



# CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE RESOURCES & UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring 2025

# Scheduled Spring Events

## Pilot House "Use Your Voice" dates

- February 17, March 17, April 14 (10am - 2pm)
- Students are provided postcards to write representatives about issues they care about
- VoteUP: Information on voter registration and civic engagement

## Immigration Panel

- Monday March 24, 2025 5-6:30 PM in Shiley 319
- Prof. Blair Woodard, Fr. Peter Walsh, Erin Currie, Michael McNerney
- Immigration policies, know your rights, supporting undocumented community members, Catholic teaching
- Resources provided

## Student Environmental Panel and Organization Networking

- DB Aud and lobby, Friday April 4, 3:30-5:30
- Students who attended COP 2024 with Dr. Oculi and those who completed environmental internships in 2024
- Local environmental organizations represented at reception following the panel

## Lunchtime Insights: Share what you care about and discussion of current events

- Tuesdays 12:30-1:30, Diversity Center

# Building Skills in Constructive Dialogue

- Think in terms of touch points:
  - Where can you weave in a few exercises that give students the opportunity to examine their own ways of thinking and being in the world and/or give students the opportunity to listen to each other without judgment in order to understand others' ways of thinking and being in the world?
  - How can you help students build relationships and trust with one another?

# Facilitation Considerations:

## *Start with the Self & Model Empathy*

- We need to think deeply about our own identities, beliefs, experiences, interactions in the world; why do we think what we think? What led to this way of thinking?
  - If I was influenced by my family, my early experiences, my faith traditions, my culture, etc, so was everyone else. Why should I expect everyone to think like me or have the same emotional reaction that I do to a certain issue when we come from very different ways of seeing the world?
- Build community and trust
  - Openness to different opinions, but accountability to what we say
  - I statements
  - Rather than ask what something thinks, ask why they think that way.
    - Ask what influenced how they think about the issue.



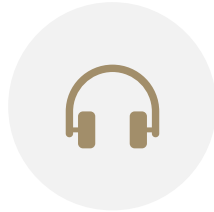
# Establishing Norms

- Establishing norms for conversations is a good way to hold students responsible in conversations:
  - Can achieve this broadly in syllabus or for specific exercises
- When students disengage-bring them back to the conversation based on agreed norms
- Embracing discomfort is part of dialogue; remain respectful of the person if not the idea
- Everyone is here to learn...
- Take personal responsibility for your own energy
- Recognize your own and others' emotions-be empathetic
- Assume the best in others
- Share airtime

# Classroom Activities: Constructive Dialogue Institute



CDI HOPES AND  
CONCERNS



CDI LISTENING  
SESSIONS



CDI MINUTE  
MEET UPS



CDI SPOTLIGHTS



PERSPECTIVES  
INSTRUCTOR  
GUIDE

Loretta J. Ross:  
Facilitator  
Tricks for  
Calling In

Goal: Model the world we want to see rather than react to the world that is

Acknowledge harmful words and address them; what are the underlying assumptions? Point out fallacies

Goal in calling in is to develop skills to respond more constructively rather than to react defensively

- Grant permission to be imperfect
- Be authentic rather than performative
- Emotions are welcome

Calm heated discussions with somatic practices (e.g. box breathing)

- **Self-awareness: what energy are you bringing to the group?**

Examples of Constructive Questions

- What makes you say that?
- Why is that issue so important to you?
- Did a person or experience influence your belief? In what ways?
- Can you say more about what you mean?
- Why do you think that is?
- Have you always felt that way?
- How do you know this?

Sustained  
Dialogue  
Institute:  
Building Trust  
to Work  
Together

- Exercise of trust-building: in groups of 8-10, try standing in a circle, eyes closed, and see how high the group can count with each person calling out a number one at a time. You are trying to listen to each number, trying to make sure everyone participates. Any time two people talk at the same time, you have to start over. After the exercise, ask what the participants noticed about the exercise and what they themselves experienced.
- When confronted with something that is factually incorrect:
  - State the Fact: make it clear, concrete, plausible
    - e.g. DEI hiring was not responsible for the plane crash over the Potomac; all personnel involved were highly trained individuals and the accident was tragic
  - Warn about Myth: let people know you will explain the myth behind the misconception
    - e.g. blaming DEI hiring is a myth that is intended to divide us
  - Explain the Fallacy: explain the myth behind the misconception
    - e.g. by raising false claims about DEI hiring, the Trump administration is trying to divide and distract; it is trying to promote a certain narrative that appeals to its base: white, mostly male, disenchanted voters without providing any evidence of truth
  - Tell the Fact again: reinforce the factual statement
    - e.g. the plane crash was a tragedy; the investigation continues to try to uncover what happened; it is an event that should not be politicized



# Classroom Activities: Listening to Understand

One-on-one exercise where each person has 2 minutes to explain their opinion about something (gun control, for example). The other person simply listens.

- After the first person is done, the second person reflects back to the first person what they heard and asks if what they heard was correct. Then switch roles.

Small group: give students questions to ask of each other; tell students to listen attentively without saying a word, trying to avoid thinking about their own answer to the question—simply listen fully for 60 seconds, then move on to the next person. Then talk about the experience.

- How did it feel to truly listen intently to each person without responding, without asking other questions, without letting your mind wander to the response you wanted to give?
- Why is this hard to do?

Want to  
partner or  
need more  
information?

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[Resources on our Website](#)