

**Dialogue on ‘Belonging’**

Guidelines for Facilitators

Your help is vital for ensuring that our conversations remain focused, that our principles for dialogue are upheld, and that the voices of all participants are heard.

Below, you’ll find brief descriptions of the separate phases of this training dialogue, as well as sample questions to spark conversation in each phase. We’ve also included some general tips for facilitating that apply both to in-person and virtual dialogues.

**Tips for Dialogue Facilitators:**

1. Prepare well beforehand: think about events illustrating the dialogue’s theme, select some examples from your own life, and draft a few questions that can be used as necessary to jump-start the conversation. These guidelines can help.

2. Focus on the process, leave the content to the participants. Keep steady, give space to think, use momentary pauses, and watch the time. In Phases 2 through 4, put yourself last, and only share your views if there’s sufficient time.

3. Make sure all participants feel they’re being seen and heard, and that everyone gets their turn to speak. Set a good example: follow the dialogue rules, show genuine interest, and give concrete examples drawn from daily life.

4. See that everyone gets involved and pays attention. Invite participants to speak and to listen to each other. Encourage deeper investigation of discussion topics.

5. Always keep the theme of the dialogue in sight. Use open-ended questions as necessary to direct participants at your table/in your Zoom room back to that theme.

**Note: This worksheet is only meant to serve as a guide, and to give examples of affirmative questions that can enrich the dialogue. Prepare yourself beforehand so that you can focus on the conversation.**

*You have 90 minutes total for this online dialogue!*

**Phase 1: Welcome, Review Principles of Dialogue, Introductions 15 minutes**

**Goal: Create a safe atmosphere in which participants can open their hearts and minds. Offer introductions and make personal contact with each participant**

**Key Question: Which principle of dialogue do you find most important? And what does the word ‘belonging’ mean to you personally?**

Everyone is welcomed to the table. Facilitator emphasizes the importance of maintaining a safe space, outlines the phases of the dialogue, and invites participants to introduce themselves.

* Explain the rules of the dialogue: Phones should be put away. Everything said in the safe space created in this breakout room will remain here. Everyone may decide for themselves what they are comfortable sharing. Participants should not talk over each other, but instead listen to everyone and respond thoughtfully.
* Explain the phases: After introductions, participants will share their experiences related to the dialogue theme. On the basis of those experiences, participants will discuss possible actions they can take, individually or together, to spark change.
* Make introductions: Say your name, why you are here, and which community standard you find most helpful. Then go around the group and ask each person to do the same. Keep things brief to save time for the heart of the discussion.

**Phase 2: Sharing Experiences 45 minutes**

**Goal: Consider the topic ‘belonging’ on the basis of personal experiences, and get the dialogue going**

**Key Question: Have you recently had an experience in which you found you truly belonged somewhere? Or an experience in which someone from outside your neighborhood/community/organization was made to feel truly at home?**

**Possible follow-up questions:**

* Where were you? Who else was there? What happened?
* What made that experience possible?
* What did you learn from that experience?
* Is there someone who you believe sets a good example for you here?

Invite participants to share an example from their own lives of belonging. Assure them they need only share experiences they are comfortable with. Ask participants to describe those experiences in concrete terms; use follow-up questions to help with this.

To get things started, you can employ the “popcorn principle:” the first person for whom an experience “pops up” gets to speak. This may prompt someone to share another experience, so that a dialogue gets started between the participants. Ask people to follow up on each other’s stories, while respecting privacy. **Make sure no arguments arise, no one gets defensive, and everyone shares something.**

**Phase 3: Dreaming 15 minutes**

**Goal: Envisioning the ideal future and inspiring action**

**Key Question: What, in your view, is the ideal situation of belonging? What group(s) do you dream of being part of?**

**Possible Follow-up Questions:**

* What does your dream future look like?
* What would it take to get there?
* What would have to change?
* Describe your ideal future so that we can see it too. How does it look, how does it feel, how does it sound to belong in a new place (or finally belong in an old one)?

**Phase 4: Doing                                                 10 minutes**

**Goal: Moving from dreams to action**

**Key Question: What can you do, individually or working together, as a first step to bring your dream for belonging closer to reality?**

Ask the participants what they can do today, tomorrow, or in the coming week to bring their dreams or ideals a step closer to reality.

**Possible Follow-up Questions:**

* What are you going to do tomorrow?
* What’s the first step you will take?
* What’s required to take that step (time; resources; opportunitiy)?
* What do you think it will feel like?

**Phase 4: Evaluation and Results 5 minutes**

**Goal: Collectively discuss the results and wrap up the dialogue**

**Key Questions: How was the dialogue? What will you take away?**

Thank the participants for their attentiveness and their contributions. Ask them what it was like to participate in the dialogue, what they learned, and what they’ll take away.

*Be sure to encourage members of your breakout room to return to the main room once the invitation pops up!*