

SUPPRESSION AND EXCLUSION

Nobody asked me.
They didn't ask me in a way that I am capable of responding.
I don't feel welcome here.
My beliefs/opinions/experiences don't seem like they would be welcome here.
It's pretty clear I am the only one like me in this conversation.

PROTEST AND RESISTANCE

I refuse to be a representative for everyone in my identity group.
I remain silent to make a point.
As someone from my identity group, I don't think I should rightfully have a voice in this conversation.
The questions being asked of me are tokenizing, objectifying, condescending, or otherwise oppressive.

TRAUMA

I have past trauma that is being triggered by the materials and topic of this conversation, people's comments, or others' behavior.
I feel shocked or stunned into silence and unable to find words at the moment.
I am actively experiencing violence in this moment.

FEAR

I don't feel safe from violence or oppression in this space.
I'm afraid of others' judgment or condemnation.
I don't know the right words to use.
I know what I want to say will be criticized or unpopular.
Speaking in front of people I don't know well makes me very anxious.

Why Silence? *Reasons We Choose Not to Talk*

Created by Dr. Sarah Ropp, 2021

REFLECTION AND PROCESSING

I need more time to think.
I'm not sure how I feel yet or if I want to respond.
I'm still digesting what we were reading or discussing earlier.
I am organizing my thoughts and crafting what I want to say.
I'm taking notes, drawing, or meditating to focus on following the conversation.

LISTENING AND OBSERVATION

I'm attuned to others' thoughts right now, not my own.
I'm deeply interested in the dynamic unfolding between others in this conversation.
I'm intensely absorbed in what someone else is saying.
I have nothing that I want or feel compelled to add.

VALUES, CULTURE, PERSONALITY, ABILITY

I believe that silence is valuable and important. I practice it deliberately.
In my culture, we tend to speak less than in this one, or dialogue proceeds differently.
I am a still and quiet person by nature, and I don't talk much.
I'm nonverbal or have trouble producing speech in the way others in this space do.

DISTRACTION, DISCOMFORT, DISENGAGEMENT

I'm thinking about other things I have going on right now.
I didn't prepare for this conversation.
I'm not interested in this topic.
This conversation feels too high/low level for me.
I slept poorly last night or my body doesn't feel comfortable right now.