

TOGETHER, one LINCOLN



Overview

In conversations around a table, on the front porch, and at the end of the driveway, a small group of people (ideally four - seven) come together to get to know one another in a more meaningful way. Guided by a simple format, participants practice being open and curious about all perspectives, with a focus on learning from one another, rather than trying to debate the topic at hand.

Conversation Agreements

Be curious and open to learning. Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. Enjoy hearing all points of view. Maintain an attitude of exploration.

Show respect and suspend judgment. Human beings tend to judge one another; do your best not to. Setting judgments aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated.

Find common ground and note differences. Look for common ground you can agree on and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.

Be authentic and welcome that from others. Share what's important to you. Speak authentically from your personal experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.

Be purposeful and to the point. Notice if what you are conveying is or is not pertinent to the topic at hand.

Own and guide the conversation. Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and of the conversation. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed.

Apologize and learn. Accept that you may or others may make a mistake. These conversations take practice and we are learning together. If your words have a hurtful impact apologize and commit to doing better.

CONVERSATION GUIDE



Conversation Agreements Continued

If you are concerned about managing people that dominate the conversation as well as off-topic, or disruptive situations during the conversation. We offer these tips:

- Everyone shares responsibility for guiding the conversation and is invited to help keep the conversation on track.
- The group can decide to keep track of time in some way to help people remember to keep their comments similar in length to others. Soft music when the time is up is a great reminder.
- If an area of interest has arisen that has taken the group off topic, ask the group if they would like to set aside the new topic for a separate conversation.
- If someone is dominating, disruptive or has found their soapbox, respectfully interrupt the situation, refer to the Conversation Agreements and invite everyone to get back on track with the current question.

The Conversation Starts Here

We all want to live in a society that is fair and has opportunity for all. This conversation is an opportunity to explore our experience of race and racism. Where are we and what do we aspire to for ourselves and our community?

Introductions: Getting Started / Why Are We Here?

- What interested you or drew you to this conversation?

Core Values

Answer one or more of the following:

- What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your life?
- What would your best friend say about who you are?
- What are your hopes and concerns for your community and/or the country?



Race and Ethnicity

Remember that the goal for this conversation is for all of us to listen and learn about where we have different opinions and where we have shared interests, intentions and goals. Answer one or more of the following questions:

- When were you first aware of yourself as a member of a particular racial group?
- When was a time you realized that you would be treated differently because of your race?
- What do you think it would take to create a society that values racial and ethnic differences?
- Can you think of anything you are doing toward that effort? Can you think of anything you could start doing?
- When you hear people in your circles making biased comments, do you speak up? Why or why not?
- Who are you most afraid of having conversations about race with? Do you have any idea why?

Reflection & Next Steps

Answer one or more of the following questions:

- In one sentence, share what was most meaningful / valuable to you in the experience of this conversation.
- What learning, new understanding or common ground was found on this topic?
- Has this conversation changed your perception of anyone in this group, including yourself?
- What is one important thing you thought was accomplished here?
- What is one action you can commit to taking based on the conversation we just had?

Here are some ideas for action:

- Use our **Read For Change: Resources from Lincoln City Libraries** list to start a bookclub, read one of the books with your family, or with your colleagues.
- Organize and engage in additional conversations