

FACILITATION GUIDE

This facilitation guide serves as a supplemental resource to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Conversation Starter Cards. Leaders who use the DEIA Conversation Starter Cards may use this facilitation guide as a tool to ensure adequate preparation for conversation facilitation.

GENERAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY CONVERSATION FACILITATION TIPS

Set Conversation Guidelines

Prior to engaging in discussion about the DEIA Conversation Starter Card content, take a few minutes to set discussion guidelines with the group. A few examples of guidelines that might be set include showing respect for differing opinions and allowing all participants to share their thoughts before moving onto subsequent sections.

Start with an Icebreaker Activity

Icebreaker activities are a great way to build connection and sense of community prior to discussion commencement. When people feel connected to other participants, they are more likely to engage in open discussion.

Use Effective Communication Techniques

Be aware of the different ways in which you are communicating, both verbally and nonverbally. Think about the ways in which participants might best engage with the content. Use various communication techniques, such as active-listening and communicating directions in multiple formats (for example, reading the directions out loud and printing the directions for dissemination) to increase participant engagement.

Establish a Safe Environment

Give the group permission to display a level of candor that isn't reached in most settings. Encourage listening to understand and suspending judgement of differing opinions.

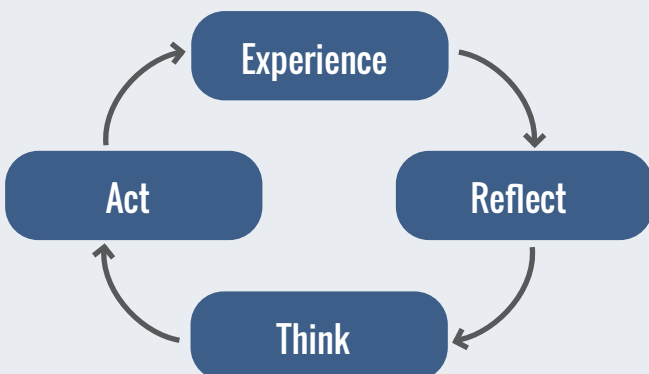
Be Comfortable with Silence

It can be difficult to fight the urge to fill moments of silence. During these facilitated conversations, ensure that participants are given the time to process their thoughts and share without influence.

Have a De-escalation Plan

Conversations around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility topics may become tense. Uncomfortable conversations are necessary for growth, however, if discussion becomes volatile, ensure there is a plan in place for redirection. If redirection is unsuccessful, ensure there is a plan to pause the conversation until all parties can continue the conversation appropriately.

Experiential Learning Cycle



EXPERIENCE: Encourage participants to personally engage with the activities and scenarios.

REFLECT: Give participants space to acknowledge their initial mental, emotional, and physical reactions to each activity and scenario.

THINK: Ask participants to discuss thoughts while posing alternative approaches for continued conversation and consideration.

ACT: Motivate participants to realize how this conversation shows up in their day-to-day life, and plan for appropriate actions and next steps.

FACILITATION TIPS

Scenarios

Scenario 1:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A

Acknowledge the team member's feelings and behaviors. Then offer that new perspectives might take longer to work through at first but might ultimately lead to the best solution, which may potentially end up being more efficient in the long run.

B

Offer the following questions "What if circumstances out of your control led to work group changes? Would it benefit you to have experience working with different types of people prior to forced change?"

Anticipated Questions

Question: Does this mean that I should always be seeking out new team members? When is it okay to work with people familiar to me?

Answer: Working with familiar faces is okay! Being aware of our unconscious and conscious biases about working with those more unfamiliar to us is important to identify and address patterns of behavior for consideration.

Question: After conversation, this team member reiterates that they are still more comfortable working with a select few teammates and have no plan to work with anyone else on the team unless forced to do so. How should I respond?

Answer: Change can be difficult. Reintroducing this concept to the team frequently, in low pressure situations, might help ease resistance and motivate people to get outside of their comfort zones. You might also ask this team member to consider the perspectives that are missing when only a select few teammates are consistently consulted.

Scenario 2:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A

Intentionally try to obtain a variety of perspectives by seeking input from people across the unit whenever possible in decision making.

B

Provide multiple avenues for decision-making input from all people within the unit, including methods such as written submissions, group discussions, and one-on-one recommendations.

Anticipated Questions

Question: There are so many different types of diversity, what type is this scenario referencing?

Answer: This scenario is referencing all aspects of diversity, to include all attributes in which make team members different from one another.

Question: For reasons out of my control, some decisions must be made quickly and by the same select few individuals. What am I supposed to do?

Answer: Focus on and continue to champion diversity in areas of decision-making you are able to influence, understanding we should trust the leader is making the most effective decision concerning the given situation and allotted time. There will be times when you can include diverse voices and perspectives and other times when decisions must be made without others' perspectives.

FACILITATION TIPS

Scenarios

Scenario 1:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A

The goal of DEIA is not equal treatment; it is fair and equal opportunities to succeed. Offer to these teammates that ensuring all members having the necessary tools and resources to succeed increases the team's success, which inevitably returns positive impact for all members.

B

Sometimes questions are best answered with questions. Ask the teammate to explore the potential reasons why they are more concerned about "equal treatment" than about every member being able to adequately do their job. You might also ask how they would want to be treated should they be in their teammate's shoes, or whether they can think of any circumstances where different treatment is just and fair?

Anticipated Questions

Question: I don't understand why the goal of DEIA is not fairness, don't we want everyone to be treated equally?

Answer: Fairness, is treating others appropriately based on their circumstances. It is the goal of DEIA to ensure that all members receive appropriate resources, which does not necessarily mean that support will look the same for all.

Question: How is DEIA different than Affirmative action and Equal Employment Opportunity?

Answer: Affirmative action is a set of specific efforts designed to correct the underrepresentation of identified marginalized communities across the workforce. Equal employment opportunity, often referenced as EEO, is the notion that everyone should have the equal opportunity when they're considered for employment decisions (such as hiring, promotion, termination, compensation, etc.). EEO is civilian-centric whereas MEO (Military Equal Opportunity) is the military-centric equivalent.

Scenario 2:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A

There are various ways in which this scenario might be addressed. To the right, at an extremely high-level, is only one of many potential approaches.

Step 1 - Enlist members to form a team; identify roles and responsibilities

Step 2 - Plan a current state assessment

Step 3 - Collect data (review documentation, conduct interviews, compile metrics, etc.)

Step 4 - Analyze data (identify trends, triangulate qualitative and quantitative findings, etc.)

Step 5 - Formulate recommendations from findings

Step 6 - Develop a recommendation implementation plan

Step 7 - Identify owners of recommendations

Step 8 - Track progress and iterate as necessary

Anticipated Question

Question: I don't have a DEIA point of contact or team within my unit, in this case, who would be responsible for equity initiatives such as this one?

Answer: If there is no DEIA point of contact or team within your unit, it is recommended you reach to your Component or Service level DEIA office for further guidance.

FACILITATION TIPS

Scenarios

Scenario 1:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A

Acknowledge the team member's feelings and thank them for coming to you to share their concerns. Then, ask them if there are any specific reasons why they feel excluded so that you are able to better understand their perspective and support.

B

Acknowledge the team member's feelings and thank them for coming to you to share their concerns. Ask them if they would be comfortable brainstorming actionable ways the team might help them feel more included.

Anticipated Questions

Question: What type of diversity is being referenced?

Answer: This scenario is referencing all aspects of diversity, to include all attributes in which make team members different from one another.

Question: If I've invited all members of my organization to the table, why is it also my responsibility to make them "feel good" about their contributions?

Answer: The value of representation is lessened if the features that make the group diverse are not respected. It isn't necessarily about "feelings," but rather about acknowledging and validating all perspectives. To harness the power of diversity, all voices must be empowered to bring thoughts to the table, and respected when they do, and it is the responsibility of leaders to practice inclusivity.

Scenario 2:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A

Check in with this team member to understand how they are feeling and if additional action is needed.

Anticipated Question

Question: As a leader I've tried to become more inclusive by holding space for activities and events, but oftentimes participation is low, and the fruit does not bear the labor. What should I do?

Answer: It is important to understand your organization's diverse interests and skillsets. The engagement challenge might be due to lack of interest, in which case it would be best to survey organization members to understand the types of events they would be interested in attending prior to hosting events. It could also be the case that organization members would prefer an alternative to extracurricular events or activities.

FACILITATION TIPS

Scenarios

Scenario 1:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A Work with your EEO/MEO Office and identified team member to employ a reasonable, agreed upon accommodation until an accessible option is available.

Anticipated Question

Question: How do I clarify whether a concern is accessibility related or something different?

Answer: There is no harm in asking, so reach to your EEO/MEO office to clarify any questions you might have about concerns raised.

Scenario 2:

After reading the scenario and question to group participants, take a moment of pause for response. If participants are having a difficult time formulating a response, start the discussion by proposing an example response.

Response Examples

A Ensuring that all spaces, tools, and resources are easily accessible for all members of the team is vital to team success.

Anticipated Question

Question: Is it appropriate to ask a colleague why they use certain accessibility features, such as a ramp or accessible technology features?

Answer: Generally, it is not appropriate to inquire about the use of someone's use of accessibility features.

FACILITATION TIPS

FACILITATION WRAP UP

Key to facilitating discussions around DEIA is to acknowledge that the example responses provided are not exhaustive, but rather a potential starting point for conversation. Example responses cannot take into consideration everyone's individual thoughts and motives. Therefore, facilitators are encouraged to promote discussion and exploration of other factors such as mission and organizational needs, while valuing everyone's individual concerns or thoughts.

We recommend wrapping up each conversation by allowing space for participants to think more deeply about the scenarios and alternate considerations not covered by the example responses.

Additional Questions for Consideration

- What do you think of the requests presented in each scenario? Are they reasonable or possible?
- Have any other factors been considered?
- How could you set boundaries and manage expectations in each scenario?
- What will you commit to doing?
- Where, if at all, is more capacity-building needed?