

Expectations of Group Discussions

LISTENING

Deep Listening

Listen to understand the others' points of view rather than to prepare a defense of your own view. Use empathy. Listen more than you speak.



Lean Into Discomfort/Tension

Make a commitment to stay in the dialogue despite the tensions. Experience possible discomfort and do something different, than how you are conditioned to respond. Expand your capacity to be present for that of God within each person.



Aim To Understand

The goal of a dialogue is to increase understanding between individuals. The goal is not to solve the problem or agree on everything



Be Mindful of Hurt

We each experience conflict in the church differently and with differing impacts. For some the experience has been exceedingly painful and has created deep wounds. Participating in this gathering is harder for some than it is for others.



Check Your Assumptions

Is there something someone said that you want to understand better? Be inquisitive. Use curiosity instead of judgements/assumptions.



adapted from Dr. Catherine Barnes



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GENERAL

Honor Dignity

Everyone is worthy and created in the image of God. Listen and speak in a way that honors the other person's perspectives, lived experiences, and presence.



Minimize Interruptions

In general, people should be allowed to finish what they are saying without being interrupted and without side-talk between other participants. Mobile devices, computers, and electronic tablets should be on silent and put away.



Expect /Accept Non-closure

The expectation of participants is to hangout in uncertainty. Uncertainty is an opportunity to learn more from others and the collective wisdom of the group.



Maintain Confidentiality

Outside the group, participants may discuss the content of what was said, not who said what. Take the learning, leave the story.



Self-Management

Be mindful of the amount of time you are using. Remember to balance the time you are using with the amount of time others in your group are using.



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SPEAKING

Ask questions

Ask honest, thought-provoking questions that give people the opportunity to explore and explain their underlying assumptions. Remain curious.



Speak About Personal Experiences

Start your sentences with "I" rather than "you." "I experienced..." Speak from your lived experiences and not the lived experiences of others. Personal, Local, and Immediate to you.



Speak For Ourselves

No participant represents a whole group, and we will not ask others to represent, defend or explain an entire group.



Speak In A Way To Be Heard

Phrase your speech in a way for it to be heard by others. Avoid accusational phrases and tones.



Separate Intention From Impact

Sometimes our words land differently than we intended for them to land. Apologize when our words cause harm.



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