

Useful Questions for Dialogue Facilitation

Things to keep in mind when posing the following questions:

Those receiving them may not speak English as a first language, so please keep in mind your pace of speaking, and the words you use (e.g. colloquialisms).

Be sensitive to disability issues (e.g. using the words "stand" or "hear").

Exploratory questions to probe basic knowledge:

- *What do you think about _____?*
- *How does _____ make you feel?*
- *What bothers/concerns/confuses you the most about _____?*
- *What are some ways we might respond to _____?*

Open-ended questions that don't require a detailed or specific kind of response:

- *What is your understanding of _____?*
- *What do you want to know about _____?*
- *What is the first thing you think about in relation to _____?*
- *What are some questions you have about _____?*
- *State one image/scene/event/moment from your experience that relates to _____?*

Challenge questions to examine assumptions, conclusions, and interpretations:

- *What can we infer/conclude from _____?*
- *Does _____ remind you of anything?*
- *What principle do you see operating here?*
- *What does this help you explain?*
- *How does this relate to other experiences or things you already knew?*

Relational questions for comparisons of themes, ideas, or issues:

- *Do you see a pattern here?*
- *How do you account for _____?*
- *What was significant about _____?*
- *What connections do you see?*
- *What does _____ suggest to you?*
- *Is there a connection between what you've just said and what _____ was saying earlier?*

Cause and effect questions for causal relationships between ideas, actions, or events:

- *How do you think _____ relates or causes _____?*
- *What are some consequences of _____?*

- *Where does _____ lead?*
- *What are some pros and cons of _____?*
- *What is likely to be the effect of _____?*

Extension questions to expand the discussion:

- *What do the rest of you think?*
- *How do others feel?*
- *What did you find noteworthy about this comment?*
- *How can we move forward?*
- *Can you give some specific examples of _____?*
- *How would you put that another way?*

Hypothetical questions to propose a change in the facts or issues:

- *What if _____ were from a different _____, how would that change things?*
- *Would it make a difference if we were in a _____ society/culture?*
- *How might this dialogue be different if _____?*
- *What might happen if we were to _____?*
- *How might your life be different if _____?*

Diagnostic questions to probe motives or causes:

- *What brings you to say that?*
- *What do you mean?*
- *What led you to that conclusion?*

Priority questions to seek to identify the most important issue:

- *From all that we've talked about, what is the most important concept you see?*
- *Considering the different ideas in the room, what do you see as the most critical issue?*
- *What do you find yourself resonating with the most?*
- *If you had to pick just one topic to continue talking about, what would it be?*

Process questions to elicit satisfaction/buy-in/interest levels:

- *Is this where we should be going?*
- *How are people feeling about the direction of this dialogue?*
- *What perspectives are missing from this dialogue?*
- *Everyone has been _____ for a while, why?*
- *How would you summarize this dialogue so far?*
- *How might splitting into groups/pairs affect our discussion?*

Analytical questions to seek to apply concepts or principles to new or different situations:

- *What are the main arguments for _____?*
- *What are the assumptions underlying _____?*
- *What questions arise for you as you think about _____?*
- *What implications does _____ have? (for _____?)*

- *Does this idea challenge or support what we've been talking about?*
- *How does this idea/contribution add to what has already been said?*

Summary questions to elicit syntheses, what themes or lessons have emerged:

- *Where are we?*
- *If you had to pick two themes from this dialogue, what would they be?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *What benefits did we gain today?*
- *What remains unresolved? How can we better process this?*
- *Based on our dialogue, what will you be thinking about after you leave?*
- *Let me see if I understand what we've talked about so far... What have I missed?*
- *Ok, this is what I've heard so far... Does anyone have anything to correct or add?*

Action questions to call for a conclusion or action:

- *How can we use that information?*
- *What does this new information say about our own actions/lives?*
- *How can you adapt this information to make it applicable to you?*
- *How will you do things differently as a result of this meeting?*
- *What are our next steps?*
- *What kind of support do we need as we move forward?*
- *How does this dialogue fit into our bigger plans?*

Evaluative questions to gauge emotions, anxiety levels, what is going well or not:

- *Is there anything else you would like to talk about?*
- *How are you feeling about this now?*
- *What was a high point for you? A low point?*
- *Where were you engaged? Disengaged?*
- *What excited you? Disappointed you?*

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