



Talking To One Another

PURPOSE: To create a safe space for dialogue and the sharing of feelings, thoughts and ideas following crises and/or tragedies that are occurring in our community and our country.

TIME: 60 - 90 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:*
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.
You may not get to discuss all the questions; this is okay. The first question is the most important.
- 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. 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 and move from the personal into the organization and/or 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

FEELINGS

1. *What has been your immediate feeling upon learning about what has happened?*

Have these feelings shifted or become more complex? If so, how?

STORIES

2. *What is the dominant story you are telling yourself and others about what happened?*

What other stories are you hearing? Who is telling these stories?

Whose story don't you know or understand?

PEOPLE

3. *How can we – as leaders and individuals - connect and stand with those who are vulnerable and marginalized in our community?*

What must we confront that's "in the ground" in our community and in ourselves in order to interrupt the culture of fear of and violence toward "the other" – whomever that may be in our worlds and spheres?