

CROSSROADS

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CENTER

Question-Crafting Guide

1. What type of exchange are you trying to generate with your question? Dialogue or debate or analysis?
2. Does the question promote understanding and support for building relationships that can sustain deeper, more challenging conversations?
3. What are the follow-up questions?
4. Does the question allow for people with differing viewpoints and opinions to provide input?
5. Which experiences aren't in the room? Do those views need to be stated if no one else articulates them?
6. Is the language you are using inclusive (non-binary, etc.) and collective (we, our)?

To foster dialogue, asking questions that invite personal experiences or associations rather than objective judgment or immediate critical problem solving is more likely to promote the understanding of different perspectives necessary to build a community of trust or even ultimately move to action steps when necessary. Sample questions that tend to encourage dialogue rather than debate or analytical discussion are suggested below. These questions are not intended to be used sequentially, but are simply listed as variations of the basic types of questions represented in Dialogue A.C.T.S.

Questions to Promote Dialogue

- What are your particular associations with _____?
- How would you describe the ways you learned to think about _____?
- How have you experienced _____ in your family?
- How have you experienced _____ in your home community?
- How have you experienced _____ in your professional community?
- Have there been other situations where you have experienced or observed bias around _____?
- In your experience, what are some other ways social biases manifest themselves regarding _____?
- Can anyone share a story or experience of being internally conflicted by your beliefs about _____ and the roles you tend to play according to social norms?
- What are some other perspectives that have not be represented by our comments thus far?
- What might someone who holds that perspective say if they were here?

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