

Bread & Borders: Exploring Fears, Facts & Impacts about Refugee Claimants Conversation Process for “New Friends”

Purpose:

To provide a respectful space in an informal setting (living room, dining table, etc.) for participants to explore their perspectives on the recent Refugee Claimant arrivals in Manitoba; and to enter into dialogue with people of differing views.

Pre-Conversation Preparation:

Assemble between 8-12 people, including the Host; select a *talking object* to be used; print one copy each of (a) the Agreements (located near end of toolkit), and (b) the four questions on one page (located at end of instructions); and select a timing device (process will take ~90 min).

Conversation Process:

As a general introduction explain that you, as Host, will guide the group through the conversation. Clarify that your role is not to provide answers or be an expert, rather to facilitate the process.

- 1. Opening - Group Introductions/Check-in:** Go around room and invite people to say (a) their name; and (b) something they love about their community (however they define this).
- 2. Agreements:** Point to and read over the Agreements, acknowledging that these are simply a guide to help all feel safe and respectfully engaged. Remind people that this is intended to be a group conversation (i.e., no side conversations).
 - **Open-mindedness:** Listen to and respect all points of view.
 - **Acceptance:** Suspend judgment as best you can.
 - **Curiosity:** Seek to understand rather than persuade.
 - **Discovery:** Question assumptions, look for new insights.
 - **Sincerity:** Speak from your heart and personal experience.
 - **Brevity:** Go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on.
- 3. Process:** Explain that, using a talking object to indicate who can speak, each person will have an opportunity (approximately 2 minutes, depending on how long participants can stay) to respond to each of four questions, one per round. Refer to handout with questions.
 - **Round 1:** Pass around the talking object; without providing feedback or response each person speaks briefly about the Round 1 question - ***Regarding the recent Refugee Claimant/Asylum Seeker arrivals in Manitoba...what is one concern or question you have and why? (Be as specific and focused as possible in your explanation.)***
 - **Round 2:** Again with talking object, each person speaks briefly about the Round 2 question - ***Regarding the recent Refugee Claimant/Asylum Seeker arrivals in Manitoba...what is one thing you would like to see happen as a response (whether it's currently happening or you feel still needs to happen)?***
 - **Round 3:** Again with talking object, each person speaks briefly about the Round 3 question - ***Reflecting on comments already shared, what do you still want to know/understand?***

- **Final Round:** Again with the talking object, each person speaks briefly about the Final Round question - ***What is one thing you are taking away from this conversation (A new understanding? Something you want to learn more about? Something you will commit to doing to address this issue?)?***
4. **Closing:** Share resources in *Bread & Borders: Exploring Fears, Facts & Impacts about Refugee Claimants in Manitoba*, as appropriate. In particular, it can be helpful to provide a copy of the *Common Myths/Misconceptions About Refugees* document once the Final Round has concluded as this may help to stimulate further dialogue or address unanswered questions. Share with the group at this time, and only at this time, so as to not pre-empt the purpose of the activity.

Here are some ways to stay at ease, curious, inviting and keep the conversation flowing:

- ***Tell me more about...***(If your curiosity is piqued)
- ***This is what I heard you say... is it what you meant?*** (If your instinct is to counter another's statement)
- ***What led you to this point of view?*** (If you are with someone who begins advocating for a fixed position)
- ***What is most important you in a leader?*** (If you are with someone who begins championing/criticizing a leader who has taken a position on this issue)
- ***I notice your passion on this issue; what makes this so important for you?*** (If someone begins lecturing and intellectualizing)
- ***What if the opposite were true?*** (If you are with someone who always agrees with you)
- ***Can you say that in another way?*** (If you suspect you don't understand)
- ***I'd like to offer another point of view...*** (If you hold a different opinion)
- ***I'm wondering if you have some thoughts or feelings about what you've been hearing...***(If someone has been silent)
- ***If what you are proposing came to pass, how would things be different?*** (If someone's ideas are very abstract)

Adapted from:

Conversation Café: *Basic Resources for Hosts* (<http://www.conversationcafe.org/for-hosts/>)

United Way Winnipeg, *How to Host a Red Table Dinner*. (<http://unitedwaywinnipeg.ca/red-tables-a-meal-with-a-message/>)

Round 1:

*Regarding the recent Refugee Claimant/Asylum Seeker arrivals in Manitoba...**what is one concern or question you have and why? (Be as specific and focused as possible in your explanation.)***

Round 2:

*Regarding the recent Refugee Claimant/Asylum Seeker arrivals in Manitoba...**what is one thing you would like to see happen as a response (whether it's currently happening or you feel still needs to happen)?***

Round 3:

Reflecting on comments already shared, what do you still want to know/understand?

Final Round:

What is one thing you are taking away from this conversation? (A new understanding? Something you want to learn more about? Something you will commit to doing to address this issue?)