



**Courageous  
Conversations**

# Conversations Driving Change



## What is Courageous Conversations

- ✓ Platform that enables candid and honest dialogue based on the Minneapolis YWCA Time to Talk series
- ✓ Conversation starts with an external keynote speaker followed by small group table dialogue (8-10 per table)
- ✓ Each table is led by a facilitator who receives training and table questions prior to the conversation
- ✓ Conversations lasts 90 minutes split between the keynote and table dialogue

## Why Courageous Conversations

- ✓ Creating space for employees to engage on difficult topics helps drive a more inclusive culture
- ✓ Topics help build empathy and understanding across various dimensions of diversity
- ✓ Conversations are a safe space for employees to practice skills of productive discourse
- ✓ Drives employee engagement & community building

## Action Steps to Starting a Courageous Conversation

- ✓ If you have resources bring in an outside consultant to help navigate (YWCA, Winters Group).
- ✓ Identify a relevant topic and content stimulus. Best case this would be an external speaker, however, video content and articles can also be used.
- ✓ Logistics: identify a date/time, method for sign-up, and identify potential facilitators. Certain functions like HR and Consumer Insights are potential pools of talent to facilitate.
- ✓ Draft conversation questions, run of show and conversation ground rules.
- ✓ Schedule a pre-meeting with facilitators to provide deeper insight into the conversation topic, walk through conversation ground rules, and discuss conversation questions. Train facilitators on best practices including navigating difficult conversations, dealing with silence, and how to guide a successful conversation.
- ✓ Have company leader kick-off conversation detailing how this initiative ties back to company priorities and reiterate that these conversations are a growth opportunity for all.
- ✓ Have a game plan to navigate tough conversations and be ready to de-escalate conversations as necessary. See Handling Tough Conversations slide.
- ✓ Send post-event survey gauging quality of speaker, relevancy of topic, and overall event satisfaction

# Courageous Conversation History

April 2016  
Authenticity in the  
Workplace



Carolina Wanga, CDO Target

Sept 2016  
Islamaphobia



Nehrw Abdul-Wahid

January 2018  
#MeToo



Jon Nudi  
Jacqueline Williams-Roll

April 2018  
I'm Fine



Mark Meier  
Face It Foundation

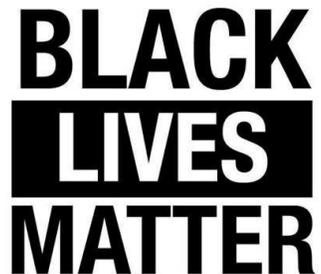
September 2018  
Immigration



*Supporting families and strengthening  
communities for more than 20 years*

John Keller  
Executive Director, ILCM

July 2016  
Open Forum on Police  
Shootings



January 2017  
Minnesota Nice



Brave New Workshop

December 2017  
Unconscious Bias



Howard Ross

March 2018  
Take a Knee



Nate Boyer

July 2018  
Fitting in While LGBTQ  
Exploring Intersectionality



Dr. Joel Brown



# Courageous Conversation History

October 2018  
Disability in the Workplace



Deb Dagit

March 2019  
5 Generations in the Workplace



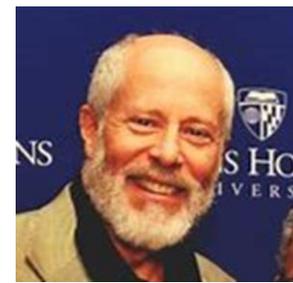
Cam Marston

Aug 2019  
Allyship in Action



Kyle Korver

Dec 2019  
From Unconscious Bias to Conscious Inclusion



Howard Ross

June 2020  
George Floyd Tragedy & National Unrest



The Gender Cool Project

February 2019  
The Macro Impact of Microaggressions



Dr. Derald Wing Sue

June 2019  
Journey to Authenticity  
Beyond the Visible – Expanding our Awareness of Disability



Jana Shortal



Employee Panel

April 2020  
Grief, Mental Health, & COVID19



David Kessler

June 2020  
Expanding our Understanding of Gender Identity



The Gender Cool Project

# Conversation Guidelines



- What you share within the context of the conversation is confidential, honored, and respected.
- Use “I” statements. No one speaks for another or for an entire group of people.
- Focus on your own experiences.
- Be honest and willing to share.
- Listen with curiosity and the willingness to learn and change. Resist the desire to interrupt.
- Be brief and share the time equitably.
- Be open to the kernel of wisdom in each person’s story.
- We use the Betty Crocker spoon to ensure that only one person speaks at a time and that we listen respectfully
- Be willing to surface and explore unconscious beliefs and values
- Be willing to think about issues, perspectives and beliefs in an expanded view

# Example Discussion Questions



QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP	FOLLOW UP
What were your initial reactions to the news/videos?	Did they change as you learned more or heard the reactions of others?	
What emotions are you experiencing now?	What about these recent tragedies and the resulting unrest makes you uncomfortable?	Do the implications of this incident have an impact on you and your family? If so how?
How might one's personal reaction to seeing the images of George Floyd's final moments differ from that of colleagues and friends from the black community?	What might police officers and their families be feeling/experiencing?	What has surprised you about the different reactions you've seen – whether from a distance or those close to you? What has inspired you?
Some in the black community have expressed a tension between gratitude for the number of Ally voices in response to the recent tragic events and frustration that it has taken this long. What do you think it is about these recent tragedies that has brought out more ally voices?	As allies, how can you broaden your perspective about the injustices members of the community you're allying with experience?	What are things that you can do to drive positive change?
As a result of this conversation, what am I going to do differently in my life or in my job?		

# Handling Sensitive Conversations



## The Role of the Facilitator

- Ensure people are abiding by conversation guidelines.
- Drive the conversation flow by timing/type of questions.
- Leverage personal story to showcase the behaviors we expect of our participants.

## Additional Tips

- Remember that you don't need to have the answers to every question. It's perfectly okay to just create space for conversation and even silence.
- Have a plan to deal with conversations that derail. One idea is to say "thank you for your contribution" recognizing the person's opinion then finding a way to pivot to other participants and/or moving on to another topic area.
- Your role isn't to validate another's opinion or experience. Your role is to create a space where we can engage each other in productive, empathy building and reflective conversations.

## Focus on Conversation Guidelines

- Use "I" statements. No one speaks for another or for an entire group of people
- Focus on your own experiences
- Be open to the kernel of wisdom in each person's story

## Focus on Shared Values

- We all want to feel safe, valued, and respected
- We each bring a unique perspective shaped by historical context to the table
- We are all on a journey to be more inclusive, understanding and empathetic