

# COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

## GROUND RULES FOR SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUES

### **We are all here with the best intentions.**

We are here to improve our community, not hurt each other. If something happens, assume the best intentions.

### **Use “I” statements.**

Beginning statements with “I believe,” “I think,” or “I feel” avoids generalizations and confusion.

*Note: Saying “I feel like” dilutes this. Consider the difference: “I feel like you were aggressive” vs. “I felt scared.”*

### **We are all experts on our own personal experience.**

Acknowledge the validity of others’ experiences.

### **Address the statement, not the person.**

We may make statements that offend or oppose the beliefs of others. We should react to what was said, not **who** said it.

### **Participants represent only themselves, and are not representatives of social groups.**

In dialogue, group members are not expected to represent organizations or groups.

### **Don’t substitute “all” for “some,” or “some” for “one.”**

Our experiences don’t expose us to everything there is about a topic, even when we feel like experts.

### **Push beyond your comfort zone.**

Challenge yourself to share your reactions, even when you disagree or don’t relate.

### **Share airtime.**

No dominating the conversation.

### **Listen with an open mind.**

Think about what was said before formulating a response. Try not to interrupt or have side conversations.

### **Challenge yourself to say what you really mean.**

Communicate directly and honestly. Avoid being politically correct in favor of being genuine. Avoid using sarcasm in favor of being honest. Practice kindness and civility.

### **Practice empathy.**

Put yourself in the other people’s shoes.

### **Try to acknowledge generalizations and stereotypes in your own contributions.**

Be comfortable if others challenge them or ask you to be more specific about them.

### **Honor confidentiality.**

What happens here stays here. Take learning out of the room, and leave the names in.

**\*NO RECORDINGS OR SCREEN SHOTS OF DIALOGUES ARE PERMITTED\***