



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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1999 Community Circles Dialogues

Discussion Guide

SCHEDULE

SESSION ONE

Getting Started

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

SESSION FOUR

What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE

These guidelines are intended as a starting place for respectful and productive circle discussions:

- ◆ Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- ◆ Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- ◆ Share "air time."
- ◆ If you are offended, say so; and say why.
- ◆ You can disagree, but don't personalize it; stick to the issue. No name-calling or stereotyping.
- ◆ Speak for yourself, not for others.

SESSION ONE

Getting Started

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Why are we here?

Community circles are intended to:

- **Raise awareness** about the challenges of race, housing and education for our neighborhoods, our city and our region, and to help participants learn more about the complexity of these issues.
- **Provide an opportunity to talk** honestly and deeply about these issues and explore some possible solutions.
- **Generate suggestions** for possible action that we can take as individuals, as organizations, and/or collectively as a community, to address the challenges of race, housing, and education.

3. How do we create a productive dialogue?

Take this opportunity to set expectations and meeting guidelines for your group.

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES

1. Tell us your name and a favorite community and/or neighborhood event in which you participate.
2. Share some of your personal "story" with the group by responding to the following questions:
 - Where did you grow up? (big city, inner city neighborhood, suburb, rural, small town, farm, etc.)

- How did you feel about where you lived and your experience in general?
- How did where you grew up influence your opinion on race, education, or housing?
- Why did you decide to take part in this community circle dialogue?

3. Briefly discuss your reactions to what you've heard:

- What stood out for you in these stories? What was your reaction to listening to others' stories?
- What made you uncomfortable? What did you find you could identify with?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ How have you experienced racism personally?
- ◆ How do you see life opportunities changing in your neighborhood — for better or worse? increasing or decreasing?
- ◆ How is segregation today different than segregation in the 1960's?

CLOSING

- ❖ What words or phrases from today's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and re-introductions
2. Revisit the discussion guidelines
3. Briefly reflect on last session/
demographic handout

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?
- ◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?
- ◆ In your own experience, how influential are some of these reasons for segregation? Are some more than others? Why?
- ◆ Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation. Which of the viewpoints most likely describes the cause of segregation? Why?
- ◆ In these viewpoints, what ways of doing something to affect segregation are suggested? What are your own suggestions?

CLOSING

- ❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and re-introductions
2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the causes of segregation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal perspective? Why?
- ◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?
- ◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?
- ◆ What are the strengths of each approach? What are the weaknesses?
- ◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the *most*? The *least*?
- ◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work *most* effectively?
- ◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work *least* effectively?
- ◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?
- ◆ What are some steps that *communities* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?
- ◆ What are some steps that *individuals* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?

CLOSING

- ❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION FOUR

What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and re-introductions
2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the challenges of housing and segregation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?
- ◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?
- ◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?
- ◆ What are the strengths of each perspective? What are the weaknesses?
- ◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the *most*? The *least*?
- ◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these options?
- ◆ What are some steps that you think might help our communities to address the achievement gap in our schools? What efforts would you like to see policymakers focus on?
- ◆ What are some steps that individuals might be able to take to address the achievement gap and unequal opportunity in our public schools?

CLOSING

- ❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

TO BEGIN ...

1. Welcome and re-introductions
2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the student achievement gap.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Thinking back to the previous sessions, were there any common threads that emerged from the group's discussions? Were there any common themes in the solutions you chose for addressing the challenges we discussed?
- ◆ What were some of the main areas of agreement that were discussed over the last few weeks?
- ◆ What do you think is the responsibility of the community as a whole to address these challenges?
- ◆ What is the role of our institutions (schools, city and state governments, Metropolitan Council, the business community, religious groups, neighborhood and community-based organizations, etc.) in addressing these challenges?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

While there may not be consensus within your circle about how to best address some of the challenges discussed here, there may be ideas or solutions which have emerged over the past few weeks and are supported by most participants. As a group, try to answer the following question:

- ◆ What are the three most powerful action steps your group feels would make a difference? (These may range from individual efforts to large-scale initiatives, and could address one or many of the issues discussed.)

CLOSING

- ❖ What has been valuable to you about these circle dialogues?
- ❖ What do you think you might do differently in the future as a result of being part of this series of dialogues?

1999 Community Circles Dialogues

Discussion Guide

Facilitator's Version

SESSION ONE

Getting Started

TO BEGIN ...

(20 minutes)

1. Welcome and Introductions

△ **Facilitators:** Welcome everyone to the group.
Share names around the circle.

2. Why are we here?

Community circles are intended to:

- **Raise awareness** about the challenges of race, housing and education for our neighborhoods, our city and our region, and to help participants learn more about the complexity of these issues.
- **Provide an opportunity to talk** honestly and deeply about these issues and explore some possible solutions.
- **Generate suggestions** for possible action that we can take as individuals, as organizations, and/or collectively as a community, to address the challenges of race, housing, and education.

△ **Facilitators:** Briefly discuss the purpose of this community circle. Explain that the dialogues will probably be experienced and have some impact on everyone at a personal or individual level, in connection with their neighborhood or a group they may be involved with, and on a public policy or community-wide level. (All three levels can happen at the same time and each one is important.)

3. How do we create a productive dialogue?

Take this opportunity to set expectations and meeting guidelines for your group.

△ **Facilitators:** You might want to include the following in this discussion:

- Discuss roles of facilitator and participants (see *Handbook for Facilitators*)
- Discuss the differences between dialogue and debate (see *Handbook for Facilitators*)
- Review or create discussion guidelines for your circle (see *Handbook for sample guidelines, or have the group develop its own*). You may want to post these guidelines on a flip chart and revisit them at the beginning of future circle sessions.

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE ISSUES

(60 minutes)

1. Tell us your name and a favorite community and/or neighborhood event in which you participate.

△ **Facilitators:** The initial question strives to establish a basic connection among the dialogue participants.

2. Share some of your personal "story" with the group by responding to the following questions:

△ **Facilitators:** Ask participants to take turns telling their stories. You should go first to model sharing a story that is brief yet somewhat revealing to give the conversation some depth. You may want to post the questions on a flip chart.

- Where did you grow up? (big city, inner city neighborhood, suburb, rural, small town, farm, etc.)
- How did you feel about where you lived and your experience in general?
- How did where you grew up influence your opinion on race, education, or housing?
- Why did you decide to take part in this com-

3. Briefly discuss your reactions to what you've heard:

- What stood out for you in these stories? What was your reaction to listening to others' stories?
- What made you uncomfortable? What did you find you could identify with?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(30 minutes)

- ◆ How have you experienced racism personally?
- ◆ How do you see life opportunities changing in your neighborhood — for better or worse? increasing or decreasing?
- ◆ How is segregation today different than segregation in the 1960's?

CLOSING

(10 minutes)

△ **Facilitators:** *At the end of this session, distribute the demographic handout and ask participants to look it over in preparation for next week's session. Also use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.*

- ❖ What words or phrases from today's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION TWO

What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?

TO BEGIN ...

(20 minutes)

1. Welcome and re-introductions

△ *Facilitators: Welcome everyone to the group. Share names around the circle.*

2. Revisit the discussion guidelines

△ *Facilitators: You may want to post flip charts from first session.*

3. Briefly reflect on last session/ demographic handout

△ *Facilitators: Ask the group the following questions:*

1. What are some words or phrases that were said at the last session that you remember?
2. What is something important or valuable to share that you remember from looking over the demographics? What stood out to you?

VIEWPOINTS

(60 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Read through each of the following viewpoints one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.) After each of the viewpoints is read, ask the following questions:*

- What are the words or phrases that stood out for you in this viewpoint?
- What was your initial reaction while you listened to this viewpoint?
PROBE: What does it remind you of or what associations do you have with it?
- What was a surprise or new information to you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(30 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Select any of these questions that seem most pertinent to the group, or use them all if time allows.*

- ◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?
- ◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?
- ◆ In your own experience, how influential are some of these reasons for segregation? Are some more than others? Why?
- ◆ Each viewpoint states a reason for segregation. Which of the viewpoints most likely describes the cause of segregation? Why?
- ◆ In these viewpoints, what ways of doing something to affect segregation are suggested? What are your own suggestions?

CLOSING

(10 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.*

- ❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION THREE

How can we address housing challenges in the Twin Cities?

TO BEGIN ...

(10 minutes)

1. Welcome and re-introductions

△ *Facilitators: Welcome everyone to the group. Share names around the circle. Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.*

2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the causes of segregation.

△ *Facilitators: Ask - What are some words or phrases that were said at the last session that you remember?*

VIEWPOINTS

(40 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Explain that this session focuses on further understanding segregation and presents different options for addressing the housing challenges our city and the region is facing. Read through each of the scenarios one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.) After each of the viewpoints is read, ask the following questions:*

- What are the words or phrases that stood out for you in this viewpoint?
- What was your initial reaction while you listened to this viewpoint?

PROBE: What does it remind you of, or what associations do you have with it?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(60 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Select any of these questions that seem most pertinent to the group, or use them all if time allows.*

- ◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own personal perspective? Why?
△ *Facilitators: PROBE - What informs your perspective?*
- ◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?
- ◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?
- ◆ What are the strengths of each approach? What are the weaknesses?
- ◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the most? The least?
- ◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work most effectively?
- ◆ Which of the viewpoints do you feel could work least effectively?
- ◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these approaches?
- ◆ What are some steps that *communities* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?
- ◆ What are some steps that *individuals* might be able to take in the area of housing and residential segregation?

CLOSING

(10 minutes)

- △ *Facilitators: Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.*
- ❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION FOUR

What can we do about the achievement gap in our schools?

TO BEGIN ...

(10 minutes)

1. Welcome and re-introductions

△ *Facilitators: Welcome everyone to the group. Share names around the circle. Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.*

2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the challenges of housing and segregation.

△ *Facilitators: Ask – What are some words or phrases that were said at the last session that you remember?*

VIEWPOINTS

(40 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Explain that this session focuses on developing a further understanding of education challenges facing our city school district and the entire region – particularly the achievement gap and unequal education opportunities. It may be helpful to review some of the data provided in the demographic handout to give participants a better feel for the issue. Then read through each of the following scenarios one at a time out loud as a group. (Ask for volunteers; let participants know it's okay to pass.)*

- What are words or phrases that stood out for you?
- What was your initial reaction while you listened to this viewpoint?

PROBE: What does it remind you of, or what associations do you have with it?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(60 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Select any of these questions that seem most pertinent to the group, or use them all if time allows.*

- ◆ Which of these perspectives comes closest to your own? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?
- ◆ What hit your hot button while reading/listening to these viewpoints?
- ◆ Are there any other viewpoints that should be represented? What's missing?
- ◆ What are the strengths of each perspective? What are the weaknesses?
- ◆ Who would be most affected by each viewpoint? Who do you think would benefit the most? The least?
- ◆ What do you think are some of the barriers to any of these options?
- ◆ What are some steps that you think might help our communities to address the achievement gap in our schools? What efforts would you like to see policymakers focus on?
- ◆ What are some steps that individuals might be able to take to address the achievement gap and unequal opportunity in our public schools?

CLOSING

(10 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Use this time to give a quick overview of the next session and make any announcements.*

- ❖ What words or phrases from tonight's discussion do you think you will remember most?
- ❖ What new insights, awareness, or curiosities do you have as a result of this discussion?
- ❖ What would you like to see as a direction for next week's discussion?

SESSION FIVE

Making a Difference

TO BEGIN ...

(10 minutes)

1. Welcome and re-introductions

△ *Facilitators: Welcome everyone to the group. Share names around the circle. Also revisit the discussion guidelines if you like.*

2. Briefly reflect on the previous session about the different options for addressing the student achievement gap.

△ *Facilitators: Ask - What are some words or phrases that were said at the last session that you remember?*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(60 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: Explain that this session focuses on generating ideas for action that address the challenges of race, housing and education on an individual level, (what we can all do ourselves), a group level (what organizations can do), and a community level (what we can do collectively to impact policy decisions, etc.).*

◆ Thinking back to the previous sessions, were there any common threads that emerged from the group's discussions? Were there any common themes in the solutions you chose for addressing the challenges we discussed?

◆ What were some of the main areas of agreement that were discussed over the last few weeks?

◆ What do you think is the responsibility of the community as a whole to address these challenges?

△ *Facilitators: PROBE - What is the risk to the community as a whole if we do not address these challenges?*

◆ What is the role of our institutions (schools, city and state governments, Metropolitan Council, the business community, religious groups, neighborhood and community-based organizations, etc.) in addressing these challenges?

△ *Facilitators: PROBE - How would we like to see these institutions a move forward on these issues? What can we do to influence them?*

IDEAS FOR ACTION

(30 minutes)

While there may not be consensus within your circle about how to best address some of the challenges discussed here, there may be ideas or solutions which have emerged over the past few weeks and are supported by most participants. As a group, try to answer the following question:

◆ What are the three most powerful action steps your group feels would make a difference? (These may range from individual efforts to large-scale initiatives, and could address one or many of the issues discussed.)

△ *Facilitators: You may want to capture these ideas on a flip chart, asking participants to add some detail where needed. Remind the group that it is not necessary for everyone to agree to all the actions. Rather, try to identify ideas which seem to have the most group energy behind them. The ideas identified here should be recorded on the report form for this session and will be used as part of the "Call to Action" forum, the last forum in the Cities at Work series.*

CLOSING

(20 minutes)

△ *Facilitators: After sharing responses to the following questions, ask participants to complete circle dialogue evaluation forms. Remind everyone that this is a pilot project, so their feedback is extremely valuable.*

❖ What has been valuable to you about these circle dialogues?

❖ What do you think you might do differently in the future as a result of being part of this series of dialogues?