



## **Talking about Charleston**

**PURPOSE:** To provide an opportunity for a dialogue about what happened in Charleston, South Carolina on Wednesday, June 17, 2015 and to create a space for the sharing of thoughts, feelings and ideas.

**TIME:** 40 - 60 minutes (*depending on the number of people involved*)

### **PROCESS:**

1. Identify someone to assist in facilitating/guiding the conversation. The role can be as simple as starting and ending the conversation, ensuring that everyone is encouraged to speak and that everyone is listening to others.
2. Key Guidelines are: Authentic personal sharing; listening and giving space to others. LISTENING to others and accepting views and experiences that may be different from one's own is very important. The hope is that there is a new shared understanding in listening to each other.
3. Share the purpose of the dialogue in a sentence or two. Ask participants to reflect on the questions in silence for a few minutes (2 - 5'). They may write some responses, but that's not essential. A few moments of silent reflection is crucial, however.
4. Consider taking the questions one at a time and let each person respond before you move to the next question. These questions are offered as a way to promote dialogue and move from the personal into the organization and into the community – time permitting.
5. Ask your facilitator/guide to summarize and paraphrase – and to ask follow-up questions as appropriate.
6. In closing, ask how understanding has increased through listening to others' responses to the questions.

## QUESTIONS for REFLECTION

1. What was your immediate feeling upon learning about what happened in Charleston? How have these feelings shifted or become more complex over the last weeks?
2. What is the dominant story you are telling yourself and others about what happened in Charleston?
3. How does that story reflect “what’s in your ground?” How does it reflect what’s in our country’s ground?
4. If this tragedy were to happen in Charlotte, what do you hope we would do as a City? What do you hope you and/or your organization would do?