

How To Talk About DEIB Topics at Your Organization

Having organization-wide DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) dialogues doesn't have to be scary! They are opportunities to come together, increase our engagement and connections with one another, and through collective courage, have dialogues and conversations that will enable our organization to be better aligned with **DEIB principles**.

Here we provide a template with questions around DEIB at an organizational level as a follow-up to the **Courageous Conversation Starters** for dialogues with individual colleagues. These questions can be used in various ways with different types of groups at work, like at organization-wide monthly- and quarterly meetings. They can also be bi-weekly or monthly stand-alone opportunities that your organization intentionally sets aside to deepen the vision, mission, and equity of your organization.

Think, Pair, Share and Pair, Share & Report Out are two common smaller group activities that can be included in a larger, organization-wide meeting, gathering, or workshop. Consider jotting down notes as you work through these questions with your peers:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you worked in places where DEIB conversations took place? Share a bit about how they were structured. What stands out to you about this? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk a bit about having/not having experiences working in community with racially and ethnically diverse colleagues. If you haven't had experiences working closely with diverse colleagues, talk about how this might have shaped the experience(s) and the outcome? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have DEI&B conversations taken place here [insert Organization Name] before? If so, were you a part of them? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you or someone you know had difficult, punitive experiences in the workplace when DEI&B-related issue or dilemma was brought up? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has the Board of Directors/Trustees engaged in DEI&B dialogue and conversations? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have the themes of privilege and <u>white fragility</u> come up in conversations? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name some fears around having and participating in uncomfortable conversations in the workplace? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you been a part of a book club or other group-based effort at work (in any organization) to collectively learn about DEI&B? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who has participated in intentional equity-based analysis (looking at our processes, procedures, administration, etc., from the place of DEI&B) in places of work, either here or elsewhere? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you been a part of DEI&B pair-share conversations before? What stands out to you about that experience? |

Additional Questions: Use the following to prompt group-wide activity to launch/ deepen the dialogue either before or after the pair/share questions above. Record answers on large post-it notes.

- What are conversation stay-ers? In other words, what elements of DEIB conversations might continue encouraging participation?
- What are conversation stoppers? What elements of DEIB conversations might increase the likelihood that you will stop attending and participating?

These questions are one aspect of fostering organization-wide DEIB in your workplace and are intended to help you and your colleagues on your internal journey - from dialogue to action. Whether you are just getting started or looking to deepen and draw connections between elements of the dialogue from the personal to the organizational, these questions will yield rich and dynamic dialogue that will help your colleagues and organization forward, towards greater diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Conversations and themes around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) usually occupy our awareness and take place on different levels: the individual, the group-based, and the organization-wide. Many organizations are looking for ways to be more knowledgeable about- and focused on DEIB initiatives that help foster stronger alignment between vision, mission, and practice. Setting intentional time and effort to incorporate, foster, and grow organization-wide DEIB conversations is an important step.

Tips For Our Organizations

Often, we start first with internal dialogue and conversations around DEIB with ourselves and our colleagues, and then deepen the work by peeling back the layers, moving the dialogue to the organization-wide level.

After self-reflection and moving to conversations where we connect, engage, and share with colleagues in pairs or smaller groups, the next level to further our DEIB awareness, knowledge building, and commitment is to have conversations **at the organizational level.**

Setting intentional space and giving time to begin moving towards having full-circle conversations — from self, to colleagues, to the organizations in which we work — is an important and courageous leadership moment. Connecting the dots, gaining greater awareness about our own patterns of communication and how DEIB elements are always present, whether we have talked about them or not, are critically important aspects of an organization's journey. There are many ways to show up and further opportunities to deepen your organization's DEIB across multiple areas.

Getting started with a list of questions-as-prompts can be helpful in deepening organizational participation and awareness about how through each individual staff member and every organization is responsible for fostering an inclusive environment that is diverse and accessible.

Interested in more resources about how to foster DEIB and other best practices at your nonprofit?

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