

What: P-Town Dialogue Project

Why: To spur diverse dialogue to understand what contributes to police-community problems in Portland and in larger systems, to listen to one another with the goal of understanding and empathy, to search for inclusive pathways forward, and to explore additional group opportunities to reach larger community audiences.

When: Every other Wednesday for four weeks starting September 9 from 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM (9/9, 9/23, 10/7, 10/21). The event is limited to one hour and limited in size to 12 total participants.

Where: Fellowship Hall, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 3138 N Vancouver Ave, Portland, OR 97227.

How: A trained group moderator will facilitate the dialogues and ensure everyone in the group feels safe to express their feelings, views, and ideas. An observer will be present to evaluate the effectiveness of the process for larger-scale use.

Rules and Process ^{1 2}

A place of safety to diverse dialogue to understand what contributes to police-community problems in Portland and in larger systems, to listen to one another with the goal of understanding, empathy, patience, and grace, to search for inclusive pathways forward, and to explore additional group opportunities to reach larger community audiences.

"An enemy is one whose story we have not heard." Gene Knudsen-Hoffman (1919-2010) (Also, attributed as a Quaker expression.

Genuinely listen for understanding, not persuade others to your position.

- Empathize and try to understand where they are coming from and why.
- Get out of the "blame frame."
 - Each person involved in the situation has a different objective story about what happened. Your goal is not to judge who's right and wrong. It's to manage for better outcomes in the future.
- Offer an invitation for patience and grace.

Approach the conflict from a place of curiosity (trying to understand), not blaming or trying to prove you are right.

- Ask open-ended questions, not ones that assume facts or involve judgment.
- Find out what happened
- Understand the other person's story, and then your story.
- Last, create a neutral, third story.

Intentions vs. impact.

- What were my intentions?
- What was the person's impact on me?
- What were the other person's intentions?
- What was my impact on them?

Contributions.

- What did I contribute to the problem?
- What did they contribute?

Feelings

- What feelings underlie my attributions and judgments?
 - Angry, frustrated, disappointed, hurt, guilty, embarrassed/ashamed, sad, etc.
- Acknowledge the other person's feelings too.

¹ Adapted from Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. New York: Penguin Group.

² Adapted from Schneider, K. (2020). *The Depolarization of America: A Guidebook for Social Healing*. Colorado Springs: University Professors Press.

Identity issues

- How does what happened (and the conversation) threaten my identity?
- How does what happened (and the conversation) threaten the other person's identity?

Paraphrase.

- To create clarity and to let people know you're genuinely listening, summarize what they're telling you.
- Ask them to do the same.

References

Schneider, K. (2020). *The Depolarization of America: A Guidebook for Social Healing*. University Professors Press.

Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. New York: Penguin Group.