

A GUIDE FOR BOLD, INCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS®

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INTRODUCTION:

Organizations do not exist within a vacuum. A polarizing social and political climate, coupled with global, traumatic events that directly and indirectly impact employees, have created an imperative for organizational leaders to create internal spaces for bold conversations. As leaders take strides towards organizational cultures that encourage employees to bring their whole selves to work, they will need to ensure they are fostering the skills and competencies conducive to creating these environments. This guide provides an overview of how individuals can begin to engage in bold, inclusive conversations around polarizing topics.

1. PRE-REQUISITE: FOCUS ON SELF AND 'OTHER' UNDERSTANDING

The ability to engage in bold, inclusive conversations is a journey that requires fostering cultural self-understanding, addressing our biases, and understanding the role of power and privilege.

CONSIDER:

- ☐ **WHO AM I CULTURALLY?** Where did I grow up? What was the culture of my community? What did I learn about right/wrong or good/bad?
 - o What are my values and beliefs, and how have they changed over time?
- ☐ **WHAT IS MY CULTURAL IDENTITY?** (e.g. race/ethnicity, generation, religion, education, socio-economic status)
 - o How does my cultural identity shape who I am and how I think?
- ☐ **WHAT IS MY ORIENTATION TOWARDS DIFFERENCE?**
 - o "Us/Them:" People are different, but I think my cultural group's norms are better.
 - o "Color-Blind:" We are all the same as humans. We are more alike than different.
 - o "Differences Make a Difference:" Differences are normal, inevitable, and something to learn about.

ASK YOURSELF:

- ☐ **WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE OTHER GROUP—FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE?**
 - o Expand your understanding by engaging in experiences or new learning (e.g. books, research, biopics, etc.) that reflect the perspectives of your 'others.'
- ☐ **WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT THE VALUES AND BELIEFS OF OTHER GROUPS, AND HOW THEY WERE SHAPED?**
- ☐ **DO I UNDERSTAND POWER & PRIVILEGE?**
 - o Do I belong to cultural identity groups that have traditionally held power/privilege or been historically marginalized?
- ☐ **WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING SYSTEMS THAT IMPACT OUTCOMES FOR THE GROUP(S)?**
 - o Challenge inclinations or biases that position inequities as result of 'cultural flaws' of the group. Dig deeper.
- ☐ **WHAT DO I KNOW IN GENERAL ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES?**
 - o Consider differences that may exist in communication styles, cultural norms, individualistic vs. group-oriented cultures, etc.

2. ASSESS READINESS – THE WINTERS GROUP READINESS ASSESSMENT ®

	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Not at all
1. I am culturally self-aware.			
2. I have explored my unconscious biases.			
3. I am comfortable talking about difficult subjects.			
4. I believe that treating everyone the same is not the solution to polarization.			
5. I have studied my own and other culture's norms and beliefs.			
6. I have a high degree of emotional intelligence.			
7. I readily acknowledge that I don't know what I don't know.			
8. I recognize that there are differences that make a difference and I try not to minimize them.			
9. I have regular exposure to difference.			
10. I have meaningful relationships with diverse individuals and groups.			
11. I can separate the person from their position.			
12. My organizational culture is ready to have bold, inclusive conversations.			
13. There is a high level of trust in the organization.			
14. There is a high level of trust within my team.			
15. I am aware of my power and privilege.			
16. I already have a lot of experience with bold, inclusive conversations.			



Readiness Level	New at This: <i>Have not had bold, inclusive conversations</i>	Some Experience: <i>Have had a few conversations</i>	I'm very experienced
GET READY	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus <i>MOST</i> on self-understanding and other understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus most on other understanding <input type="checkbox"/> This level assumes you have <u>experience</u> with at least one or two cultures other than your own	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus most on exploring differences
PREPARE	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you are prepared	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on lessons learned from previous conversations. <input type="checkbox"/> What would you do differently?	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on lessons learned from previous conversations. What would you do differently?
CONVERSE	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen, learn, clarify and reflect <input type="checkbox"/> Be patient <input type="checkbox"/> Build Trust	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen, learn and reflect, <input type="checkbox"/> Question, clarify and share your perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Be patient <input type="checkbox"/> Build Trust	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen, learn and reflect, <input type="checkbox"/> Question, clarify and share your perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Share deep personal stories, be vulnerable <input type="checkbox"/> Share points of disagreement <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss ways to bridge differences for win-win <input type="checkbox"/> Trust level should already be high
PRIMARY GOAL:	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen and strive to come to shared meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Deeply Explore Differences	<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge cultural differences; reciprocal empathy

3. PREPARE & PLAN FOR THE CONVERSATION – WHY? WHO? WHAT? HOW? WHERE? WHEN?

WHY ARE WE HAVING THIS CONVERSATION? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What is the main reason for this conversation? <input type="checkbox"/> Why is this important to do? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there shared understanding of the purpose? 	WHO SHOULD BE PART OF THE DIALOGUE? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Who will facilitate? <input type="checkbox"/> Who from within the organization will be part of the conversation? 	WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What do we want to achieve during this dialogue? <input type="checkbox"/> What will be the next steps?
HOW SHOULD THE CONVERSATION BE CONDUCTED? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What are the pros and cons of a virtual or in-person conversation? 	WHERE SHOULD THE CONVERSATION BE HELD? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In or outside the office? <input type="checkbox"/> Room size? <input type="checkbox"/> Room configuration? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the space accessible? <input type="checkbox"/> Any environmental concerns? 	WHEN WILL THE CONVERSATION TAKE PLACE? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> During or after work hours?

