

CREATING DIALOGUE

In DISCUSSION we try to...		In DEBATE we try to...		In DIALOGUE we try to...
Present ideas		Succeed or win		Broaden our own perspective
Seek answers and solutions		Look for weakness		Look for shared meaning
Persuade others		Stress disagreement		Find places of agreement
Enlist others		Defend our opinion		Express paradox and ambiguity
Share information		Focus on 'right' and 'wrong'		Bring out areas of ambivalence
Solve our own and others' problems		Advocate one perspective or opinion		Allow for and invite differences of opinion and experience
Give answers		Search for flaws in logic		Discover collective meaning
Achieve preset goals		Judge other viewpoints as inferior, invalid, or distorted		Challenge ourselves and other's preconceived notions
Acknowledge feelings, then discount them as inappropriate		Deny other's feelings		Explore thoughts and feelings
Listen for places of disagreement		Listen with a view of countering		Listen without judgement and with a view to understand
Avoid feelings		Discount the validity of feelings		Validate other's experiences and feelings
Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference		Focus on conflict and difference as advantage		Articulate areas of conflict and difference
Retain relationships		Disregard relationships		Build relationships
Avoid silence		Use silence to gain advantage		Honor silence



MULTIPARTIALITY

Reflection

What is multipartiality?

Because our identities and experiences follow us into team spaces, as facilitators of group conversations and reflection, we *need* to be working towards true dialogue. Thoughtful dialogue facilitation creates a balance of power by giving equal time to all experiences (experiences of privilege and oppression). To do this, the facilitator must pay particular attention to the amount of sharing by participants and encourage consideration of identities and perspectives not represented among the participants.

Multipartiality recognizes that it is impossible to stay objective or unbiased while facilitating reflection. Instead, acknowledge opinions and identify biases to move toward an intentional balance of social power:

- encourage participation from everyone in the group; challenge contributions that uphold dominant societal norms and narratives
- offer perspectives not represented among the participants
- give equal attention to multiple identities and experiences and - most importantly - to those identities and experiences that might be absent or unheard.

How can we be multipartial facilitators?

- Look at who is speaking in the group, who isn't, and facilitate sharing of the verbal space. Things to think about:
 - How often, and for how long, each person is speaking
 - Is anyone controlling the conversation with their silence?
 - Who is initiating and who is reacting?
 - Whose concerns or ideas are being accepted more easily?
- Use storytelling or 1st person narratives to further the dialogue. Help participants 1) speak in a way where they are the subject and 2) speak in true forms of self disclosure and experience — not in a way that is emotionally detached, lofty, purely theoretical or factual.
 - Ask how participants' identities impact their lives. Their family? Their job or other activities?
 - Invite the participants to explore how the story might change for different social groups
 - Ask how participants think their identities have influenced their statements
 - Ask what is missing

- Suspend judgment of privileged groups, but rather encourage the experiences and perspectives of *all* participants.
- Be emotionally invested in your facilitation — being open to step outside your comfort zone and share your personal experiences, modeling vulnerability, authenticity, deep personal engagement, and productive communication through conflict.
- Evaluate participant ideas for how they relate to, promote, or challenge dominant narratives and stereotypes. Consider how power is at play, how the identities of the people involved intersect, and how your own social identities will impact your intervention.
- Look for the patterns of oppression around you: in the dialogue, in yourself, in others, in daily actions made based on power and privilege. Make yourself aware of issues different groups face. Be sensitive to their perspectives.
- Don't expect members of oppressed groups to always be able or willing to educate everyone, be the experts, or challenge oppressive statements in dialogue. Challenge (mis)conceptions and confront prejudice: Take risks and take responsibility, treat your position as the facilitator as part of the work against injustice. Level the playing field and lead by action.
- Acknowledge discrepancies in values and statements made during dialogue and ask for clarification.
- Consider how practiced you and your team members are in exploring your own identities and how those identities have impacted their experiences. Use this to inform your approach in responding to and challenging dominant narratives and stereotypes.
- Approach the experience with humility. Even well-seasoned facilitators are constantly learning. Don't be afraid to share your challenges or reach out to other facilitators for support.

Adapted from "Balancing Social Power in Dialogue: What it means to be a multi-partial facilitator in intergroup dialogues" by Natalie Zappella



FACILITATION STRATEGIES

Reflection

Adapted from "A Guide for Training Public Dialogue Facilitators" by Everyday Democracy and "Facilitation Strategies as a Culture Builder" by James Madison University's Alternative Break Program

Supporting Strong Reactions

"It's clear you have a lot of [energy, emotion] around this. Thank you for sharing. (Is there more you need to say to be heard?)"

"I have heard a lot of people express this [strong opinion], thank you for surfacing that here."

"What I'm hearing you say is [X,Y,Z], is that right? What more would you add?"

"There are also people here who feel strongly and differently; I would like to invite others to share thoughts."

Clarifying

"Let me see if I'm hearing you correctly..."

"What I believe you are saying is..."

"What are the key points here?"

Shifting Focus or Redirecting

"Thank you, _____. Do you have anything to add, _____?"

"We've been focusing on views 1 and 2. Does anyone have strong feelings about other views?"

"Are there other ways of looking at this issue?"

"Does anyone else agree with this perspective?"

"I know this is very clear to you, and there are some among us for whom this isn't clear.

"Can we dig deeper into this conversation to surface where we are unclear?"

"We are not defending an idea, coming to a decision, etc. - this is an opportunity to share/surface perspectives."

"What other perspectives, questions, etc. do we want to layer into this conversation?"

"Here are things we've talked about so far, is there anything more that needs to be said?"

"Thank you for sharing your [thoughts, reactions, opinions]; I'm going to move us on."

Equal Participation

"You raise an interested point; what do others think about that?"

"Thank you; what are others thinking about..."

"Okay, we have heard two people speak on this matter. Does anyone else have a different thought?"

"We are all really clear on _____'s perspective. What other perspectives are there?"

"Who else has an idea?"
"What do others think?"
" ___ just offered an idea. Can anyone give us an example of this in action?"
"Are there comments from anyone who hasn't spoken for a while?"
"Is this raising questions for anyone?"
"Was there a thought you wanted to express?"
"You look as if you might be about to say something..." (If they decline, be gracious and move on.)
"Let's go one at a time. ____, why don't you go first?"
"Let's take a few moments in silence to think about what this means for each of us."

Responding to Nonverbal Communication (Body Language)

Questions to ask yourself:

What signals am I sending with my body?
What signals am I reading from others?
How do I signal encouragement?
How do I invite others to participate?

Revisiting Community Agreements

"At the beginning of our dialogue, we agreed to _____. How are we doing?"
"Let's pause to think about how we're living up to our community agreements. What are we doing well? Where do we have room to grow?"

Encouraging Depth

"If this conversation were ending now, what would you regret not saying?"
"What are the things you are saying or thinking to yourself that you are not sharing out loud?"
"Please say more about that."
"What do you know to be true?"
"To what degree are you speaking from firsthand knowledge/experience?"
"Can you share with us a specific example of what you're talking about?"
"How did you come to this opinion/perspective?"
"When have you seen this happen?"
"What patterns do we hear?"