

SAFE SPACE RADIO



APOLOGIES **AUDIO DISCUSSION GUIDE**

www.safespaceradio.com

Using this Guide

The purpose of this discussion guide is to help facilitate discussion and reflection after listening to Safe Space Radio's *Apologies* episode, part of Season One of our miniseries, *Can We Talk*. This guide is divided into sections corresponding to the five stories in the episode. We hope this discussion guide will prove useful to people directly impacted by the issues addressed in *Apologies*, as well as friends, family members, caregivers, teachers, and healthcare providers for whom these conversations are part of daily life.

If you use Safe Space Radio in your home, classroom, group, or community, please let us know! We would love to hear from you at info@safespaceaudio.com.

About Safe Space Radio

The mission of Safe Space Radio is to inspire courageous conversations, break down the barriers that divide us, and create compassionate communities.

Founded in 2008, Safe Space Radio has broadcast more than 300 episodes and received numerous awards. The first season of our four-part miniseries, *Can We Talk?*, broadcast in May 2019 for Mental Health Awareness Month. Two long-form specials, "[Out-Takes](#)," on suicide prevention among LGBTQ teens, and "[Still Here](#)," on caregiving and dementia, both broadcast nationally in 2016. Our podcast is used in training programs for healthcare professionals, therapists, and teachers as they learn to address the needs of underserved populations.

About Can We Talk?

Can We Talk is our miniseries for Mental Health Awareness in May. The first season broadcast in May 2019. Each episode explores a subject that is difficult to talk about through a combination of storytelling and expert guidance, offering listeners practical tools for navigating challenging conversations. This series is distributed in partnership with WBUR Boston.

The first season of *Can We Talk* includes four hour-long episodes:

- [Apologies](#)
- [Asking for Help](#)
- [Loneliness](#)
- [Talking to White Kids About Race & Racism](#)

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT APOLOGIES

What is the hardest thing about apologies? Why can they be so difficult?

Why do apologies take courage?

Why do you think apologies are important? How can an apology change a relationship?

How do we model apologies to younger generations? Do you remember how your parents taught you how to apologize? How did this lesson make you feel?

Is there an apology you need to make but haven't? What keeps you from doing so?

Describe a memorable apology you received. Was it effective? Why or why not? Did it change your relationship with the apologizer?

Describe a scene, conversation, or story from this episode that you found particularly moving, vivid, or disturbing. What about that scene was compelling to you?

If you could ask anyone in this episode a single question, what would you ask them?

What did you take away from this episode that you wish everyone knew? What would change in our community if everyone knew it?

What do you think about the statement "apologies begin with telling the truth?" This statement comes at the end of Denise's segment, but how does this statement relate back to other stories in the episode? How does it speak to your own experience?

JOSEPH JACKSON/MAINE INSIDE OUT SEGMENT (RESTORATIVE JUSTICE)

Content Reflection

What is justice? What does restorative justice mean to you?

What is fairness? What does fairness mean to you? Is fairness different than justice?

How do you think restorative justice is beneficial to students, schools, or communities? What elements might be especially challenging?

How would you complete this sentence: the primary purpose of the criminal justice system is to _____.

What are the government's or community's roles in supporting the mental health of young people and teens? What can communities do to support young people at risk before they commit crimes? What about after?

How would you articulate the values of a restorative approach to justice? What does Joseph seem to value most about his work?

Personal Reflection

In the episode, Joseph describes a hypothetical kid who breaks a window with a softball, and asks "is jail good? Or is fixing the window better?" Describe a situation from your own life where a restorative justice approach might have been especially beneficial.

Did you ever get in trouble in school or as a teenager? How was it handled? What do you think you learned from the experience?

How do you make an apology to someone who doesn't want to listen? What if the person you hurt doesn't want to describe the impact of your actions?

In the episode, Cullen describes how he was able to look back on his apology as a moment he "did something good." Do you have experiences you look back on as proof of your own goodness? Why is it important to have those moments? What is the difference between doing something bad and being a bad person?

MAGGIE MURPHY SEGMENT

What are the stages of self-forgiveness? What helps you forgive yourself for making a mistake or doing something you regret?

What do you think makes it so hard for people to forgive themselves?

In the episode, Maggie apologizes to herself in the dream. Can you imagine apologizing to yourself for something in your past?

HARRIET LERNER SEGMENT

Content Reflection

What are the most important parts of an apology? Do you agree with Harriet's tips for apologies? What would you add to her list from your own experience?

Does Harriet say anything that surprised you?

Personal Reflection

How do you experience gender pressure around apologies?

Harriet says that forgiveness is not necessary. Why do you think she feels that way? If we let go of forgiveness, what are other ways we can move on after we are hurt or hurt someone else?

For Clinical Providers

Have you ever apologized to a patient before? How did it feel? How did they respond?

Patients may struggle with feeling that they need to forgive in order to fully heal and move on from past hurts. How important is forgiveness to you? How would you work with a patient around forgiveness?

DANIELLE BERRIN SEGMENT (SEXUAL ASSAULT AND #METOO)

Content Reflection

In the episode, Danielle says that teshuva demands “a spiritual transformation” in the individual who transgressed. What do you imagine this looks like? Do you think transformation is an important or necessary part of an apology?

After an apology, we often want to trust that the transgressor will never transgress again. Is there a way to demonstrate this kind of change? How do you think trust is related to apologies?

Danielle was willing to sit down and talk with the man who assaulted her. Why do you think she decided to do this? How did you feel about her decision while listening to the story?

The #MeToo Movement has resulted in many public apologies. What do you think is the difference between a public and private apology? Are there ways to tell if it is just a performance? How can you tell if it is real??

Personal Reflection

In your own life, have you ever confronted someone who hurt or wronged you? How did it feel? Did it change how you thought about the person?

Have you ever experienced a transformation after an apology? What do you think changed?

DENISE YARMAL-ALTVATER SEGMENT

Content Reflection

Denise describes how meeting with white employees of the Department of Health and Human Services made her feel anger and fear, “like I was a little girl again.” Why do you think she stayed and kept meeting every month? Why do you think she insisted that the state child welfare workers be involved in the Truth and Reconciliation process?

Justin Trudeau apologized to Canada’s First Nations on behalf of the Canadian government and the nation. What is the purpose of such a large-scale apology? What are the benefits? What are the dangers?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever had to make a big apology to your own child? What fears did you have? How did it go?

If your mother ever asked you what it was really like to have her as a mother, and wanted to listen and apologize to you, what would you want to tell her?

If you are a parent, what might keep you from making a similar offer to your adult child?

Describe a time when telling your own story or sharing an experience changed something for you.

Describe a time when listening to someone else’s story or experience changed something for you.

Does Denise’s story speak to or relate to any challenges in your own family or community?

For Clinical Providers

Most people have a secret wish that their parents will finally apologize to them. How would you approach this issue with a patient?

How would you approach working with pain that has its roots in intergenerational trauma and oppression? What needs might a patient in this situation have?