation class at a Morgan horse show. When one rider walks into the arena, your barn mate mutters, “Jeez, lady, lay off the cupcakes!”

“Please stop.” (In the immediate.) → Signals that these types of comments are not acceptable to you.

“Personally, I’m really hoping the equitation division continues to become more of a riding contest and less focused on someone’s body type. I think we’re heading in that direction. What are your thoughts?” (Eventually.) → Calls your barn mate in to have a conversation about biases and makes it known that you do not accept body shaming.

Remain silent and don’t acknowledge or laugh nervously. → Signals that while you may not make such comments yourself, you are complicit as a listener.
You are new to the area and decide to go to your first reining competition with your new trainer. After you finish a great pattern, your trainer whispers to you, “That girl only scored higher than you because she’s Black.”

“Wow, I really need to let you know how that comment offends me.” (In the immediate.)

Signals that these types of baseless accusations are not acceptable to you.

“I’m really curious, do you think reining judges aren’t capable of evaluating riders in an unbiased manner?”

Starts a reflective conversation to have your trainer examine the reason they think someone might score higher because of their identity.

Pat your horse and walk back to the barn.

Signals that while you may not make such comments yourself, you are complicit as a listener.
You’re scrolling through your social media feed and see a boarder at your barn has posted that they don’t think USEF licensed officials should have a DEI education requirement.

“Luckily a lot of USEF members feel like this is the right thing.”  
(In the immediate)

Signals that other people in their community feel it is important to advance inclusivity and that education is critical for the leaders in our sport.

Comment on post or message privately: “I would be interested to know why you feel this way. From my perspective, I love that the governing body is trying to make our sport more welcoming.”

Starts a reflective conversation to have your fellow boarder examine the reason they don’t think officials should have DEI education.

Scroll through and ignore it, text your friend a screenshot and roll your eyes.

Signals that while you may not make such comments yourself, you are complicit as a listener.
You are spectating at a dressage show and another person in the stands next to you says that it isn’t really fair that someone is able to have the letters called out to them by their trainer.

“Please don’t comment on something if you don’t have context.”

Signals that many people may require accommodations in equestrian sport.

“I’m not sure if you’re aware, but they may be blind or visually impaired, so they may be allowed to have an assistant read out the letters of the arena. I think it’s really cool that we can compete in the same divisions!”

Has the potential for a shift in perspective from perceived fairness to actual equity, which includes accommodations.

Roll your eyes and clap for the competitor.

Signals that while you may not make such comments yourself, you are complicit as a listener.
You are a client at a hunter/jumper barn and notice that the barn manager is constantly asking the one youth of color to help out with walking horses up to the ring, grooming, and cleaning tack.

“I think it would be great to have everyone pitch in more.” — Signals to the barn community that you notice one person being singled out to do more work than others.

You pull the barn manager aside to ask why they always ask that particular person to help, and mention that the optics of asking the single youth of color to do more work than others are troubling. — Has potential to make space for introspection and a perspective-shifting conversation. Signals to the barn manager that there is inequity in the barn culture and the entire barn should work to rectify it.

Ignore it. — Signals that while you may not ask this particular youth to do things for you, you are complicit as a client of the barn.
The response from someone is, “Oh you always take things so seriously! I was just joking!”

“That might be true, but I would rather err on the side of caution when it comes to something that could hurt others. I know you care about people too, have you ever thought about it that way?”

The person you address insists that you’re wrong.

Ask if they are open to listening genuinely and understanding that their words or actions have harmed or may harm people. If they are not, it may be time to cut ties.
**The person you address becomes angry or combative when you point out an incident of bias.**

*ALWAYS walk away if your safety is in question.*

“I think we should pause and come back to this topic later.”

“I understand that this topic might be really emotional for both of us. I know we care about one another, so I want to understand where you’re coming from.”

Try to start from a place of commonality, “I know we both want the barn to be a welcoming place for everyone, right?”
“I feel” statements ease the tension a little bit. Ex. “I feel passionate about equal opportunities for all riders at the barn”

Reflective listening gives the other party the chance to be heard but also allows you to state your case. Ex. “I hear that you are very passionate about your opinion, I too am passionate that we should come from a place of body positivity”.

Self check-in to help you know when to stop. It is easy to become caught up in an unproductive discussion!

Interpersonal dynamics

“Agree to disagree”
Thank you for helping grow our sport and for your hard work in making it more welcoming!