

What is a Brave Conversation?



“ A discussion, conversation or meeting defined by a commitment to lean into vulnerability, to stay curious and generous, to stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving, to take a break and circle back when necessary, to be fearless in owning our parts, and, as psychologist Harriet Lerner teaches, to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard.”

— Brené Brown, American researcher and scholar



Brave conversations that focus on a racial justice lens include:

- » Speaking up against something that directly impacts you.
- » Being an ally to Black, Indigenous and people of color.
- » Sharing one's story/perspective.
- » Sharing a position knowing it will be critiqued.



Implementation

Rules of Engagement

- » Leaning into vulnerability.
- » Staying curious (open-minded).
- » Sticking with problem identification/solving.
- » Taking breaks and reengaging.
- » Owning our parts (accountability).
- » Listening with the same passion with which we want to be heard.

Things to Consider

- » What is the goal of your conversation?
- » What structure best serves the conversation?
- » What are the ground rules that foster vulnerability?



Components of Brave Conversations

1

Establish Purpose and Expectations

2

Set Community Agreements

3

Opening Activity and Thoughts

4

Engage in Conversation

5

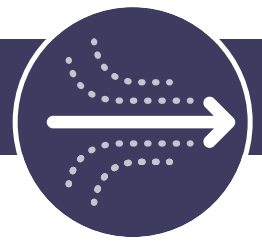
Close the Conversation

6

Commit to Moving Forward



Brave Conversations Template



- 1. Establish Purpose and Expectations:** Be explicit about the main topic of discussion and the reason(s) for having the conversation.
- 2. Set Community Agreements:** Set clear expectations and promote a safe space for participants to engage in the conversation.
- 3. Opening Activity:** Engage the group in an activity or scenario that helps promote conversation around the topic.
- 4. Engage in Conversation:** Facilitate a discussion that engages all participants, guides the discussion, and synthesizes responses to build community and continue to support a safe space.
- 5. Close the Conversation:** Ensure that the conversation ends with the facilitator bringing together the group with final thoughts and a summary of the discussion. While this closes the conversation, the next step allows for further action and support of the conversation moving forward.
- 6. Commit to Moving Forward:** Brave conversations focus on challenging topics, and there is opportunity to commit to moving forward in both big and small ways. Engage with the participants in a commitment to moving forward in a way that is measurable, achievable and has the potential to be revisited to continue to support the conversation.



Role of the Facilitator

- » Listen.
- » Ask questions.
- » Start big.
- » Empathize.
- » Reflect.

Best Practices

- » Utilize resources such as books, videos, etc.
- » Practice.
- » Ask questions.
- » Reflect.
- » Think about boundaries (yours and others).
- » Take perspective.

Key Takeaways

1 *Brave conversations can be informal.*

2 *Brave conversations are uncomfortable.*

3 *Brave conversations are about growth.*

4 *We get better with practice.*

