

# CONSCIOUS CONVERSATIONS: COMMUNITY VIRTUES & AGREEMENTS

To provide a shared foundation for us to enter conscious conversations together, the following guidelines serve as our community agreements, providing an offering for all who enter these spaces to uphold and model.

## WE AGREE



*We may not agree on everything, but in gathering, we choose to agree on this:*

**I will grant you welcome**, and I thank you for the welcome you grant me.

**I will show up, be present**, and be open to creating this experience together.

**I will speak and listen with truth and love**, agreeing or disagreeing with respect and kindness.

Cited from The People's Supper

## GENEROUS LISTENING



*When we truly listen to another, we show up as an ally, inviting a space where understanding and healing can occur.*

- **Listen generously**, not only with your ears, but also with eye contact, your heart, and your intuition.
- **Listen with curiosity**. Ask open-ended questions that can help inspire expression or revelation.
- **Listen without an agenda**. Attempt not to project your experiences onto another person's share.
- **Listen as a companion**, not a problem-solver. Ask for permission before offering advice.
- **Paraphrase and validate**. Acknowledge someone's share to help them feel heard. "That makes sense" or "Let me see if I got that. You said..."
- **Thank others for sharing**. Opening up can feel vulnerable. Thanking someone can give comfort and push away vulnerability hangovers.

## AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION



*When we share from a place of honesty while owning our experiences & maintaining our boundaries we open into a space of healthy vulnerability.*

- **Use your unique voice**. Speak about your own experiences, not on behalf of a group or community. For example, "this is my truth," not "this is the truth." Use I statements such as "For me..." or "What's that makes me think of is..."
- **Take your share of the space, if you want it**. People have different speaking styles and confidence levels. If you find yourself unable to get "air time" in the conversation, make a nonverbal signal such as raising your hand, or ask the other to pause. "Could you pause for a minute?"
- **Tune into yourself and others**. Notice how you're feeling, and share what's comfortable for you. Listen at least as much as you speak.

## KIND DISAGREEMENT + DIFFERENCE



*Constructive expression of differing perspectives can help us develop resilience and better understand others.*

- **Check for understanding**. When there is disagreement or difference, listen completely. Then, reflect back in your own words what you understood someone has said before sharing your perspective or how their words may have impacted you.
- **Pause**. If things get tense, take a few breaths in and out to settle and reset.

## CONSCIOUS + HONORED BOUNDARIES



*Knowing and expressing our limits and reading those of others honors and preserves the space we collectively create for conscious conversations.*

- **Set boundaries**. Sometimes we feel a "yes" for an interaction, and sometimes we feel a "no", or a "maybe." When we feel a "no" arising, we can choose to relate differently by expressing a boundary: for example, asking to pause, changing the subject, or leaving the conversation.
- **Honor boundaries**. Honor the other's boundaries: thank someone for expressing a boundary; practice active listening to understand the boundary; ask for clarification; and respect when someone decides not to share, or asks to pause, change course, or end a conversation.
- **When in doubt, check in**. If you aren't sure if a comment or question will be too challenging, or if you think your conversation partner might be struggling, check in with them. For example, "May I ask you something?" or "Would you like to pause?"
- **Take care of you**. This space is for you. If you need to step away at any time, feel free to do so without feeling the need to explain yourself. If you want to listen rather than share, let others know. If you need support, we have team members around the room to receive you.

# REFLECTION + DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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## Experiencing

- Feel free to share about a loss you've suffered, if you'd like.
- What does loss **feel like** for you?
- What does loss feel like in your **body**?
- What do you **wish people knew** about your loss/grief?
- What are some feelings you want to **honor** or not sweep under the rug? (Can be positive or negative)

## Healing and coping

- What has helped you **heal or cope** in your loss?
- What is **one helpful thing** that you did or that someone did for you in your grief or loss?
- What's **one piece of advice** you **wish you had** during loss or grief that may have saved you some serious headaches?

## Changing, growing, and learning

- What's one thing you have become **more mindful about** following your loss?
- In the face of loss, how has your **spirituality** changed or deepened?
- In the face of loss, how have **love and intimacy** changed?
- How has loss changed **your expectations** for your own life?
- What's something you've been wanting to **let go of** or **forgive**?