

**Challenging Racism presents  
Partner Guide for Organizations**

**Discussions on Race and Equity: DRE Together**



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## **Dialogues on Race and Equity (DRE) Background Information**

On September 19, 2019, the Arlington County Board adopted a *Racial Equity Resolution* to examine and address racial inequities. Arlington, as well as cities across the nation, are grappling with historical policies and practices that have resulted in residential segregation, which in turn has created racial inequities in food security, housing security, income security as well as gross disparities in access to healthcare, education and worker protections. While there is strong political will to examine and address racial inequities in Arlington, without a shared understanding and informed examination of the impact of historically unfair systems, new policies supporting racial equity, diversity and inclusion may remain mostly on paper, no matter the good intentions of the plan.

Challenging Racism is an Arlington-based 501(c)3 organization focused on educating people about the prevalence and inequities of institutional and systemic racism, and giving them the knowledge and tools to disrupt racism where they encounter it - in their family, work and community. We are excited to partner with Arlington County to support the Arlington County Manager's Office in its initial effort to open connection with the community on race and racial equity in a series of Public, Leadership, and Neighborhood conversations that foster greater understanding of the issues, provide skills to support productive conversations, and generate interest in further engagement.

Over the long term, these efforts can move us forward to a common goal and vision of ***“What does racial equity in Arlington look like, and how can we get there?”***

# **Dialogues on Race and Equity (DRE) Together**

## **Introduction**

The Partner Guide for Organizations is the document that DRE organizations will use to lead the virtual session of Dialogues on Race and Equity: A Community Conversation.

## **GOALS FOR THIS SESSION**

- Give you tools to help you plan your conversations
- Review the curriculum for DRE Community Conversations
- Introduce practical facilitation techniques that focus on safely, invite diverse perspectives into the conversation, and structure conversation to limit harm to participants
- Review deliverables for the program

## **TRAINING OVERVIEW**

- Part 1 - Planning and preparation for conversations
- Part 2 - Curriculum overview and discussion
- Part 3 - Facilitation techniques and guidelines for successful conversations

## **BEGINNING OUR CONVERSATION: WHO AM I? WHY AM I HERE?**

Each group should choose a spokesperson who will provide a short summary in Large group and a scribe. Please summarize the group answers to “Why are you here?”

### **ACTIVITY 1: Small Group Introduction**

1. Introduce yourself.
  - a. What is your name?
  - b. Your organization?
  - c. Why are you here?
  - d. Choose your spokesperson
2. Share out in large group.

## **PART 1 - Preparing for the Conversation**

### **Before the Conversation**

#### **RUNNING A MEETING VS. FACILITATING A DIALOGUE**

- Key differences
- Who has facilitated a dialogue

#### **GROUP DYNAMICS**

- Who is in your group?
- What level of engagement has your organization been involved in with regard to Race and Equity
- Have you had conversations about Race and Equity in your organization?
- What issues might you encounter in these conversations?
- Other things to consider about the group...

#### **GROUP AND PROGRAM LOGISTICS**

- Gather contact information for the group
- Schedule the conversation and send initial invitations - date, start and ending times, request for RSVP
- If virtual - consider your meeting format/platform, ie. Zoom, Meetings, Facetime
- If possible, recruit a technical person who can manage the tech side of the conversations (small groups, polls, trouble-shooting, etc)
  - Prepare and practice your technology ahead of time
  - Think about contingency plans - ie. If someone needs help getting connected is there a phone number they can call?
  - Know how to handle misuse of virtual meetings - If you get “zoom-bombed” do you know how to block someone from the meeting?
  - Consider access - will you need interpretation? closed captions? etc
  - Best participation includes having cameras on and people coming in a minute or two before you plan to start.
- Send follow up/reminder invitation with details and link to the meeting

#### **SELF PREPARATION GUIDELINES**

- Intention - Create an intention for the conversation - that will help you stay on track
- Triggers - What do you need to be aware of within yourself, within your organization?
- Establish ground rules or guidelines for the conversation
- Expect conflicting views
- Expect not to have all the answers - ask for help if needed

## **Dialogues on Race and Equity (DRE)**

### **DRE Together: Partner Training**

- Continue to do your own work
- Use and practice your facilitation skills - more on that later
- Consider the power dynamics in the group which might include position in organization, race inequities, language, education, etc.
- Respecting confidentiality is important. Share with participants that what is said in the session should remain confidential.
- Set the conversation context and intention and expected outcomes - you can come back to these if the conversation strays
- Listening is perhaps more important than speaking
- Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations are:
  - Stay engaged
  - Experience Discomfort
  - Speak your truth
  - Expect and accept Non-Closure

## **HOW TO TAILOR DISCUSSION OUTLINE FOR YOUR GROUP**

Consider the following

- Amount of work your group has done on race and equity
- Amount of work YOU have done on race and equity
- Racial breakdown of the group
- Leadership buy-in
- Relationship in the community

## Dialogues on Race and Equity (DRE)

### DRE Together: Partner Training

## **PART 2 - The Conversation - A Discussion on Privilege and Bias**

### CONTENT

The content for this session is lifted from the Public Discussions on Race and Equity Participant Guide for holding guided conversations about Race and Equity that foster understanding and connection within your organizations.

#### Overview of the program

The program is slated to last 2 hours and is to be delivered online.

#### Content: What you will need to host the program

- DRE in Our Community Facilitator Guide
- DRE in Our Community Participant Guide
- DRE in Our Community Slide Deck
- DRE in Our Community Video Links

#### Deliverables: What is expected of you

- Completion of the SurveyMonkey form with the following information gathered from each session:
  - Where have you seen systemic racism poll information
  - What are your suggestions for the County Manager & County Board
  - Commitment for personally moving this work forward

### PREPARATION

In order to prepare you for these conversations on race and equity we are focusing on a discussion of privilege and bias, and presenting the use of discussion techniques in large and small groups, short videos, using the chat function to engage the group, and the use of the poll function for quick answers in your conversations.

### OVERVIEW and FLOW of Privilege and Bias

#### PRIVILEGE

- Invisibility of privilege
- Systemic privilege
- Privilege plus power
- How can we dismantle it

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BIAS

- Why is there bias
- How to connect regardless of bias
- How to interrupt bias
- How can we continue forward

CONTENT DISCUSSION

We will review the DRE in *Our Community: A Public Conversation Facilitator Guide*.

CONTENT Q&A

## **PART 3 - Conversation Guidelines & Facilitation Techniques**

### OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about the goals of facilitation
2. Discuss Conversation guidelines
3. Learn specific facilitation techniques & practice
4. Learn how to avoid common roadblocks to productive conversations

### GOALS of FACILITATION: As Discussion Leader - what is your task?

- Help foster understanding and make connections
- Help lead a conversation about race and equity
- Create a structure in which people can talk safely
- Invite diverse perspectives to share
- Help people listen and talk respectfully in order to limit harm while promoting growth.

### CONVERSATION GUIDELINES

#### **Statement of Intention:**

We are not going to discuss whether racism exists, whether it is systemic, or whether it is real. Racism exists, it is systemic, and it is real. And we are working to eliminate racism in order to create a just and equitable world.

#### **Guidelines for Discussion**

- Structure helps create a respectful and brave space.
- We ask for a different kind of seeing, listening, and speaking.
- Productive conversations require a common and agreed upon set of guidelines. They are readily available to the group to keep the discussion on track and the group working well.
- Here are our basic guidelines:
  - Listen deeply - to others, to yourself
  - We don't have to agree
  - Accept discomfort
  - Expect and accept lack of closure
  - Equity of Airtime; 3 before me - let three more people speak before you speak again
  - Both/And - not binary; Complexity; Not either/or.
  - Use I language; Speak for yourself/own experience
  - Lean into curiosity
  - Remember to breathe

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## FACILITATION TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICE

### **Techniques for successful facilitation**

- Deep Listening
- Neutrality
- Redirection
- Recap to confirm understanding
- Inclusion

### **Deep Listening Discussion**

- Really pay attention to what is being said
- Non-verbal cues include nodding, welcoming eye contact
- Checking for understanding - clarify if needed
- Model genuine curiosity
- Think about what the speaker is saying rather than what you want to say next.

### **Deep Listening Exercise**

## COMMON ROADBLOCKS - Keeping the discussion on track

Acknowledge the purpose/topic of the group at the beginning

- Be prepared to help group move back to topic when needed
  - “Let’s get back to the original question...”
  - “This is really interesting - Can we put a pin in that for later?”
  - “Let’s hear from some people we haven’t heard from” - restate question

Group Evaluation - think about your group.

- Dealing with power dynamics:
  - Is someone dominating the conversation? - Three before me rule.
  - Are small groups well balanced - **Make sure that you do not leave under-represented group members alone in small groups.**
  - Are there accessibility needs that need to be addressed
- Potential pit-falls
  - Are there areas of disagreement that you anticipate might come up during the conversation?
  - Are there predictable divisions in the group?
  - How can you help the group handle the differences respectfully and acknowledge that we will not solve this today

### **Practical exercise: Journaling**

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Please take a moment to journal about your group. Pay particular attention to the power dynamics that might be present in the group and the demographic characteristics of the group. What are some of the challenges the group might encounter? Take note of areas of disagreement, agendas, differences of opinion. How might you handle these challenges? Questions?

### **What happens when someone says...**

(information from the 21 Day FSNE Racial Equity Challenge Discussion Guide - see resources)

***“I’m tired of talking about white power/privilege/supremacy. What really needs to happen is we need to learn to have constructive relationships, learn to communicate, try to help them...!”***

Consider: It is true that we have to learn to have more constructive relationships and communication. AND we have to recognize that racism is a system of oppression that is used to uphold the power of the dominant racial group, in this case white people. It is used to preserve unearned privilege and the myth of white superiority. This is the water in which we swim in this country, so failing to see it, talk about it, and working actively to shift it essentially helps to keep racism in place

***“Why use the word “racism”? Couldn’t we find a gentler, less negative word?”***

Consider: Who are we trying to protect by being “gentler” and less negative? Often we privilege the comfort of the privileged (white people), at the ongoing expense of people of color. We have to be bold, courageous and truthful, and recognize that there is a difference between discomfort and outright panic. Unless we name racism, how will we be able to work to undo or dismantle it?

***“I just see people as people. I don’t see Black, or White or green or purple.”***

Consider: Science suggests otherwise. Implicit bias has been proven to play out in everyone’s minds to some degree and at a level of consciousness that can be very subtle but still impact our actions in the world. It is best that we be humble about this fact and actively work to counter these unconscious biases and stereotypes. There is a self assessment in the resources that provides a link to the Harvard Implicit Bias Test.

