



# Dialogue Planning

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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?
- What is the (desired) **location**? How will you ensure **accessibility** and **curate the environment** for dialogue?

### 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 **materials** will you need?
- What **prompts** will they respond to? How can you **frame** questions to yield the dialogue you want?
- 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 **formats** will you use? (e.g. pairs; circle practice journaling; panel; etc) What **prompts** will you use? How can you frame them to align with your objectives + purpose?

#### 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 end of the dialogue.

