



Dialogue Planning

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS



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Begin with purpose. All other decisions should be grounded in your purpose!

THE WHY: PURPOSE

- What **occasion** or **topic** do you feel driven to create conversation around?
- What do you hope participants will come away **feeling, knowing, thinking**, and/or **doing** as a result of the conversation?
- Make sure that your purpose is **clear to you** and transparently **communicated to participants**.

*Note: You may have multiple purposes. Make sure you prioritize which is **primary**: if nothing else, what are you hoping to provide/create?*

THE WHAT: OBJECTIVES

- What is the **actual work (intellectual, social, emotional)** your participants will be doing to realize your purpose? What series of concrete, observable **ACTIONS** will they engage in?
- Purpose is abstract and overarching. Objectives are **concrete**: e.g. Self-reflect. Define [term]. Analyze [text]. Describe [experience]. etc.)
- What necessary **knowledge** and **skills** do participants first need to build or access in order to complete other objectives?

THE WHO: PARTICIPANTS

- Who would you like to **include** in this conversation? Why? How will this dialogue process **serve** them?
- What do you know about them? What are their **identities, interests, and needs**? What do you need to find out about them in order to better serve them through the dialogue?
- Who else may you wish you to bring in as **partners, advisors, presenters, co-facilitators**, and/or **audience** members?

THE WHEN ± WHERE: LOGISTICS

- **How long** will the dialogue last? What **date/time** will it (tentatively) take place?
- **How many** participants are ideal? How will you **recruit** them?
- What **promotion** is needed?
- Will you be serving **refreshments**? From **where**?
- What **materials** will you need to bring? What is your plan for **creating, buying, or sourcing** them?
- What is the (desired) **location**? How will you curate the **environment** for dialogue, including taking steps to ensure maximum **accessibility**?
- What **funding** is necessary and how will you get it?

THE HOW: STRUCTURES

- What dialogue **format(s)** and **mode(s)** will participants engage in? What **activities** will participants perform, in order to complete your objectives and fulfill your purpose?
- What **prompts** will they respond to in each stage? How can you **frame** them to yield the dialogue you want?
- What **materials** will participants need in order to respond in the formats and modes you've chosen?
- How will you accommodate different **learning styles**? How will you include different **identities** and **perspectives**? How will you set **guidelines** and create a space that is both **safe and challenging**?

↑ Think about how you will structure EACH of these key stages of a dialogue process: ↓

COMMUNITY BUILDING

How will participants to **connect** to one another and build **trust**? Plan a "check-in" or initial sharing activity. This should be low-stakes and positive, not requiring too much vulnerability or critical thinking of folks.

FRAMING THE DIALOGUE

Express the **purpose**. Share the **agenda**. Define key **terms**. Establish **community agreements** that people can understand + agree to. Norms describe concrete behaviors, not abstract ideals!

MAIN DIALOGUE

This is the body of your dialogue process. What **prompts** and **questions** will you use? How can you frame them to align with your objectives + purpose? In what **formats** and **modes** will participants respond?

REFLECTION ± SYNTHESIS

How will participants **reflect** on what they are taking away + **synthesize** what they've learned? This can be individual and/or shared with the group, but make sure to create space for this at the dialogue's end.