

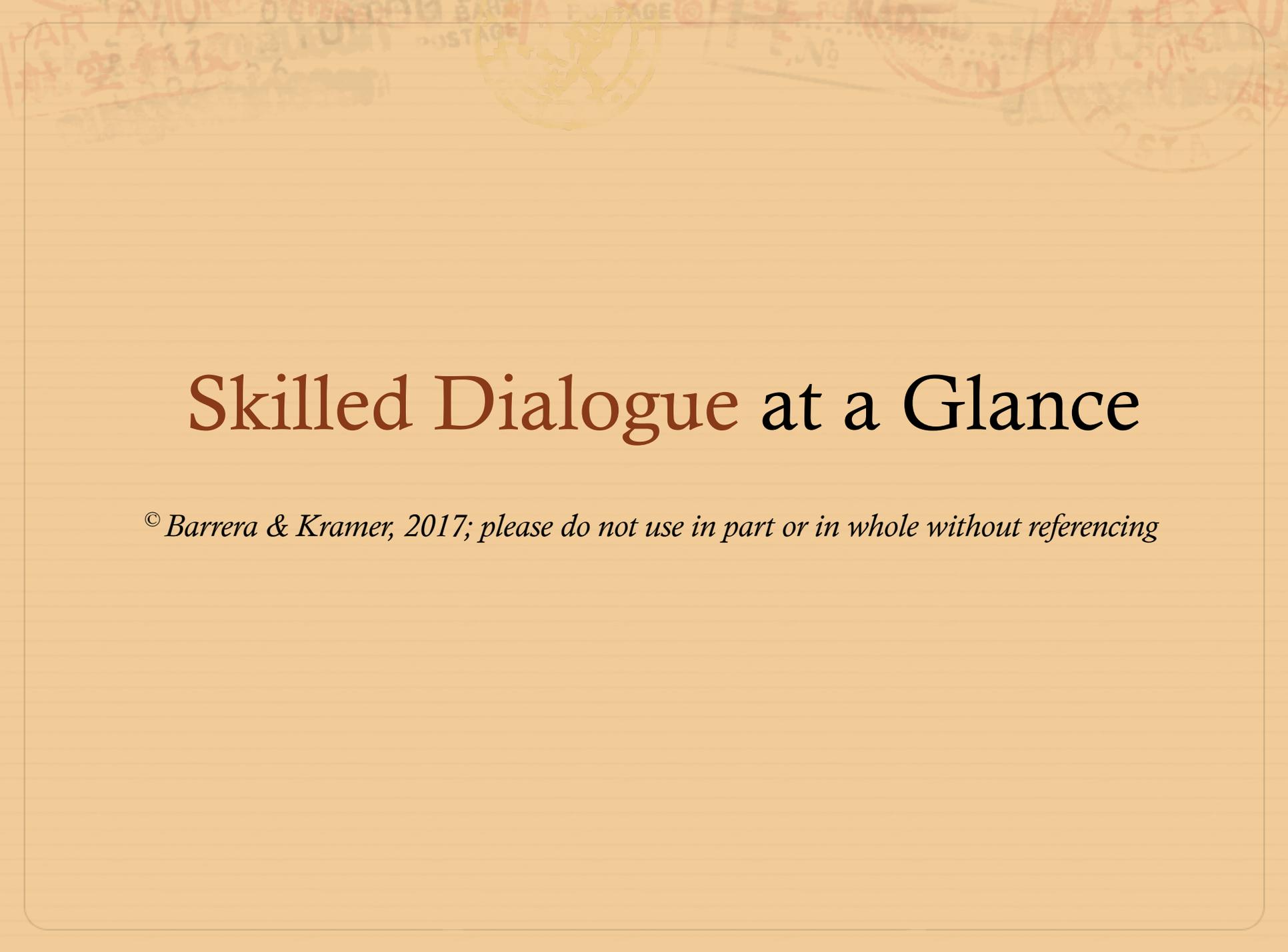
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*Skilled Dialogue Revisited:  
JOINING & HARMONIZING Diverse  
Perspective*

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The background features a collage of various stamps and logos. On the left, there are red stamps with Chinese characters, including '航空' (air) and '航空' (air). In the center, there is a yellow circular logo with a globe and the word 'POSTAGE'. On the right, there are red circular stamps with the word 'POSTAGE' and other text, including '257A' and '916'.

# Skilled Dialogue at a Glance

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**Choosing  
Relationship  
Over Control**

**Setting  
the Stage  
for Miracles**

**Welcoming**

**Allowing**

**Sense-Making**

**Appreciating**

**JOINING HARMONIZING**

***SKILLED DIALOGUE***

# Scenario



Mr. Jacoby, an elementary special education teacher, wants to talk to Mrs. Ricardo, Patrick's mom, about some of Patrick's behaviors. Mrs. Ricardo hasn't returned any of Mr. Jacoby's calls. When Mr. Jacoby has a chance to talk to Mrs. Ricardo, she quickly tries to shut down the conversation by saying, "I don't want to talk about Patrick's behavior again. Tell me how he's doing in reading?" Mr. Jacoby tries again and asks, "What makes it difficult for you to talk about Patrick's behavior?" This time, Mrs. Ricardo does not change the subject. Her eyes tear up and she says, "I feel like you are always picking on Patrick. I'm sure he's not the only one acting like that in your class. What am I supposed to do? I can't do anything about his behavior at school. I can barely manage it at home."

(NOTE: See Barrera & Kramer (2017) for more detailed analysis and discussion of other scenarios.)

# Procedural Steps



CAUTION: Even though, for purposes of this presentation, Skilled Dialogue's various steps are discussed in a linear fashion, they are in fact cyclical and reiterative .

Steps often need to be revisited depending on how interactions progress. If you find it difficult to appreciate the others' views, for example, it may be that you need to allow more time for them to express those views, or perhaps, you need to give more attention to making sense of those views. Similarly, if one disposition seems difficult to set in place, it may be that the other needs to be strengthened.

# Step 1: Set your dispositions

## Disposition

*The predominant stance with which you approach what you do*

# *Choosing Relationship over Control*

Hallmark: Explicit intent to prioritize relationship over agenda or outcome

With this disposition, one would enter into meeting with Mrs. Ricardo focused not on a particular outcome, but on strengthening relationship with her, getting to know her better, getting a stronger understanding of her concerns.

Examples	Non-Examples
<p>1. Thanks for coming. I'm really looking to learning more about your views and your concerns regarding this situation.</p> <p>2. So good to see you. I am really looking forward to learning more your concerns and ideas on how we can best support your child. Your expereince as a parent is an invaluable asset to us as we look at what we might be able to do.</p>	<p>1. Thanks for coming. As I mentioned before, we have some concerns about your child's level of progress. As you know, ...</p> <p>2. I'm glad you're here. As you know, we want to make sure that we have explained available options to you.</p>

# *Setting the Stage for Miracles*

Hallmark: Openness to non-dual thinking and paradox

This disposition emphasizes not knowing rather than knowing. It directs teacher's focus to staying open to new ways of seeing/interpreting and responding to concerns rather than to a pre-determined interpretation of the situation and Mrs. Ricardo's behavior.

Examples	Non-Examples
<p>1. Let's talk for a while. I'd like to learn more about what you believe we need to focus on.</p> <p>2. How you see this situation is important. I'd like to think that we could come up with something that would work for you and Patrick as well as for what we'd like to see here at school.</p>	<p>1. It looks like we have a choice here. We can do X or we can do Y. Maybe if we listed the pros and cons that would help.</p> <p>2. Do you think we might find a compromise between what you think best and what we are proposing?</p>

## **Step 2: Honor other's identity**

*Acknowledge and accept boundaries that define other's identity as evidence-based*

# Pre-Requisite Strategies

## *Welcoming*

Hallmark: Other person's sense of being welcomed

Examples	Non-Examples
1. Hi Mrs. Ricardo, I'm so glad that you were able to come. How has your week been?	1. "Thanks for coming. Have you thought about Patrick's behavior I mentioned on the phone?"
2. Thanks for coming, Mrs. Ricardo. I'm really looking forward to your thoughts about Patrick's progress.	2. "I'm glad you're here. As you know, it's been a rough week and we need to get started as soon as possible, I have another parent in 30 minutes.
3. So good to see you Mrs. Ricardo. I hope you didn't have any problem finding this room. I am really looking forward to hearing your ideas on how we can work together. I am just so glad we were able to meet!	3. Hello. Sorry I'm late. I got hung up in another meeting, running behind all day. OK, let's get to the point, Patrick's behavior is getting worse.

## *Sense-Making*

Hallmark: Understanding how other's concern/perspective makes sense given particular context(s)

Examples	Non-Examples
1. Can you tell me more about why you think we're picking on Patrick.	1. I don't understand why you believe we are picking on Patrick. We're only trying to help.
2. "I've never thought of it that way. Can you tell me more?"	2. I think it might be better if we continued to talk about Patrick's behavior.
3. I'd like to hear more about why you don't want to talk about Patrick's behavior.	3. I'm sorry it's difficult for you to talk about Patrick's behavior.

## **Step 3: Establish reciprocity**

*Recognize that each person in an interaction is equally capable; honor all voices*

## Support Strategies:

### *Allowing*

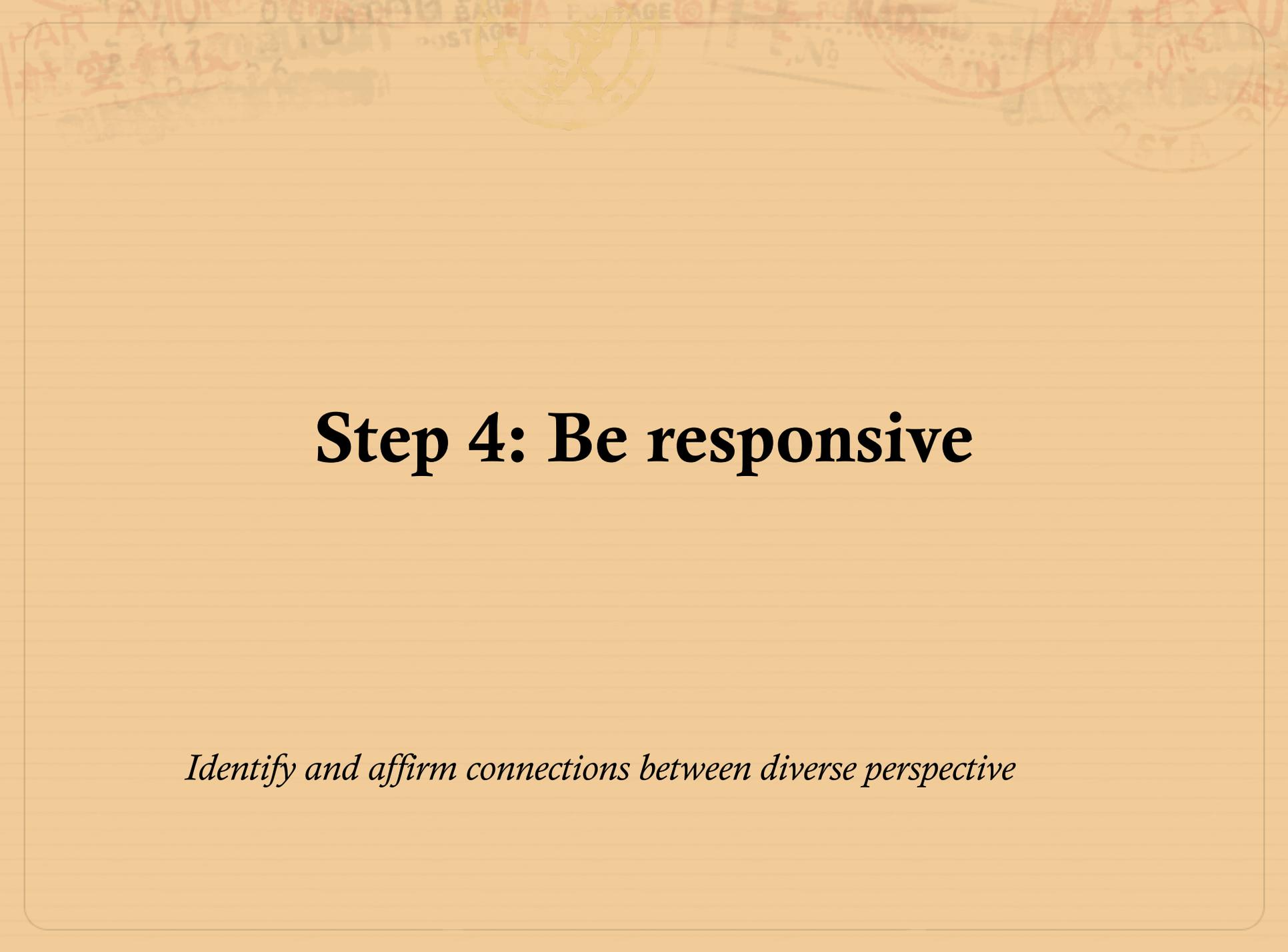
Hallmark: Degree to which I've listened to other expressing their concerns, ideas, and perspectives without interjecting or defending my own

Examples	Non-Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I hear that you're concerned about what you could do? Can you tell me more about that?</li><li>2. I see. Could you tell me a bit more about how you see this situation?</li><li>3. That's interesting. I'd like to hear more about it.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I see. Let me tell you a bit about what I think is necessary.</li><li>2. I think we need to look at things differently.</li><li>3. What do you think about the suggestions I emailed you?</li></ol>

### *Appreciating*

Hallmark: Degree to which I express recognition of value of other's perspective/ideas

Examples	Non-Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I see. I can appreciate how it seems we are picking on Patrick.</li><li>2. You know, I think I'd be concerned too if I thought we were picking on Patrick.</li><li>3. I can see how focusing on Patrick's academics has helped in the past.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I hear what you're saying. I just don't think it is helpful in this situation.</li><li>2. I'd never respond that way. (spoken aloud or only thought).</li><li>3. Have you thought of paying more attention to Patrick's behavior?</li></ol>



## **Step 4: Be responsive**

*Identify and affirm connections between diverse perspective*

## Key Strategy:

### ***JOINING***

Hallmark: Other person's confidence in your understanding of their concern/perspective.

Examples	Non-Examples
<p>1. I think I understand. It can't be easy to feel like there is nothing you can do about his behavior at school. I'd be frustrated too.</p> <p>2. It sounds to me like you're feeling pretty powerless at this point. I've felt that way too and it's never easy.</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Here is how I understand what is happening.</p> <p>2. As I've said, I'm concerned about Patrick. I have talked with several other people and they also seem to think he is having a problem with his behavior.</p>

## Key Strategy:

### ***HARMONIZING***

Hallmark: The crafting of a “3<sup>rd</sup> Space:” i.e., an option inclusive of both other’s idea/perspective and my own

Examples	Non-Examples
<p>1. What if we could promote behavior change AND also focus a bit less on Patrick’s behavior? What do you think that might look like?</p> <p>2. I think we could find a way to focus less on Patrick’s behavior while also helping him to learn more appropriate behavior. One could actually help the other.</p>	<p>1. As we just discussed, we believe that we really need to focus on Patrick’s behavior so that he can work better in the classroom.</p> <p>2. I understand that you’d like less focus on Patrick’s behavior, unfortunately I don’t see how we could do that at this time.</p>

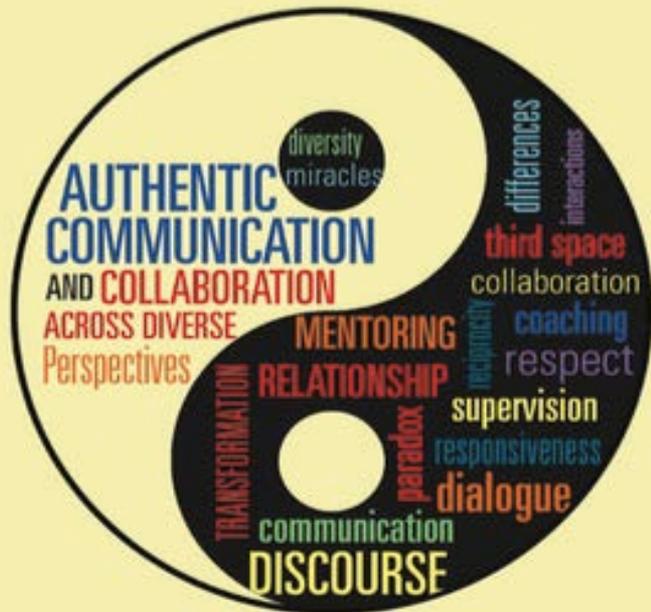
“I therefore recommend that you and the other side establish a ‘brave’ space,” a learning environment that emboldens you to embrace [differences], take personal risks, and reconsider perspectives.” (Shapiro, 2017)

“Dialogue is not about trying to change anyone’s opinions but is about understanding that people’s opinions, their truths, can actually be a contribution to a collective truth. This is perhaps the fundamental purpose of dialogue—to create a shared understanding beyond our individual points of view.” (Zaiss, 2002)

It is our hope that Skilled Dialogue will help you establish “brave spaces” from which to create shared understandings that contribute to a collective truth enriching to all of us.

Isaura Barrera, Ph.D. & Lucinda Kramer, Ph.D.

# SKILLED DIALOGUE



*The material in this presentation has been adapted from Barrera & Kramer, 2017. Given the time and format constraints we could only summarize much of the information contained in the book, which explores Skilled Dialogue in greater depth and specificity. It also contains multiple resources for greater understanding of 3<sup>rd</sup> Space, a key concept of Skilled Dialogue.*

# Contact Us

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