

# DESIGNING THE ARC OF DIALOGUE

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## Phase One: Community-Building

### ➤ Purpose

Why are we, specifically, coming together to engage in this dialogue process?  
Why is this important to us?

### ➤ Intended Outcome(s)

What do we hope to learn by engaging in this dialogue?

### ➤ Ground Rules/Principles for Engagement

What are the “norms,” rules, principles or guidelines we want to establish to guide our dialogue and help us establish the “container” that the dialogue occurs within?

### ➤ Ice-Breaker

Ice-breakers serve the purpose of helping to build the “learning community” and break down artificial barriers between people by providing participants with non-threatening opportunities to teach about themselves and learn about others.

## Phase Two: Sharing the Diversity of Experiences

These questions invite participants to think about their own experiences with the dialogue topic and to bring examples of these experiences into the conversation. These questions help participants begin to make personal connections and find personal meaning in the dialogue topic. This process also allows participants to begin to establish a “common ground” of understanding and personal connection to the dialogue topic.

## Phase Three: Exploring the Diversity of Experiences Beyond Our Personal Experiences

These are questions specifically designed to explore the dialogue topic beyond participants’ personal experiences with it. These questions help participants to engage in inquiry and exploration about the dialogue topic in an effort to learn with and from one another.

## Phase Four: Synthesizing and Closing the Learning Experience

### ➤ Synthesis

The facilitator helps participants to identify and make meaning from the “threads” that connect the ideas, perspectives and insights generated through the dialogue.

### ➤ Next Steps

The facilitator works with the group to reflect on its learning and to decide what, if any, are the next steps the group wants to take.

### ➤ Closure

In the process of closure, the facilitator works with the group to reflect on its learning, offer final observations, make comments to one another about the learning process.