

CHECKING IN:
**REMEMBERING
SEPTEMBER 2016**
ONE YEAR LATER

In September 2016 residents of Charlotte found themselves in the national narrative – a police-involved shooting that was the impetus for demonstrations, protests and civil unrest. Charlotte was shocked but should not have been surprised when affected community groups expressed their anger and frustration over issues that had been buried in our ground for way too long. Many could not believe what we were seeing and experiencing in the Queen City. We heard people say, "This is not who we are." But, too many knew that sadly this is exactly who we are – and that what happened affects us all.

As our community began to accept the reality of what was happening - and to take steps to address long standing concerns around equity, fairness, inclusion and police/community relations – Community Building Initiative (CBI) and the Community Relations Committee (CRC) served on the front lines as a ready resource as people and organizations responded. We supported the crafting of a “Statement of Commitment” signed by over 2,000 people and created a Dialogue Guide (“Talking Together in Challenging Times”) shared with partners and stakeholders and made available on-line. Deep, enduring relationships allowed our two organizations to be a resource in a time of crisis.

As we approach the anniversary of September 2016, CBI and CRC are once again offering resources to people, organizations and our community. We know there is value in looking back and in looking forward as we prepare to commemorate, observe and continue to learn from what took place last year and what is underway as a result. We are also painfully aware of the turmoil and tensions that erupted in Charlottesville. We have seen demonstrations and rallies in Charlotte and in cities throughout our country in response. We continue in our commitment to confront long-term racial divisions and discrimination, to build a more fair and just community and to support constructive dialogue between allies and across difference to increase understanding, inspire action and promote accountability. We invite you to use these resources for your own “Check In” and let us know how you - and we as a community - are doing.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CHECK IN?”

A friend has likened last September to having a heart attack – catastrophic and surprising though perhaps inevitable because of family history or years of not paying attention to troubling signs. Once we move through the initial trauma of a heart attack, we face the necessity to institute changes. We may adjust our behaviors, improve our diet, embark on an exercise program and take other preventative steps. Periodically, we submit to a “check in” to see how we are doing and what additional actions or adjustments may be needed.

Conversation Guide

- PURPOSE** To provide a safe space for dialogue, engagement and the sharing of feelings, thoughts and ideas in response to the anniversary of the events of September 2016.
- TIME** 90 - 120 minutes (*depending on the number of people involved*)
- NUMBER** 10 to 12 people are an ideal number for one moderator/facilitator.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Speak your feelings and thoughts by making "I" statements.
- Use "both/and" thinking, rather than "either/or."
- Listen for understanding rather than judgment.
- Be open to thoughts and feelings different from your own.
- Build on what each other has said in the conversation.
- Remember that it's OK to disagree but NOT to attack, shame or blame.

Guideline for Facilitators

CONVERSATION GUIDE

ROLE

Your 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.

KEY GUIDELINES

Authentic personal sharing; listening and giving space to others.

This is not a “debate” or a problem-solving discussion. You are not trying to come to a singular conclusion but rather to express and better understand the multiple realities that may be in the room.

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.

Share Guidelines for Participants & Questions for Reflection.

PROCESS

1. **Share the purpose of the dialogue** in a sentence or two.
2. **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 are crucial, however.
3. **Take 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/engagement and move from the personal into the community.
4. **Summarize and paraphrase** what is said. Ask follow-up questions as appropriate.
5. **Confidentiality:** If a participant asks that a personal attribution stay in the room, that request should be honored.
6. **In closing, ask how understanding has increased through listening to others’ responses to the questions.**
7. **Feedback** – Remind participants to share their reflections in written or video format using **#checkin2017 @CBCharlotte**.

Questions for Reflection

CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. As you think back to the events of Fall 2016 in Charlotte, what stands out for you?
2. What evidence have you seen, heard or experienced that supports you to believe that change is possible in our community? What changes have you observed?
3. How have the events of September 2016 impacted you?
4. What would you like to see take place and/or be part of in the year ahead?