A Guide for Thinking through Conversations using tools from Sustained Dialogue

SUSTAINED DIALOGUE INSTITUTE
— campus network —

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Welcome Note

Thank you for your interest in Sustained Dialogue (SD). We are excited to share with you some of our resources to support you in your effort to bring dialogue to your community. Below you will find some of our abridged tips and strategies to help you make dialogue more successful.

While Sustained Dialogue™ is process with a unique approach, dialogue can take on many faces and be piloted in many ways. You'll notice below that we have listed how SD is different in certain core components. Sustained Dialogue takes *significant practice and intentional training* to be able to replicate the entire model and meet all of its goals. Without fully immersing in formal training by a certified Sustained Dialogue associate, we encourage you to focus on one of the main goals of Sustained Dialogue – **building and improving meaningful relationships across lines of difference**. We have included a limited set of resources below to help you meet that goal. Please note that each of the following pages is a simplified or excerpted version of a larger manual.

If you find that this is an exciting start, but you crave the opportunity to do more, including working to meet the other significant goal of SD – **creating concrete community action to improve the climate in your community** – then please reach back out to us. We welcome the chance to more fully engage, share SD tools with a broader group, and improve communities across the globe.

Thank you for your commitment to this important work!

– The Sustained Dialogue Team

What is Dialogue?

"Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others' concerns into their own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up their identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims so that they will act differently toward the other."
--Dr. Harold Saunders, Founder of Sustained Dialogue

Dialogue is a distinct way of communicating, seldom practiced in daily interactions. When people with varied viewpoints converse in order to **seek mutual understanding**, they are in dialogue. In a society of arguments and roundabout discussion, dialogue stirs us to **reassess our earlier assumptions**. The goal of dialogue is not for participants or moderators to change others, but for participants to **allow themselves to be changed** through engagement with new experiences, ideas, and people.

Discussion	Debate	Dialogue
Seek answers and solutions	Look for weakness	**Look for shared meanings**
Give answers, often those in accordance with academic standards	Search for flaws in others' logic; critique their position	**Discover collective meaning; reexamine and destabilize long held ideas**
Listen, in order to gather rational pieces of an argument	Listen, in order to form counterarguments	**Listen without judgment and with a view to understand**
Retain relationships	Disregard relationships	**Build relationships**
Avoid silence	Use silence to gain advantage	**Honor silence**

The Dialogue vs. Discussion table was adapted from: *Differentiating Dialogue From Discussion: A Working Model* (Kardin and Sevig, 1997) and *Exploring the Differences Between Dialogue, Discussion, and Debate* (Tanya Kachwaha, 2002, adapted from Huang Nissan, 1999).

What is Sustained Dialogue?

SD is an intentional process used by parties to improve challenging relationships and come to action in intergroup issues. Sustained Dialogue has been used to build the collective voice of everyday people, to develop treaties in entrenched violent ethnic conflicts, towards nuclear de-proliferation, toward economic development, in land and natural resource disputes, to address community tensions, and to re-build relations after acute community divisions using five stages:

- Stage 1: Conveners address all barriers to productive dialogue and then a dialogue group comes together.
- Stage 2: This group shares relevant experiences that relate to the central community concerns.
- Stage 3: They pick an issue to focus on and work to analyze the root causes.
- Stages 4 & 5: They plan and execute new ways to act in agreed scenarios for change around their chosen issue.

At least two peer moderators lead each group. Moderators should be familiar with the context and trained by SDI. **Through these stages, groups can:**

- create a cumulative agenda (ex. questions left at the end of a meeting form the next agenda) to develop a common body of knowledge of interests, not just positions.
- learn to talk analytically together rather than polemically.
- Later, learn to work and act together.
- **Participants:** Each SD group maintains roughly the same participants and moderators.
- **Agenda:** Each meeting is designed to continue where the last ended.
- **Time:** Dialogues meet consistently at a regular, appointed time that works for the context.

A Checklist for Applying the Sustained Dialogue® Process

☐ Is there something more logical to do (than organize dialogue)? Have the people most impacted by the issue asked for a different type of action or activity?

☐ Groups can be formed to affect any large community challenge. Often, they are formed to improve challenging relationships between groups or to approach large-scale intergroup conflicts. Do you have trusted partners from each of the groups involved in the conflict who are eager to dialogue?

☐ Is participating beneficial for all groups involved? [Note: Dialogue groups applying the Sustained Dialogue® process must work to: 1) improve relationships AND 2) take action.]

☐ Have potential dialogue participants opted into a dialogue process? Dialogue can never be mandatory. Participants need to opt into dialogue in three key ways:
   o Opting into dialogue as a method of communication (rather than debate or discussion)
   o Opting into sharing personal experiences
   o Opting into a multi-meeting experience for the duration of the dialogue process

☐ People are open to listening to others' perspectives and are not joining to try to change others.

☐ Organizers agree to recruit participants who:
   o are not hostile toward others
   o do not dehumanize others
   o respect others' experiences and others' privacy

☐ Do you (potential organizers) have the time and energy to address group relationships? If yes, dialogue could be a good option. If not, then dialogue might not be a good fit. (I.e. if you feel like "I just need this person to stop doing Y" then an educational workshop is a better fit than a dialogue.)

☐ The Sustained Dialogue® process is never used for topics that require professional support (i.e. counselors) without that support being present. Have you made sure that the dialogue topics are NOT topics that would be better explored through therapy? Have you made sure that the dialogue topics would NOT involve participants bonding around traumatic experiences?

What Does it Look Like for Groups to Apply the Sustained Dialogue® Process from dialogue to action?

The Sustained Dialogue® process involves a relational approach to facilitation. The focus is NOT on presenting interesting topics. Instead the focus is on how group members share, interact, respond, and understand each other. Adherence to the process allows for improved group relationships that lead to informed, concrete community change.

- Dialogue groups of 8 to 15 participants meet for a pre-determined number of meetings, often for several months. Many dialogue groups can meet at any given time.

- Two trained peer moderators co-lead each dialogue group. Moderators, or mods, complete training through the Sustained Dialogue Institute.

- Dialogue group co-moderators set a schedule for their dialogue group. They decide whether they want their group to meet weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Each dialogue meeting is at least an hour. Most moderators decide to have weekly 90-minute dialogue sessions for 10-12 weeks. Dialogue groups typically meet at least 7-12 times.

- After deciding the dialogue group schedule, moderators and organizers recruit dialogue participants. Dialogue participants commit to attending all the dialogue group meetings. The group then meets consistently for several months using the meeting schedule they all agreed to.

- Each dialogue group maintains the same participants and moderators throughout the entire process.

- Each dialogue meeting is designed to continue where the last one ended. Early meetings focus on helping participants build relationships and learn about one another's experiences. Later meetings become less focused on experiences. Instead, later meetings focus on actions the group can take to address problems impacting the community.

- Each meeting ends with moderators leading a group reflection process. This process is called debriefing. During debriefing, participants share feedback on the dialogue they just held. The feedback that participants share during this time helps shape the next meeting's agenda.

When choosing a topic: Do's:

- Do choose a topic that participants have ability to make a difference around. That may mean that the title should relate to the local community or campus.

- A topic should not be stressful for the moderators and should fill mods with hope and joy

- Mods should be from the communities in which they will facilitate

- Expertise in the topic isn't necessary–it can be brought in as needed. Comfort with the topic is important and some ability to recognize and predict common perspectives is important.

- Mods should plan for 10 dialogue meetings and the topic should be something the group members could act on by the end of ten 60–90-minute dialogue meetings.

- Should be chosen after hearing feedback from at least 1-2 potential dialogue group participants after a draft topic is chosen.

- Should include guidance of who is not going to have a productive time there – a narrow, tailored invitation for key stakeholders is better than broad invitations for all.

- Should not invite people that moderators feel unable to have authority in dialogue (bosses)

- Think about where the dialogue should take place. The space should be as welcoming and accommodating as possible. Think about physical and tech needs.

- Do your due diligence. Think deeply about how power might operate as your start to identify group members. Is there an imbalance? If so, how can we adjust the audience or pre-meeting plan to ensure that no one will experience hostility, dehumanization, or aggression?

What are the 5 Stages of the Sustained Dialogue® process?

Dialogue groups meet with the same participants and moderators each time. As they meet, they progress through these 5 stages. Not all groups experience the 5 stages linearly. Yet, well-moderated groups do engage in each of the stages. The stages build on each other while remaining flexible and adaptable to groups' needs.

Stage 5: NOW!
Individual and Collective Action
Act!
Take scenario to larger groups for implementation
Continually ask: How are we doing?

Stage 4: HOW?
Brainstorming Action
What resources do we have to move in that direction?
What steps need to be taken?
Who can take those steps?
Arrange a scenario of mutually reinforcing steps

Stage 3: WHY?
Identifying and Analyzing Problems
Identify relationships that cause the problem
Identify options for transforming those relationships
Weigh those options
Agree on a direction for action

Stage 2: WHAT?
Building Trust and Exchanging Experiences
Set the tone and habits of the group
Participants share problems that concern them
Participants learn to talk openly about what really bothers them
Participants name a problem to focus on together

Stage 1: WHO?
Deciding and Committing to Engage
- Organizers, Conveners, and Mods listen to community needs to draft a topic
- Decide who needs to be at the table in order to lead to change
- Remove as many barriers as possible to productive engagement through pre-conversations, topic re-framing, and careful logistical planning
- Identify willing and appropriate participants, recruit, and agree to meet
- Reach an understanding of the nature, purpose, and rules of the dialogue

Advanced Tips for Creating Effective Group Norms

You and your co-mod will guide participants in establishing group norms, which are a shared set of expectations for participants. Let participants know that the created list is always up for revision.

1. **Don't mention or promise "safety".**
   Framing dialogue as a "safe space" might set unrealistic expectations. This is because dialogue often involves hearing uncomfortable or challenging statements. This group likely is an intercultural space (a place where we will hear things that will be challenging), but people often expect a safe space (in which we have skills and knowledge to prevent hurting others). In this process, we cannot assume others' previous skills, abilities, or previous knowledge.

2. **Ensure they shape the list, not you or your co-mod.**
   Let your group shape the list by staying very quiet as they make suggestions, letting them work out disagreement, recording their exact words, and not giving your own thoughts or value judgments on suggestions. If they are unfamiliar with dialogue, show them the Sample Group Norms on p.45 before setting group norms.

3. **Ask for specific behaviors, not broad ideas.**
   For example, consider the suggestion, "Be respectful." People can interpret a vague idea like respect in many ways. When participants suggest broad rules, ask for specific behaviors that will help demonstrate the norm. You can ask, "What does that look like to you? What are some behaviors that would show respect?" Write down the more specific behaviors that the group suggests. If there is a suggestion that is a helpful tip that is so specific that it likely will not work as a rule that everyone has to do, label it as "helpful option" while recording it.

4. **Are they setting reasonable expectations for knowledge? Keep it simple!**
   Look out for norms that expect unrealistic levels of shared knowledge. For example, a norm like "use the right terms" expects everyone to know what the "right terms" are. A person's disabilities, education, and language background impact how that person communicates. Because of this, it is unlikely a group can share a set of "right terms". Say, "I'm concerned that we won't have enough shared knowledge to do suggestion #X. Is there a way we can make this work for beginners?"

5. **Prevent hostility by ensuring that there is a norm about dehumanization**
   Dialogue involves a diverse group of people who all have different values and lived experiences. All dialogue participants should agree that no one will be treated as fundamentally "less than" anyone else. If anyone says something that devalues others, treats them as if they are unimportant or bizarre, invalidates their views, or is hostile, the moderator should intervene. A moderator must also intervene if a person ranks groups of people (i.e., "group A is better than group B"). Say, "If statements are made that suggest members of the group do not believe others' lives have equal value, this will be addressed by moderators. If a person makes comments that are dehumanizing or hostile, we mods may intervene through one-on-one conversations. If we can't resolve things after attempting to, we may ask that person to leave."

6. **Don't let the norms become a source of ableism**
   Say to your group, "We will practice not judging others by their ability to interact with the group. Your involvement in this work means not shaming others and imagining why some may not respond in expected ways. If someone seems to be struggling to stick to a norm, we will follow up with them privately." A person's behavior might be related to a disability or social identity, like being neurodivergent.

Sample Group Norms

Participation requires respecting all participants as human beings whose lives have equal value to your own.
>   Disagreeing is important. Dehumanizing or belittling others is not appropriate here.

Avoid statements that oversimplify complex things into "either-or" or "good or bad".
>   We'll make sure not to oversimplify complex events or topics, or else we'll be under pressure to agree.

We will make mistakes as part of this process and then deal with these consequences as a group.
>   Each of us may say hurtful things here. We will work together to deal openly with the emotional results.

Share airtime.
>   No dominating the conversation. Try not to interrupt or have side conversations.

We are all experts on our own personal experience.
>   Acknowledge the validity of others' experiences.

Address the statement, not the person.
>   Participants may express opinions or make statements that will offend or oppose the beliefs of others. The group should agree that in these situations, they should react by addressing **what** was said, not **who** said it.

Participants represent only themselves and are not representatives of social groups.
>   Though you may choose to, in dialogue, group members are not expected to explain group views.

Use "I" statements.
>   Saying, "I believe," "I think," or "I feel" avoids generalizations, and makes participants own their statements. *Note: Saying "I feel **like**" or "I feel **that**" dilutes this, ex. "I feel **like** you were aggressive" vs. "I felt scared."*

Honor confidentiality.
>   What happens in the session stays in the session. Take learning out of the room, and leave the names in.

Remember that there may be other rules that affect us.
>   While we have confidentiality agreements, we will seek to avoid topics that require mandatory reporters to share more with authorities.

Use each other's' names to refer to each other
>   We are getting to know each other. We will try to refer to people using the names that they want to be called, and we'll do work as a group to become familiar with pronunciation and pronouns.

Moderating Tip Sheet

What is Moderating?
The moderator is responsible for managing group meetings, keeping dialogues on track (in terms of time and topic), and ensuring each member's voice is heard. By taking a group through a process that produces a specific outcome, a moderator generally encourages all members to participate. By recognizing the unique and valuable contributions of each member, the moderator plays an active and critical role in ensuring that a community taps into its own knowledge.

What Makes a Good Moderator?
Competent moderators have both personal characteristics and acquired skills that make them good at what they do. Many good moderators make a difficult process seem very natural and intuitive, even when lots of planning and training goes into the craft. Good moderators:

- Value people and their ideas
- Think quickly and logically
- Are not there to teach

- Are excellent communicators
- Are both product and process oriented
- Are familiar with common perspectives on the topic

Troubleshooting Moderating:

Staying on-task and on-time.
With groups of passionate and knowledgeable people, it is easy to veer off onto other topics or easily get side-tracked by minute details of a conversation. As a moderator, you may be required to intervene to keep the event on track and obtain optimal productivity. In order to help the group stay focused, you may want to:

- Remind the group of the "keep focused" expectation
- Don't be afraid to directly re-focus the group on a particular agenda item
- Try to close the item or set it aside in a "parking lot" for consideration later
- Let the community decide

Dealing with unproductive behavior.
Difficult behavior is often unintentional or occurs as the result of an emotionally charged situation. Intervention will assist you in dealing with behavior that does not help the community achieve its meeting goals or objectives.

- Use gentle and appropriate humor for redirection
- Restate the ground rules directly
- Direct your questions to the individual for clarification
- Seek help from the group
- Address the issue at a break or offline

Stimulating productive inquiry.
While passionate people often have a lot to say and suggestions for action, it is not uncommon for communities to experience lulls in an on-going conversation or a stand-still in a single event. Use the following techniques:

- Use probing questions
- Call on individuals in the group
- Share a counterpoint

Adapted from Communities for Public Health
Accessed 1/17/16 at http://www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/docs/plan_facilitation_tip_sheet.doc

Asking Strong Questions: The 4 C's
Questions to Intervene in Tense Conversations*

What can a pair of co-mods do when someone states a controversial opinion? Use **the 4C's!**

Why use the 4 C's?
- To help the group engage in dialogue around a challenging statement.
- To keep participants from fighting, debating, or discussing.
- To push the group to dialogue through disagreement using "I" statements.
- To lean into discomfort and disagreement, rather than ignoring it.

Note: Do not use the 4C's for statements that are: dehumanizing, invasive, invalidating, or hostile. Those types of statements need a more direct intervention to redirect the conversation.

Example participant statement: "While we're talking about how Geminis are discriminated against, I want to share that I think Libras are treated really badly, too."

1. **Clarify** the speaker's meaning OR clarify the intent of their contribution in order to get a sense of what they actually mean.

    - **Example 1** (clarify meaning): "Tell me more about what you mean by that."
    - **Example 2** (clarify intent): "I want to clarify the intention of what you've said. Are you hoping to share how some Libras might relate to anti-Gemini discrimination?"
    - **Example 3** (re-direct, clarify later) "I want to make sure that doesn't pause us from hearing about anti-Gemini discrimination. We'll turn to learn more about that after we talk through what others are currently sharing."

2. **Change the conversation to experiences**.

    Example: "What experiences from your life are important for helping us understand what you're sharing?"

3. **Create space to share group impact**.

    Example: "How do others respond to the experiences and conversation we've just been in? Do you have similar or different responses?

4. **Challenge** the statement with a **credible counterpoint**.

    Example: "I've heard that statements like that sometimes make others feel that their identity is less important. How, if at all, does that influence your thoughts about this?"

Asking Strong Questions: Tips and Types of Strong Questions

Strong Questions:
1. **Relate to a relevant topic that lends itself to sharing experiences (not just opinions).**
   Do: "What have your experiences been with racism in this community?"
   Don't: "What do you think about racism?"

2. **Illuminate participants' backgrounds, rather than illuminating interesting concepts.**
   Do: "You mentioned fairness. What's an experience that makes you passionate about fairness?"
   Don't: "How do you define the concept of fairness?"

3. **Evoke feelings and experiences meant to lead to dialogue, not debate.**
   Do: "Where have you seen division between people who are new to this community and people who have lived in this community for a long time?"
   Don't: "Don't you think people who are new to this community should spend more time getting to know longtime residents?"

4. **Invite personal reflection, NOT "answers" or philosophical postures.**
   Do: "Share a story of a time when you needed more support from our community."
   Don't: "What could we do if we banded together as one human race?"

5. **Don't use "Why?" when trying to understand other's behaviors, thoughts, or choices.**
   Do: "What are the reasons that you've heard feminists protesting in this community?"
   Don't: "Why do feminists protest in this community?"

6. **Create a sense of group responsibility for the topic at hand.**
   Do: "What can we do to learn more about town policies on this topic before next week?"
   Don't: "How could the town government better support us?"

7. **Are simple and easy to remember.**
   Do: "Tell us a little more about that."
   Don't: "So you had just been talking about your experience with sexism. I'm wondering if anyone here has a similar experience or maybe a different experience. Also, if you want, you could share a little more about your experience with sexism on that day or in general."

8. **Open Ended, not yes or no (unless polling the room round-robin style)**
   Do: "How did this factor into your decision to join this community, if at all?"
   Don't: "Did you know about any of this before you joined this community?"

9. **Can be based on what is noticeable in the room (i.e., lots of energy, silence)**
   Do: "I'm noticing a lot of silence in the room. I'd love to hear from someone who's been quiet what you're thinking about."
   Don't: Ignore it or pretend it isn't happening. "So…. moving on…"

10. **Don't try to demonstrate subject-matter expertise, only providing information as a last resort.**
    Do: "Where or from whom have you learned about Islam in this community?"
    Don't: "So here are a couple of things to know about Islam before we continue."

11. **Give individuals time to think and don't ask participants to guess what others want.**
    Do: "I'd like to hear from those who feel we should have a new group agreement about this."
    Don't: "Should the group have a new agreement here? What do you all think?" (Giving little time after for individual verbal responses)

The Equitable Facilitation Toolbox

When to Intervene:

- **Invalidating:** dismissing or rejecting someone's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors.
- **Invasive:** intruding on a person's thoughts or privacy
- **Dehumanizing:** depriving a person or group of positive human qualities or putting them lesser than one's own self or group in a hierarchy
- **Hostile:** showing active opposition toward something, someone, or a group
- **Competing:** striving against one another to gain or win something
- **Oppression Olympics:** ignoring someone else's pain in favor of sharing one's own painful narrative
- **Furthering "Battle Fatigue":** Treating someone as if they should have to explain their identity or presence because of some aspect of their background
    - **Othering**: viewing or treating a person or group as intrinsically different from or alien to oneself.

1. **Tell the group in the first meeting to expect to hear experiences of marginalization, at the systemic, local, and individual levels:** Tell the group to listen for when an experience reflects an interaction with a system larger than the individual level.

2. **Remind the group of the goals of dialogue:** The main goals of the Sustained Dialogue® process are 1) building relationships, and 2) taking action. Anything that is dehumanizing, invalidating, or invasive doesn't accomplish those goals.

3. **Remind the group of relevant group norms**: Remind the group of their specific agreements.

4. **Paraphrase the speakers' emotions to honor what someone has shared that may be particularly painful:** Mirror the words a participant has used to describe something painful (especially if others don't seem to acknowledge the contribution or are engaging in invalidation or competing.

5. **Share the level of oppression you heard a speaker sharing and how it may be different from the level someone else has shared:** Sometimes dismissive comments stem from a participant not recognizing that systemic oppression is a) significant, and b) something all people do not experience.

6. **Ask a participant to take a break to reflect if something they say is bordering on dehumanizing or disrespecting others:** Sometimes a participant cannot be in dialogue with others about the topic.

7. **If someone has been harmed by a comment or chooses to leave the room, prioritize supporting the person who has been harmed. Have private conversations to check in on them immediately. (**If that happens, work with your co-facilitator to support both spaces (in the room and out of the room.)

8. **Be transparent about what you're noticing in the group:** Ask the group what they notice about the dynamic and why they think that's happening.

9. **Model the type of sharing that you want others to do:** To stretch the group members who may not share about dominant identities, share openly from yours.

10. **Remember some identities are invisible; you can't see all things:** If some people seem to be sharing only about their dominant identities, for instance, you may not realize how they define themselves.

11. Always be willing to take a **BOLD** break**:** When someone has boldly broken group trust, don't be shy about saying a big "TIME OUT"

"CHARACTERS"	TIPS
Silent Silas: A group member does not speak.	• When you ask the group questions, give everyone a minute in silence to think, and then tell the group that each member of the group will share unless a participant passes. Make sure to use this style of questions often early on, which is called "Round Robin." • Always use the debrief question, "Have you each felt fully heard and respected?" • Try more small group exercises and pair-shares (dyads) to build trust • Check-in with the participant privately. Ask how they are enjoying the group.
Talkative Thom: Overly talkative member	• Use "round robin" style questions often to keep the group balanced. • Remind the group to make sure they are leaving silence between shares. • Ask for responses from those who you haven't yet heard from.
Shallow Shia: Doesn't want to dig deeply into things.	• In the beginning of meetings, ask light icebreakers like, "What's a show that you think is hilarious?" to gradually build trust. • Demonstrate trust and depth by modeling "controlled share" responses that show tone and content examples without taking the focus from participants' time.
Emotional Emile: A participant is very emotional.	• Make sure others give the participant supportive space without interrogation. • Validate and give time in silence: "I can see this is very important and it's okay to take time to recognize our emotions." • If the group member becomes visibly distraught or unable to participate, pause the group to take a break and ask if they'd like to talk privately. Do not dig into negative feelings.
Colorblind Kai: "I'm colorblind!"	• Use the 4Cs and ask, "What do you mean when you say 'colorblind'?" • You can also add, if needed, "I want to make sure that this dialogue group is one where we can talk openly about identity and background, rather than take a colorblind approach about things that have happened."
Stumping Steven: Full of fact-based questions	• Respond with, "That's a great question. What do you all think?" • Assign someone to investigate and bring findings to the next meeting.
Expert Xavier: Knows everything about this topic, and only wants to talk about data and facts	• Validate their knowledge. Thank them for the information. • Ask, "What has been your personal experience with this issue? How have you seen that play out here on this campus?" • Remind the group of any group norms pertaining to speaking from their own experience or using academic discussion to avoid dialogue.
Skyler Scapegoat: Blames other groups and people for problems	• Use the 4Cs in this manual to clarify, but only if the comments are not dehumanizing • Use the Toolbox for Equitable Facilitation in this manual if the comments seem to treat some groups as less than others.
Total. Silence: No one is speaking after you've asked a question you planned.	• Silence is okay! Be comfortable with silence; it may mean that people are thinking. • Count to 10 slowly to yourself. Give people time to process. Do not bombard the group with questions to get engagement • Re-phrase the question, have people discuss in pairs, then have a few people share. • Ask, "I notice a lot of silence on this. Feel free to let me know what you're thinking here.
When in doubt…	• "Help me understand…"

APPROACH	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	WHEN TO DO IT
Icebreakers	Activities designed for fun or team building	• To build the group's knowledge of each other • To increase the group's energy	First meeting and at the beginning of some meetings
Round Robin	Ask a yes or no question, or one that can be answered in 10 words or less. Go around the room having everyone answer.	• To allow all a chance to voice their opinion • To show differences in opinion	When you want everyone's quick opinion. When 2 or 3 speakers are dominating conversation. To warm up or to close.
Mapping Relationships	Use a whiteboard to map relationships between groups or people based on stories you're hearing (e.g., identities, perceptions, power, etc.)	• To help the group learn more about/focus on the larger community • To build skill in analyzing power dynamics	During Stages 2 and 3, when many stories are being told. You can use the **Concept of Relationship Table** for Mapping.
Anonymous Notecards	Participants each get an index card and are asked to write 1-3 questions they would like to ask the group or a specific person. This is done anonymously.	• To bring out questions that are difficult to ask • To build a new sense of trust in the group	When some are holding back or are afraid to ask the questions that are on their minds.
Caucuses	Divide group into two groups based on identities (or commonalities, etc.) to discuss an issue without the "other" there. For example: on campus/off campus, strongly agree/strongly disagree.	• To safely bring out differences in opinion • To surface issues that may be difficult to say in front of a certain group • To create tailored proposals or framings for outsiders	During a stereotyping exercise, for use with prompts like, "Have you ever dated interracially?" or when deciding on action or issue framing.
Dyads	Break participants up into pairs of 2 to discuss a question, issue, or topic and come back and share with group.	• To get everyone talking • To have two specific people discuss an issue • To allow people to get to know each other one-on-one	This is a good technique for any icebreaker or prompt. When you don't have time for everyone to talk to everyone.

Learning to Moderate Relationally and Equitably

The Concept of Relationship, published by Dr. Harold Saunders, defines relationships as having 5 elements that moderators focus on. They are listed below:

The 5 Elements of Relationship:

1. **Patterns of Interaction** – This is about how groups interact with one another. Do they interact positively, negatively, or not at all?

2. **Perceptions, Misperceptions, & Stereotypes** – This is about how groups view one another. It is also about what groups believe about one another's identities, interests, and power.

3. **Interests** – This is about what groups want and care about.

4. **Identity** – This is about how a group defines themselves in terms of physical, cultural, human characteristics, and past experiences

5. **Power** – This is about a group's ability to control resources and other groups' actions. It is also, most importantly, about a group's ability to influence a course of events.

How might you facilitate the following relationally and equitably?

1. You co-moderate a dialogue group on campus about race and political affiliation. There is a small number of senior politics majors who identify as either Black or Indigenous men. You notice that each time one of the men shares, he tends to remind the group about the history of land displacement in the U.S., and specifically how it has affected native people across the U.S. Each time that it's brought up, the group listens quietly, and the moment turns into a mini-lecture. What elements of relationship may be involved in this moment? What might you do toward building participant relationships?

2. In a group for second years, you ask the question, "Is there a story you can share about your experience on campus that can help us understand what brought you to this dialogue on race relations?" and many participants express a lot of pity for the share of a Black student who shares their everyday experience of being vaguely ignored by others in meetings. The group expresses their disappointment, but then a few minutes later, a person says with a lot of concern, "I want to go back to what you shared. How do you find the strength to go to school here after all these years of that? I'm going to talk to a dean."

3. In a stage 2 dialogue about ethnicity and class, with the following opening question, "How has your ethnic identity impacted your experience applying or working at jobs?" You notice that people who identify as people of color and don't identify as Black seem to be staying silent. When they do share about experiences of racism and classism that they have had, they are then extremely quick to note that what they have experienced in terms of racism is "much less significant than what their Black friends have experienced".

4. In an early dialogue meeting, a person who identifies as straight asks a gay dialogue participant to speak in a way that makes it seem as if they must speak for all people who aren't straight. Other students who identify as queer end up doing most of the storytelling. Straight participants listen, but don't share stories about sexual orientation on a personal level; instead, they talk about gender, socioeconomic status, race, etc.

5. In your 4th meeting, a participant shares that a school that they went to previously had to be closed because of dangerous building materials like asbestos in the basement, where most of their classwork was held. Another participant quickly jumps in and says, "Oh my goodness! I connect with that so much. My school was also rundown. Our laptops were so old I was embarrassed to be seen with one in public!"

Practice thinking relationally in the following 2 scenarios:

1) At a small college there are strained relationships between college administrators and students organizing to increase the hourly wages for dining hall workers on campus. Tensions have been steadily increasing as students have engaged in an escalating sequence of nonviolent direct action.

2) A recent free speech event planned by a conservative student group on campus was peacefully protested by students who felt that the speaker should not be allowed to speak on campus due to previous antisemitic comments. Ever since the event and the related protest, there have been tensions between the leaders of the conservative group, the protestors, and the leaders of a Jewish student association.