

LIST OF PRACTICES, TOOLS TO TRY, INTERVENTIONS IN DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

'Can you move beyond the personal to talk about the patterns of inequality? Can you get beyond the symptoms to reveal the underlying system? Can you create connections across different concerns and communities so others can see their stake in social change? Can you appeal to shared values such as inclusion, equity, dignity, unity and love? Can you lift energy around a vision of racial, gender and economic justice for everyone?' Terry Keleher, Colorlines

- Tell humanizing stories - personalize the systemic/political to describe who has been impacted
- Talk plainly - lose jargon
- Explore being open to learning, use I statements
- Utilize empathy, humility & curiosity - what do you not know?
- Ask non-defensive questions
- Give the benefit of the doubt; ask for clarification before assuming immediately the person you are talking with has one specific opinion in opposition to yours.
- Move beyond binaries & culture bundles - explore complexities and tensions with curiosity.
- Notice and utilize body language to create conditions for more open conversation when possible.
- Draw your awareness to patterns of shame - when might your own judgement of another person be related to your own lack of self-acceptance? How might we project our sense of 'not enough-ness' onto others in these difficult conversations?
- Know your own trauma responses and how they feel in your body. This could help identify a trauma response as it's occurring so you can best take care of yourself in the moment.
- Absolve yourself of the responsibility of changing someone else's mind. They will change their own mind. It may take a long time and you cannot always know the impact of a conversation.
- Acknowledge there are certain people that may never change, notice how to strategically engage with people who may be swayed in relation to those that likely will not.

(DRAWN LARGELY FROM

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