Having Difficult Conversations about Race and Other Identities: Overview of Intergroup Dialogue

Tuesday, September 29, 2020, Noon to 1:00 p.m.
Having Difficult Conversations about Race and Other Identities: Overview of Intergroup Dialogue

September 29, 2020

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Let’s Talk about Race - Now!

What’s Wrong with this approach:
You are in a class or training session about diversity. You don’t know the others in the room very well. Before you’ve had the chance to get acquainted, the facilitator asks you to get into small groups and share your views and experiences about race and racism.

In the chat tell us:
How are you feeling right now about this request?
IUPUI’s 4-Stage IGD Teaching Model

**Stage 1: Create Meaning**
- **Focus**
  - People: What are we learning here? What's the goal?
  - Space: How will this be different tomorrow?
  - Time: Is this the right time?
  - Ask: Who is this for? How will they receive the information?

- **Listen**
  - What do they need to know? How can I help?

- **Connect**
  - Be passionate and purposeful.

**Stage 2: Examine Identity**
- **Reflect**
  - Mindfulness: What is the meaning of the experience?
  - Experiences: What new ideas or concepts have you learned?

- **Share**
  - How will I talk about my experiences with others?

- **Learn**
  - What happened? How can I learn from it?

**Stage 3: Difficult Conversations**
- **Engage and Examine**
  - Space: What is the purpose of this conversation?
  - Time: How can we make it meaningful?

- **Communicate**
  - Express: How can I share my ideas?
  - Inquire: How can I listen to others?

- **Get Motivated**
  - What motivates you to engage?

**Stage 4: Building Alliances**
- **Connect and Commit**
  - What is the value of my participation?

- **Effect Change**
  - What can I do to affect change?

- **Reflect and Evaluate**
  - What do you think of the change?

**Want to learn more? Visit igd.iupui.edu**
1. **Showing Inclusivity:** Support formation of dialogue; Build relationships across difference; Establish norms and rules

2. **Becoming Inclusive:** Explore meaning, increase awareness, promote understanding around identity, social relations and conflict

3. **Engaging in Inclusivity:** Support and challenge risk-taking in dialogues involving equity, fairness and inclusion

4. **Committing to Inclusivity:** Acknowledge contribution and celebrate collective effort with action
1. Understand purpose and process for dialogue
2. Develop group norms and guidelines
3. Build group trust
4. Encourage enthusiasm for the dialogue
In the chat . . .

1. Identify group norms and guidelines that are important to you in order to discuss issues of race, religion, politics or other controversial issues.

2. Points:
   - “Listen,” “Respect,” etc. = 0 points
   - Defining what you mean by “listen,” “respect,” etc. = 3 points per suggestion
   - Norms and guidelines unique to you, based on your personal experience or identity = 5 points per suggestion
   - Scoring = Points don’t matter

3. Time: 30 seconds
## Defining Dialogue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debate:</th>
<th>Discussion:</th>
<th>Dialogue:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Win!</td>
<td>Present ideas</td>
<td>Broaden our perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress disagreement</td>
<td>Provide answers</td>
<td>Find places of agreement among many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Right’ v. ‘Wrong’</td>
<td>Share information</td>
<td>See connections between parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justify assumptions</td>
<td>Defend assumptions</td>
<td>Inquiring into assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for flaws in logic</td>
<td>Give answers, gain agreement</td>
<td>Discover collective meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading</td>
<td>Telling &amp; selling</td>
<td>Learning through inquiry &amp; disclosure</td>
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- **Defining Dialogue**
- **Debate:**
  - Win!
  - Stress disagreement
  - ‘Right’ v. ‘Wrong’
  - Justify assumptions
  - Search for flaws in logic
  - Persuading
  - Either/or
- **Discussion:**
  - Present ideas
  - Provide answers
  - Share information
  - Defend assumptions
  - Give answers, gain agreement
  - Telling & selling
  - Either/or
- **Dialogue:**
  - Broaden our perspective
  - Find places of agreement among many
  - See connections between parts
  - Inquiring into assumptions
  - Discover collective meaning
  - Learning through inquiry & disclosure
  - Both/and
Behaviors that Support Dialogue:

1. Listen to understand
2. Share your story
3. Be aware of assumptions and stereotypes
4. Be open to differing opinions and experiences
5. Acknowledge places of disagreement

Adapted from: Five College Intergroup Dialogue Program; Faculty, Staff and Student Dialogue
Safety, Discomfort, and the Learning Edge
Watch for Triggers

- **Trigger**: Something said or done that makes members of social groups or individuals feel diminished, offended, threatened, stereotyped, discounted or attacked. We can feel psychologically threatened or our sense of social justice can feel violated.

- **Fight**: resist, become aggressive or argumentative, etc.
- **Flight**: withdraw, avoid, etc.

- **Our Challenge**: Encourage processes where we:
  - Stay in the room
  - Accept and abide by group norms that encourage respectful interaction and discourage withdrawals or aggression
  - Feel safe and less defensive (while allowing discomfort and pushing our learning edge)
1. Explore social groups and multiple identities
2. Learn and practice dialogue skills
3. Explore group privilege and group differences
4. Understand sources of potential conflict
Discussing social identities…

- Based on physical, social and mental characteristics of individuals
- Sometimes obvious and clear (Example: Race), sometimes unknown to others (Example: Sexual orientation)
- Others can be claimed but unknown outwardly (Example: Religion)

... in the context of Power and Privilege:

- **Target groups**: Social identity groups that are discriminated against, stigmatized or otherwise disadvantaged in society
- **Agent groups**: Social identity groups that are privileged, preferred or otherwise advantaged in society
Poll Question

What aspect of your identity do you feel:

- Gives you power or privilege; or
- Has been the basis of experiencing disadvantage or a lack of privilege

Identities:

Race; Gender; Sexual Orientation; Age; Religion; Disability; Socio-economic Status; Class/Race (faculty, staff, student, etc.); Other
1. Examine influence of social structures and institutions
2. Probe for deeper level of thinking, feeling and responding
3. Learn to stay in dialogue when there are conflicts or differences
4. Examine personal commitment to justice
Debriefing Difficult Conversations

“Dialogue about the Dialogue” – Allows group to reflect on the process (rather than the content) of the dialogue. Group reflects on how they interacted with one another and explores whether they were able to effectively employ dialogue skills learned earlier.

Examples:

• What skills and practices did you observe that you could build from?
• What challenges (triggers, silence, awkwardness, emotional responses) arose that would require your attention?
1. Explore what it means to be empowered and to be an ally
2. Find ways to continue personal growth
3. Engage in personal and group action planning and identify “next steps”
4. End on a positive note
**Educate Yourself**

### Actions Against Inclusion and Social Justice
- Actively Participating
- Denying, Ignoring
- Recognizing

### Actions For Inclusion and Social Justice
- Educating Others
- Supporting, Encouraging
- Initiating, Preventing

### Educating Self

Speak Up

1. Be Ready
2. Identify the Behavior
3. Appeal to Principles
4. Set Limits
5. Find an Ally/Be an Ally
6. Be Vigilant

Source: Southern Poverty Law Center: Six Steps to Speaking Up
Takeaways/Lessons Learned

1. Understanding group dynamics and dialogue principles, as they relate to the current situation, are essential precursors to deeper conversations.

2. Understanding self matters:
   - Be willing to push your learning edge
   - Learn what it means to be an ally
   - Do what you can, and try again tomorrow

3. Appropriate curiosity and interest in others, and conversations on personal experiences, are more meaningful than trying to resolve the unresolvable.

4. When delving deeper, attend to process (how we talk) as much as, if not more than, substance (what we talk about).
Questions? Please respond in Q & A

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Intergroup Dialogue Sessions

IU Faculty and Staff: [https://go.iu.edu/3jjg](https://go.iu.edu/3jjg)
- Oct 22, 2020 01:30 - 3:00 PM
- Oct 29, 2020 01:30 - 3:00 PM
- Nov 5, 2020 01:30 - 3:00 PM
- Nov 12, 2020 01:30 - 3:00 PM

IU Student Inquiry: [https://go.iu.edu/2aQM](https://go.iu.edu/2aQM)