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Part I: Overview

WHAT IS THE VOICES OF DISCOVERY PROGRAM?
Based on a model developed in 1997-1999 at Arizona State University and further refined at the University of Denver, Voices is a program that promotes greater understanding of issues of diversity through “voice” or dialogue. The main assumption permeating the project is that positive interaction between people who are different is not necessarily a commonplace or natural process. The tendency of people is to belong and spend time with those who are like themselves and who make them feel safe and comfortable. Crossing into other cultures and joining other groups is not an easy task and involves considerable emotional and psychological discomfort (Winkelman, 1993). There are many ways to create opportunities for people to interact across their differences and increase intergroup understanding; decrease intercultural conflict and tensions; and augment knowledge about other groups. One effective approach increasingly being used on college campuses is intergroup dialogues.

WHAT ARE INTERGROUP DIALOGUES?
Intergroup dialogues (IGDs) are prolonged (ranging from six or sixteen weeks) small group discussions between different groups (e.g., African American and White students, Asian and Latino students, Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual and Heterosexual students) which are led by trained facilitators who are charged to create a safe place for intergroup interaction to take place (University of Michigan, 1994). IGDs can be characterized as face-to-face discussions that are open, honest, challenging, and reflective around issues that exist between the groups. Through interacting with each other, individuals undergo the process of intergroup discovery by getting to know one another both on a personal and group basis.

The first intergroup dialogue program on a U.S. college campus began in 1988 at the University of Michigan. Coordinated out of the Program on Intergroup Relations, the Michigan intergroup dialogue model and program employs a credit hour course approach that provides sixteen weeks of sustained structured intergroup interaction to undergraduate students. That is, undergraduate students engage in diversity dialogues for an entire semester and receive course credit for their participation. A powerful aspect of the Michigan program is the use of student peer facilitators who participate in a dialogue group during one semester followed by enrollment and training in a group facilitation course for a second semester. By the time peer facilitators lead an intergroup dialogue, they have undergone extensive experience and training in facilitation. The courses explore intergroup conflict, intergroup relations, and issues of diversity and social justice (https://igr.umich.edu). This is an impactful program that has yielded plenty of research attesting to the effectiveness of intergroup dialogues (Gurin, Biren, and Zuñiga, 2013).

The Voices of Discovery (VOD) Model grew out of the University of Michigan effort and therefore, shares many similarities including theoretical approaches, philosophy, purpose, and educational outcomes. There are however several differences. First, VOD is not a
credit hour course initiative. Instead, students receive course points from faculty for participating in dialogues. Second, the program is shorter than the Michigan model and runs between five and seven weeks. Third, the model depends on faculty (at some universities up to 25 faculty members have supported the initiative) throughout a campus to participate in the program by making the intergroup dialogues either curricular or extracurricular. To incentivize faculty participation, attendance is taken at each of the group meetings and reported back to the instructor for grade assignments. There are several similar models at American University, University of Denver, University of South Dakota, and Gonzaga University.

The Voices of Discovery Program can also be utilized to undertake both faculty and staff dialogues with some modifications. Incentives are critical to the program and must be identified before initiating the program. Certificates of completion, food, letters of recognition, professional development credits, and other forms of incentives need to be established at the onset of the initiative. Meeting times might also have to differ given that human resources might have restraints on some categories of employees regarding time off for professional development. Thus, in some cases the groups may have to meet at noon.

Conceptually, VOD employs Gordon Allport’s (1954) Contact Hypothesis or Intergroup Contact Theory which outlines the conditions that must be present for relations between in-groups and out-groups to improve and for intergroup hostility or conflict to diminish. Allport posited that diverse groups that come together under the conditions of equal status contact, a common goal, and sanctioned by authority maximize their chances of reducing intergroup conflict, increasing cooperation, and decreasing prejudice and discrimination. Thus, Voices of Discovery attempts to recreate those conditions to maximize intergroup learning, growth, and development. To achieve equal status contact, the intergroup dialogues are facilitated by two graduate students each representing a social identity present in the group (e.g. Black and White; LGBTIQ and Heterosexual). Moreover, an attempt is made to equalize the groups (e.g., 10 Latino students and 10 White students). In practice, the number of participants deviates from the ideal and thus, might have 7 Latino students and 10 White students. Of course, it stands to reason that if you have one African American in a White/African American group, there will be no dialogue. The intergroup dialogues work on the common goal of achieving greater understanding of intergroup issues through dialogue. That is, participants work together to understand concepts and issues and the complexity behind them by sharing different perspectives and experiences.

When working with students, the Voices of Discovery program consists of several parts. First, professors are asked to consider giving credit to students for participating in the program. One of the objectives of the project is to supplement the theoretical and research material presented by instructors in the courses with actual face-to-face dialogue regarding the issues of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, disability status, and other salient social identities.

Second, students enrolled in those courses (e.g., race relations, multicultural education,
women's studies, intercultural communication, health sciences, etc.) in which professors are supporting the dialogue initiative are recruited for the program. These students are ideal because they receive theoretical and research material in their courses while simultaneously participating in the out-of-classroom intergroup dialogues. Participants receive the skills, such as active listening, conflict management, and ingroup-outgroup dynamics to successfully participate in the program.

Third, students accepted into the program participate in a dialogue group for six weeks (two hours per week). Examples of the dialogue groups are: Inter-religious, International/US Born, Students of Color/White, LGBTIQ+/Heterosexual, Gender Identity, Woman of Color/White Woman, Biracial, Issues of Privilege and Race in America.

Each dialogue group is co-facilitated by a combination of trained graduate students, staff members, faculty, and specially trained undergraduate students. All facilitators receive training in active listening, conflict management, group processes, ingroup-outgroup dynamics, and social identity theory prior to the beginning of the intergroup dialogues.

THE NEED FOR CREATING INTERGROUP DIALOGUES

The demographics of our society and institutions are rapidly changing. Certainly, one important institution that is quickly diversifying is the American college or university. Presently, our institutions of higher education bear little resemblance to the original elite private colleges of the 1700s and 1800s which had student bodies comprised mostly of men from wealthy backgrounds. Today, Latinx, Asian American, African American, and American Indian students, faculty, and staff continue to be recruited, hired, and enrolled in colleges and universities across the nation. The number of women on most campuses now exceeds the number of men in total undergraduate enrollment. Gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual students are "coming out" in greater numbers. International students, older students, students with disabilities, biracial students, and students from varied religious and economic backgrounds are entering our colleges and universities in greater numbers. This increasing diversity in student, faculty, and staff backgrounds poses both challenges and prospects for the contemporary American college.

The Challenge of Diversity

The primary challenge that our institutions face is managing the intergroup conflict and tension that emerges whenever significant numbers of people from diverse backgrounds are brought together within an institution. In the past, one of the assumptions that colleges and universities have made is that bringing large numbers of students, faculty, and staff from a multiplicity of backgrounds together on a college campus will in and of itself lead to cross-group interaction, positive intergroup relations, cross-cultural understanding, peace, and harmony. History suggests, however, (and most anthropologists agree) that this belief is erroneous. That is, the exact opposite-- cross-cultural conflict, misunderstandings, and intergroup tension -- is usually the outcome of contact between people who are different (Winkelman, 1993). There are several factors, which produce this result.

1. Whenever individuals from diverse backgrounds meet each other, their different customs, traditions, languages, values, and worldviews tend to
clash and cause misunderstandings. People have different ways of understanding the world that conflicts with other worldviews.

2. People do not easily interact with individuals who are different than themselves. Getting to know people from diverse backgrounds is filled with anxiety, frustration, misunderstandings, conflict, and tension. Thus, our inclination is to belong and spend time with those who are like us.

3. Normal, yet destructive, ingroup-outgroup dynamics that emerge between groups mitigate against knowing and understanding students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. Competition, discrimination, stereotyping, conflict, and other intergroup dynamics increase barriers between groups of people.

The Prospects of Diversity

From a different perspective, a diverse student, staff, and faculty body also presents for colleges and universities prospects related to the achievement of cross-cultural educational outcomes, student development, and the preparation of campus constituents for living and working in highly diverse contexts. Managed wisely, the multiplicity of cultures and groups represented on a college campus can be an educational asset toward creating a culturally competent cadre of people. Today's colleges and universities have a significant presence of diverse groups consisting of people from many different backgrounds, regions of the United States and countries around the world. Higher education administrators need only use diversity as a resource to provide students, staff, and faculty with meaningful cross-cultural and intergroup educational opportunities.

The above suggests that there is a need to create intergroup dialogues on college campuses. Bringing people together to dialogue and share can lead to cross-cultural enrichment and understanding resulting in a broader perspective of the world and an appreciation of the differences between and interconnectedness of all people.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY AND ITS CONCOMITANT ISSUES

At the foundation of the Voices of Discovery Program are several assumptions about diversity, human nature, prejudice, discrimination, and other intergroup issues.

Valuing Diversity

• Given the increasingly heterogeneous nature of American society and its institutions, mutual respect of group differences and valuing diversity are critical to our ability to function effectively as a society and to our continued evolution toward the values of equality and opportunity upon which our nation was founded. To that end, diversity (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) on a college campus is a resource that can be deployed to create interaction between diverse groups with the goal of increasing understanding between individuals and identity groups and ultimately preparing students to practice leadership in diverse settings.

The Difference Between Diversity and Inclusion

• One of the most conceptually and practically misunderstood phenomenon in the area of campus diversity is the difference between diversity and inclusion. Diversity is a
means to achieve inclusion. A campus that has a diverse student body in terms of numbers of diverse student populations does not mean that inclusion has been achieved. Inclusion is the purposeful of engagement and valuing of diversity by changing the structure of a university including polices, procedures, processes, traditions, and programs. The objective is to embed diversity into every dimension of an institution to create an environment that embraces diversity as a valuable resource for achieving a multiplicity of diverse educational outcomes.

The Persistence of Discrimination
- Many groups and individuals in our society continue to be impacted by the legacy of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of discrimination through limited educational opportunities, inadequate housing, lack of health care, and a scarcity of employment opportunities. In addition to individual acts of discrimination, many of these limitations are structural in nature and are embedded within many dimensions of an institution such as polices, traditions, practices, curriculum, processes, and procedures.

Human Nature and Discrimination
- No human being is born with racist, sexist, and other prejudicial beliefs, and no one acquires these beliefs through free choice. Through a complex and often subtle process of socialization, we are taught misinformation and prejudice. Additionally, as members of in-groups (males, Whites, heterosexuals), although we may not act in discriminatory ways, we have and continue to benefit from our status as in-group members. This does not mean that we have not worked hard for what we have obtained; however, we have received certain privileges because of our group status that others, who have also worked hard, have not received.

In-group/Out-group Dynamics
- Our membership in groups (males, females, White, African American, Latinx, heterosexual, gay, middle class, etc.) influences our perceptions about who we are and who others are. As group members, our tendency is to strive to belong to groups, which promote a positive group identity by degrading or disparaging other groups. To accomplish this, the groups to which we belong evaluate themselves positively and perceive those from other groups negatively. Positive intergroup contact and interaction (such as intergroup dialogues) have the capacity to decrease negative in-group and out-group opinions and perceptions.

Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Bias and Prejudice
- Due to the subtle nature of many prejudices and forms of discrimination in contemporary society, many of us are unaware of discriminatory thought patterns, behavior, and emotional conditioning as we respond to and interface with others. Microaggressions, implicit bias, out-group misperceptions, privilege, stereotypes, and cultural misunderstandings are examples of the hidden and unconscious nature of modern bias. Moreover, many of us do not choose to nor want to hold these prejudices and attitudes, as they conflict with our values of equality and human dignity.
The Challenge of Managing Intergroup Differences
● Given the inherent conflict between our values of equality and the legacy of discrimination, the process of learning to manage intergroup differences is often challenging. Our human tendency to protect our self-view as non-racist, non-sexist, non-homophobic, and other non-discriminatory views closes us off from new information and awareness that could lead to greater openness to differences. Intergroup dialogues provide the necessary conditions (e.g., safe space, dialogue, etc.) for students to lower their defenses and learn and gain knowledge about diverse groups. Moreover, dialogues allow for students to understand the diversity and complexity that exists within groups.

Conditions for the Examination of Intergroup Perceptions
● The process of examining intergroup differences involves scrutinizing our beliefs, acquiring new information, and acting on our insights. We can change our minds about negative deeply held beliefs under the following conditions: (a) the new information is provided in a way that makes sense for us, (b) we trust the person who is presenting the new position, and (c) we are not blamed for having misinformation.

Cognitive Empathy and Complexity
● The goal of intergroup dialogues is not indoctrination or conversion. Nor is the dialogue process designed to debate or reach consensus on issues. The process of dialogue attempts to achieve cognitive empathy – the purposeful attempt to understand the issues from another person’s perspective. This does not necessarily mean agreement with issues, but simply trying to see issues through the lens of others. The dialogue process also strives to get participants to understand the complexity of social issues and move away from simplistic notions of social phenomenon. This will only be achieved if people dialogue, listen, and present diverse perspectives.

Maximizing Free Speech
● To achieve the outcomes of cognitive empathy and increased understanding of the complexity behind intergroup issues, the intergroup dialogue process depends on participants sharing different perspectives and opinions. Participants must feel comfortable, courageous, and confident in sharing, for example middle, right, left, socialist, capitalist, religious, racial, gender, sexual orientation or other perspectives and experiences, in order to maximize the learning experience. Thus, maximizing free speech is critical to the dialogue process if that speech is presented in a respectful manner and designed to educate, rather than alienate. In sum, all viewpoints designed to lead to the understanding that intergroup issues are nuanced and complex are welcomed and encouraged.

Personal and Social Identities
● Our personal identities are very important because they signal to us and other people who we are as individuals. However, it is important to acknowledge that we also
possess multiple social identities that are a fundamental part of us. As a result of our social identities, we are impacted in both positive (e.g., group pride) and negative (e.g., discrimination) ways. Moreover, our social identities can also result in discrimination against other people (e.g., U. S. born Chicanos disliking and discriminating against recent immigrants from Mexico; Whites discriminating against Blacks, etc.)

**Making a Difference**
- One of our greatest challenges as members of our society is to examine and confront the legacy of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination that are embedded within the structures and institutions of our society. Change begins with us and our engagement in positive intergroup education and action.

**Intersectionality**
- One of the newest ideas and concepts in the area of social justice is intersectionality. This is the notion that we possess multiple group identities and some of those identities intersect with other groups. An understanding of intersectionality allows for students to see similarities with other groups; opportunities for bridging differences, coalition-building, and increasing intergroup cooperation.

**Respect, Safety, and Ethics**
- Cross-cultural/intergroup education and training activities are conducted in a manner that respects the dignity and security of each participant. All activities (e.g., lectures, simulation games, and group work) are conducted in a manner that respects all individuals and ensures their emotional and physical security. Moreover, all activities and evaluation procedures are carried out in an ethical manner consistent with American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

**CREATING DIALOGUES: THE CURRICULUM**
The Voices IGD program spans five or six weeks. This timeframe is the minimum and optimum for dialogues to achieve the diversity outcomes outlined for the program. Below is a sample 5-week curriculum for the program. It is simply a suggested set of topics and flow for the program. Except for Week 1 (which focuses much more on logistics and establishing a framework for dialogue), facilitators are free to be creative and add their own “flavor” and style to the curriculum. Stated differently, Week 2 (and beyond) can focus on topics that the students or the facilitators choose.

**Week 1 – Group Beginnings:** The foundation for the successful participation of in the dialogue groups is created during the first dialogue meeting. Participants receive an overview of the purpose and goals of the program, guidelines for participating in the intergroup dialogues, training in active listening skills, and how to practice cognitive empathy or perspective taking.

The initial meeting of the dialogue groups strictly focuses on bonding with and understanding between participants on a personal basis. Facilitators use icebreakers, personalized nametags, name games, and one-on-one discussions. Introduction to the
concept of personal identity and an exploration of personal characteristics (similarities and differences) is also part of the first meeting. Participants discuss their goals and expectations regarding their involvement in the dialogue groups. Ground rules (a critical piece of the dialogue process) governing behavior and dialogue are presented as well as the importance of students expressing their political, cultural, social, personal, group opinions and perspectives (i.e., free speech and its importance to the dialogue method). The students are also exposed to the difference between debate, consensus, and dialogue. The objective of creating a safe and brave space environment for all participants is emphasized.

**Week 2 – Our Identities:** This session may begin with an ice breaker and a reminder of the ground rules. Week 2 dialogue explores two levels of identification, personal identity and social identity, that influence our worldview and thus, our interactions with one another. The challenge of holding the “both/and” nature of individual and group identities is important to help us engage the complicated way in which we understand others and are understood by them. Multiplicity, intersectionality, malleability, observability, fixed and other dynamics of identity provide depth to perspectives about our relationships and society.

**Week 3 - Social Structures:** Week 3 focuses on social structures, how our memberships in and worldview related to many different groups impacts us and others in both negative and positive ways. Participants learn how our participation in different groups can be beneficial to them (i.e., the in-group tends to favor itself), but detrimental (i.e., the in-group discriminates against the out-group) to people outside those groups. The dialogue centers on the concepts of saliency (e.g., we are more conscious of some identities), meaning (e.g., there are stereotypes attached to some identities), and value (e.g., we value some identities more than others).

**Week 4 – Hot Topics:** Week 4 applies the learning acquired to date to specific, tangible intergroup issues and events in our society. It also provides the group the opportunity to practice their dialogue skills around topics that can carry powerful emotions and are of interest to and selected by the participants themselves. Perceptions, stereotypes, opinions, misunderstandings, personal intergroup experiences, discrimination, and intra- and intergroup dynamics are explored. Contemporary issues, incidents, and events are employed to explore the concepts and experiences tied to intergroup relationships.

**Week 5 – Envisioning Change and Taking Action:** This is the last session of the program which focuses on affirming each other (e.g., “I want to thank participant X for her/his/their support during the dialogues.”), affirming each other’s social identity (e.g., “As a White person, I want to say that now I have somewhat of an understanding about the experiences of African Americans.”; “As an African American, I now understand the issues with which Whites struggle.”), and discussing a personal action plan for improving intergroup relations. Participants reflect on and provide feedback regarding the intergroup dialogue experience.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are several learning outcomes associated with the Voices of Discovery Program. These are:

• **Increased knowledge and understanding of active listening.** Participants will be trained in the practice of active listening that is essential for entering another person’s worldview and producing constructive dialogue during the group meetings.

• **Increased knowledge and understanding of the program/dialogue groups.** It is critical that participants clearly understand the theory behind the dialogue program to ensure that the participants' goals and the goals of the program are compatible. This outcome will encourage productive intergroup dialogue, which will in turn foster greater understanding between the groups.

• **Increased knowledge and understanding of cognitive empathy (perspective taking), worldview, and worldview differences between and within groups.** Given that part of the dialogue process involves understanding others by entering their worldview, participants will be introduced to the concept of worldview and the differences in the way that people see the world that exists between and within groups.

• **Increased knowledge and understanding of personal identity.** Participants will be introduced to the concept of personal identity, which will foster an understanding of self and others on a personal/individual level.

• **Increased knowledge and understanding of social identity.** Participants will be introduced to the concept of social identity focusing on the multiple groups to which they belong.

• **Increased knowledge and understanding of the "other" group.** Part of the goal of the Voices of Discovery Program is to increase the knowledge and understanding of the "other" group (the group with which they are interacting).

• **Increased understanding of intergroup issues.** Participants are expected to explore intergroup issues leading to a greater understanding of the barriers and issues that impede communication and understanding between groups.

• **Increased commitment to change.** Participants will explore possible strategies for change and action for improving positive intergroup relations.
Part II: Group Processes

An understanding of the nature of group processes guides the formation and facilitation of the dialogue groups. Broadly defined, group processes refer to the dynamic nature of relationships among members within a group, as well as the patterns of growth and change that occur over the course of a group's existence (Forsyth, 1990; Yalom, 1985). Moreover, it is believed that, by recognizing and working with processes that commonly occur within groups, the psychological growth of group members may be enhanced. In the case of intergroup dialogues, grasping the principles and practices involving groups can maximize cross-cultural understanding and intergroup relations. These include stages of group development, the notion of support and challenge for enhancing growth and development, the roles and tasks of the group facilitator, and the use of ground rules.

Stages of Group Development

Research suggests that the development and growth of groups progresses through stages (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). As such, it is expected that the intergroup dialogues will progress through all or most of the stages listed below.

1. Forming This is the orientation phase of group development. During this stage, group members become acquainted with one another, and people seek to identify commonalities with other members of the group. Interactions are characteristically tentative and polite during this initial forming stage.

2. Storming Here we begin to see the emergence of conflict, particularly as group members begin to discover disagreements related to their points of view or interpersonal styles. Although often emotionally disconcerting to members, conflict within groups may be considered a normal phase of development that most groups undergo.

3. Norming This phase is characterized by the resolution of disagreements that emerged during the storming stage and an increasing sense of cohesion and unity among group members. Relationships between members become stronger, and membership in the group is increasingly valued. In short, the group develops a sense of cohesion or "we-ness."

4. Performing With the emergence of a solid group identity and sense of safety in the group, group members can work together to accomplish the task at hand. Applied to intergroup dialogues, this involves a collaborative effort by group members to continue to work through issues and consolidate their understandings of self and others.

5. Adjourning This is the dissolution phase of the group. That is, participants use the time for closure and reflection as the group comes to an end.

Support and Challenge

A central idea within human development is that, in order to develop and succeed in an environment, people need a balance of support and challenge. The primary role of a dialogue group facilitator is to provide safety and support, so that participants can allow
themselves to be challenged by the ideas and experiences that are shared by other group members.

Support refers to the sense of safety and trust that is needed for people to risk the fear and apprehension associated with change. Challenge, on the other hand, is defined as experiences or information that prompt a new way of thinking about oneself and others. Often, these new ways of conceptualizing are generated by providing individuals with discrepant information or points of view (Claiborn, 1982).

This notion of support and challenge is derived from the classic work of Adler (1963), who applied it to the relationship between parents and their children. He suggested that the "good parent" is one who provides both support and challenge in the raising of children. Within this context, support is defined as the secure base of love and safety embodied in the presence and actions of parents or other caregivers; whereas, challenge constitutes the new experiences and information provided to the child that enables learning and growth to occur.

When provided with too much support and not enough challenge, the child fails to develop needed competencies and becomes overly dependent on others within his or her environment. On the other hand, when subjected to too much challenge and not enough support, the child may become overwhelmed with anxiety and fail to adequately integrate the new experiences. Thus, for children to develop in their early childhood environments, a balance of support and challenge is needed.

The notion of support and challenge is also applicable to participation in intergroup dialogues. For the dialogue groups to be successful there must be a balance between the support group members receive from their facilitators and fellow participants, and the challenge they encounter when their understandings of the world are challenged by people who are different than themselves.

**Role of the Facilitator**

Facilitators play a critical role in the development of a strong and cohesive dialogue group that will constructively work through issues and concerns. In carrying out their role, facilitators follow several principal guidelines. First, facilitators support the participants' development throughout their group experience. In supporting the group, the facilitator must work to place his or her needs in the background and the needs of the group members in the foreground. Although it is expected that facilitators will also experience personal growth and change from the dialogue group experience, it is important that they not use the group as a vehicle for working on their own issues. This does not mean that the facilitator should refrain from forming a caring relationship with group members. On the contrary, supporting others often means engaging them in a caring relationship that is primarily aimed at supporting their growth and development.

Second, facilitators minimize expressing their own point of view and, instead, encourage divergent points of view from other group members. Nevertheless, at times facilitators may choose to disclose their own perspective. When this occurs, it is done in the interest of the participants' growth, and it is offered as one of many ways to conceptualize the issue rather than something that the participants must "buy."

Third, a facilitator is also learning and growing through the process of helping others. The stories and points of view shared by group members will affect facilitators. Gentle self-disclosure about their growth process is very appropriate and may be helpful to the participants.
And finally, facilitators accept people where they are in their own development, validate the experiences of every member, and offer themselves as individuals who will be there to listen if participants are feeling confused, angry, or distressed.

**Facilitator Tasks**

There are several specific tasks that facilitators can undertake in order to support group processes (Yalom, 1985).

1. **Initiating the Group** The facilitator helps the group establish itself by providing the initial structure and by creating a safe environment for all participants. This may be accomplished through introductions, icebreakers, discussion of ground rules, and disclosure of individual goals and expectations about the group.

2. **Norm Setting and Cohesion Building** The facilitator establishes norms for the group by modeling "I" statements (e.g., "I am feeling really good about being part of this group."), self-disclosing (e.g., "I, too, have prejudices against some people and need to work on changing those attitudes."), directing group members (e.g., to speak directly to each other), and enforcing the ground rules. Group cohesion is accomplished by exploring commonalties among participants and by initiating exercises that involve cooperation.

3. **Structuring** The facilitator provides a balance between structure and non-structure. Structure helps get the group moving and provides a sense of safety, whereas lack of structure allows for a greater degree of interpersonal exploration and deeper experiencing. Structure may be provided through techniques such as "check ins" (e.g., each member checks in with a brief statement about how he or she is feeling) and rounds (e.g., every member is asked to succinctly express his or her view of an issue relevant to the group). On the other hand, over-structuring is likely to impede personal exploration and experiencing within the group.

4. **Working through Conflict** Conflict within the group is not necessarily a sign of trouble. When conflict emerges, it is important to take the time to work through it by asking people to reflect on and process their experience within the group. The primary means to ensure the constructive resolution of conflict is to build a cohesive group. A united group can weather conflict because members will invest in the relationships.

5. **Self-reflective Loop** During the last 15 to 20 minutes of each session, the facilitator encourages the group to reflect on its own group process. This technique helps participants understand and clarify their interactions within the group and explore how the group process may be improved.

6. **Closure** The facilitator provides closure by encouraging participants to reflect on their experiences in the group, share with others where growth has occurred, and validate other group members.
**Ground Rules**

Ground rules are a critical part of the intergroup dialogue experience. Participants must know that there will be structure to the groups fostering a sense of safety and trust. Below are examples of ground rules that might be used for the dialogues. These are suggestions and facilitators are free to change, edit, and modify them. One technique that facilitators often use is an exercise in which participants as a group generate their own ground rules.

**Confidentiality**

In order to create a climate of open and honest dialogue, confidentiality must always be maintained. When group members assure each other that personal information will remain within the group, their confidence in sharing and discussing will increase. Participants are free to discuss their own development, their understanding of other groups, and feelings about the group with people outside the group, if they do not break confidentiality.

- **Ground rule:** Intergroup dialogue members are not to reveal names, personal experiences, or personal information to people outside the group.

**Climate for Productive Dialogue**

The purpose of the intergroup dialogues is to achieve greater understanding about oneself and others. Thus, the dialogue should include questions that seek to understand other group members more fully and gain insight into their experiences, rather than convince someone else about a point of view. The discussions should not evolve into debates, with one side trying to convince the other regarding a perspective. Additionally, the discussions should not be interpreted as opportunities to vent. Likewise, the answers to questions should be in the same vein. That is, responses to questions should seek to educate and create greater understanding, rather than attack, degrade, chastise, or embarrass a participant.

- **Ground rule:** Group participants are to refrain from venting or engaging in debates with other group members.
- **Ground rule:** Questions and answers should be directed at generating greater understanding between groups.

**Conflict Management**

Managing conflict during the intergroup dialogues is critical to having a productive and successful group in which people learn from each other and gain greater insight into their own group as well as others. If at any point in time during the dialogues a participant is having a difficult time because of tension, conflict, or psychological or emotional distress, he or she can request one of the following: a "sit-out," "time-out," or group departure. A sit-out occurs when a group member needs to step outside the group circle (yet not leave the room) to take a psychological break (e.g., collect their thoughts, observe, and listen, rather than engage in dialogue).

A time-out is requested when a participant realizes that he or she is having a difficult time coping with the dialogue and requires some time to leave the room and the group to calm down. A time-out is usually of short duration (15-20 minutes) and is
terminated when the participant indicates a readiness to rejoin the group.

Group departure is requested by a member who feels that participation in the group is no longer beneficial or is causing him or her extreme psychological discomfort. For the participant to leave the group, he or she is encouraged to discuss the reasons for departing from the group (provided that the reasons are not of a highly personal nature such as health, family reasons, etc.) and allow the group the opportunity for closure.

It is important for group members to clearly understand that the facilitators can also ask that participants take a sit-out, time-out, or depart from the group. If the behavior or psychological status of a participant violates the ground rules established for the group, then the facilitators have the responsibility to ask the participant to leave the group.

- **Ground rule:** Group participants can ask for a sit-out, time-out, or group departure.
- **Ground rule:** In the interest of maintaining safe and productive dialogue groups, facilitators can ask that group members take a sit-out, time-out, or group departure.

**Respect for Each Other**

It is important that group members treat each other with respect. Name-calling, accusations, verbal attacks, sarcasm, and other negative exchanges are counter productive to successful dialogue groups.

- **Ground rule:** Group members will always maintain respect for each other.
Part III: Theoretical Frameworks

THEORETICAL APPROACHES
Understanding intergroup dialogues from a theoretical perspective is important. Below are some theories that can be employed to conceptualize the dialogue process. The theories in the section below are not all encompassing and are merely suggested frameworks.

ASTIN'S THEORY OF INVOLVEMENT
With respect to working with students, Astin (1984) developed a theory around the concept of involvement to explain the educational outcomes of attending college. Involvement theory is based on the findings that emerged from a longitudinal study (Astin, 1977) in which a variety of involvement factors were found to be related to multiple outcomes of college. Astin (1984) defined involvement as the "amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). At the heart of involvement theory are five basic premises. First, individuals invest physical and psychological energy in both highly broad and specific experiences (which Astin refers to as objects). Second, involvement occurs on a continuum in which "different students manifest different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times (Astin, 1984, p. 298). Third, involvement can be measured through both quantitative (e.g., the number of hours spent in a student organization) and qualitative (e.g., whether the student is an officer of a club or only a member) approaches. Fourth, the outcomes of educational programs relate to the involvement by students in those programs. And finally, the main criterion for judging the effectiveness of educational policies and programs is the capacity to increase the involvement of students.

Bringing college students from different backgrounds to interact is a very powerful form of involvement. Not only are students provided the opportunity to invest both physical and psychological energy in their collegiate experience, but colleges and universities are also enhanced because they are able to achieve their educational outcomes. In the case of student cross-group interaction, the outcomes are greater awareness of self and others within the context of groups, increased understanding of group processes, enhanced knowledge of intergroup issues, and cross-cultural understanding.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY
Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a paradigm that emerged in the field of social psychology from research on group formation, group behavior, social comparison processes, and intergroup relations. SIT was developed when social scientists discovered that cognitive processes heavily influence group formation. Prior to Social Identity Theory, the main theoretical framework for explaining group formation was the Social Cohesion model, in which group formation was conceptualized primarily as an affective process. That is, social psychologists perceived social categories, or groups, forming as a result of mutual attraction, reciprocal influence, and individual attraction (Turner, 1982). In contrast, Social Identity Theory posits that membership in a group is primarily a cognitive process. Thus, a group is conceptualized as two or more individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to the same social category. The cognitive basis for the theory comes from research, which found that the mere perception of common membership, irrespective of mutual attraction,
is often enough for individuals to behave as a group (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971).

Social Identity Theory also proposes that, in addition to people perceiving themselves as belonging to specific social categories, these groups are internalized as part of the individual's self-view. However, since the context and perceptions involve groups in society, this identity is called social self-view or social identity. According to the model, social identity is distinct from personal identity. Personal identity is self-concept as a person; whereas, social identity is "self-conception as a group member" (Abrams & Hogg, 1990, p. 2).

Another facet of SIT involves its use of social comparison processes. The model draws on Festinger's (1954) work on self-view and individual comparison. Festinger proposed that individuals are driven to acquire and maintain a positive self-view and attempt to do so by comparing themselves to other persons. In the process of comparing themselves to others, they try to achieve positive psychological distinctiveness that will enhance their self-view.

"The basic hypotheses of Festinger's theory relevant to this clarification are...that there exists in the human organism a drive to evaluate his opinions and abilities; to the extent that objective, non-social means are not available, people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison with the opinions of others; and that there is a unidirectional drive upward." (Turner, 1975, p. 8)

Social Identity Theory takes this postulate of social comparison and applies it to individuals within the context of groups. That is, SIT proposes that, much like our drive to achieve a positive personal identity, individuals are motivated to acquire a positive social identity by belonging to groups that enhance their social self-view. Groups that promote a positive social identity are those that enjoy high status, power, and prestige. Individuals arrive at conclusions about the benefits (status, power, prestige) of a group by comparing the group to which they perceive themselves to belong (in-group) with another group (out-group).

REALISTIC GROUP CONFLICT THEORY
Competition for scarce resources including money, land, power, and other resources or psychological, emotional, or cultural differences can lead to conflict between groups. This is the principle premise behind Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGC).

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY
Relative Deprivation Theory suggests that intergroup conflict emerges when a group develops the perception that it is deprived or disadvantaged in comparison to another group. Moreover, this framework posits that intergroup conflict emerges even when the perceptions of inequality are not real.

GROUP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT THEORY
Researchers posit that one of the features of group identity is that it is developmental in nature. That is, a group identity (e.g., African American, Chicano, female, gay) develops over time and entails different processes (e.g., stages, statuses, linear, circular). A variety of models have been proposed for different social identities.
**CATEGORIZATION PROCESS**
The categorization process is the foundation for stereotypes and stereotyping. Researchers propose that when group categories are created, individuals in those categories are perceived as more similar and different from other groups. Stated differently, when people are categorized into social groups, both their similarities as related to that group and differences from other groups are being highlighted.

**SCHEMA THEORY**
Schema theory suggests that people have mental representations about concepts. Known as schemas or cognitive structures, researchers posit that schemas represent information stored in our minds in an organized fashion (much like a map) and that these cognitive structures are used to process information about the world. Group schemas are cognitive structures that contain information about other groups including beliefs about their behavior, their characteristics, and other group aspects.

**CONTACT HYPOTHESIS**
The Contact Hypothesis is a theoretical framework, which outlines conditions that must be present for contact or interaction between individuals and groups to result in improved intergroup relations. More specifically, this framework suggests that there must be at least three conditions present during the contact situation for the outcome of reduced intergroup conflict to occur. First, there must be a superordinate or common goal for the group. Second, the groups must come together under the condition of equal status. That is, the groups must be equal in number and must be treated the same (e.g., respected, equal resources, equal representatives). Third, there must be institutional support or support from the leader(s) for the contact.
IMPORTANT CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

**Personal Identity** - our identities as individuals including our names, personal experiences, traits, skills, personal characteristics, self-view, and self-esteem.

**Social Identity** - our identities within the context of different groups including race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class status, religion, occupation, nationality and other groups.

**Salient Social Identities** - the group identity or identities which an individual is most often conscious of or negotiates more often. For example, religion is a salient social identity for some people whereas ethnicity is not.

**Multiple Social Identities** - people perceive themselves to belong to many different groups.

**In-Group Bias (in-group favoritism)** - the tendency for in-groups to favor themselves.

**Worldview** - the lens through which we view the world.

**Oppression** - "social oppression exists when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously exploits another social group for its own benefit." (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997) While this involves individual acts, prejudice and discrimination become oppression through patterns of scale and time; see "system," below.

**System of Oppression** - is when "harassment, discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, and other forms of differential and unequal treatment are institutionalized and systematic." (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997)

**Naming** - "when we articulate a thought that traditionally has not been discussed by the minority group, nor the majority group." (Wink, 1997)

**Codification** - "the concept captured on paper, in the dirt, on the chalkboard, on the wall. It is thought, painted. It is the symbol, symbolized. I have known teachers to codify thoughts in pictures, in action, in clay, in paint." (Wink, 1997).

**Dialogue** - "is a change-agent chatter. Dialogue is talk that changes our context or us. Dialogue is profound, wise, insightful conversation. Dialogue is two-way, interactive visiting...Dialogue is communication that creates and recreates multiple understandings. It moves its participants along the learning curve to that uncomfortable place of relearning and learning. It can move people to wonderful new levels of knowledge; it can transform relations; it can change things." (Wink, 1997)
References


PART IV: Facilitator Practices and Techniques for Creating Dialogues

Facilitator Practices
Support and Challenge
To develop and succeed in a particular environment, people need a balance of both support and challenge (addressed earlier in the manual and repeated here for emphasis). This also holds true for diversity dialogues, which entail attempting to get participants to grow, develop, and change. Support refers to the sense of safety and trust that is needed for people to risk the fear and apprehension associated with change. Challenge, on the other hand, is defined as experiences or information that prompt a new way of thinking about oneself and others. Thus, facilitators should strive to set up the conditions during training that offer both dynamics. The dialogue and activities should be challenging enough to make participants get out of their "comfort" zone, but safe enough to avoid defensiveness and closing-off.

Establishing Credibility and Trust
It is important to recognize that the facilitator's social identity (the group or groups she/he/they belongs to) impacts participant's perceptions of the credibility and trust of the facilitator. There is not one single way to establish credibility and trust. Each facilitator will use different approaches. Voices of discovery uses the co-facilitator model in which the social identities within the intergroup dialogue are represented in the facilitators (e.g., the African American/White dialogue has an African American and a White facilitator). The point is that diversity facilitators must be aware of the impact of their social identity on the perceptions of credibility and trust among student participants in order to manage the group successfully.

Examining the Role of Agents and Targets
Critical to understanding intergroup relations is the process of understanding that people are both recipients and supporters/perpetrators of discrimination and oppression. Dialogue participants have the tendency to readily acknowledge and discuss how they have been discriminated against, but rarely discuss how they have perpetuated discrimination against others. In the latter weeks of the dialogue, facilitators might design exercises and group discussions directed at the full exploration of the role of people in oppression.

Inclusive and Open Space
Developing an inclusive and open space is one of the most important features of intergroup dialogue. Learning about intergroup relations concepts and about the difficult issues of diversity will be very counterproductive if participants do not feel physically, psychologically, and emotionally “safe”. Putting individuals on the defensive and attacking them for their opinions and beliefs will stifle or eliminate intergroup growth and understanding. Of course, for individuals to learn and grow, there must be some level of physical, emotional, and psychological discomfort (e.g. anger, crying, different viewpoints). However, uncontrolled dialogue settings characterized by shouting, verbal abuse, disrespect, sarcasm, snickering, and other derogatory behaviors can only lead to more
intergroup polarization. Safe space is created by establishing sound ground rules and expectations for dialogue and via trained facilitators who insure the safety of participants.

**Entering Another Person's Worldview**
One of the main impediments to understanding each other is the failure to understand and enter each other's "world." People live in different worlds and, thus see the world through different lenses. The challenge of intergroup dialogue facilitators is to establish the conditions for participants to, first, understand the concept of worldview, and second, to enter another person’s worldview and see it from their side. Also called cognitive empathy, this process involves perspective taking rather than agreement with another person. That is, just because a person sees an issue from the perspective of another does not necessarily mean that they agree with the other person. However, it is a beginning point for possibly seeking common ground and collaboration.

**Taking Action/Developing Change Strategies**
One of the most common complaints by participants in diversity dialogues is that the program did not cover the action or application implication of the concepts or material. All the "consciousness" created around issues of diversity is wasted when participants do not understand the importance of or how to take the concepts and apply them. It is important in the final dialogues for students to begin talking about the 'next step' for participants. That might include attending an upcoming workshop, participating in community service activities, or further reflecting and reading personally. It is important that students understand that positive action affects change and improves intergroup relations.

**Dialogue Techniques**
**Active Listening**
When undertaking intergroup dialogues, it is important to prepare participants for engaging in the exploration of these difficult topics. One important skill for participants to have is active listening. This type of listening allows for maximum learning and sharing during discussions about intergroup issues. Thus, it may be important for facilitators to take participants through active listening exercises before proceeding into the dialogues.

**Trigger Warnings**
Intergroup dialogues cover varied topics and employ stories, experiences, short videos, brief articles, and many other materials that may cause students distress tied to past experiences and trauma. Facilitators should be aware of potential “triggers” that might be unlocked by the teaching elements in the dialogue process. Facilitators should be aware of the concept of triggers; give trigger warnings in writing or verbal when appropriate; and discuss with student participants trigger warnings and their purpose.

**Preferred Names and Pronouns**
Acknowledging and using students preferred names is an important component of engendering rapport, trust, and respect with students as well creating a welcoming environment. Preferred names differ from legal names and are used by people for a variety of reasons ranging from nicknames to gender identity. Facilitators should be aware of and respect participant’s preferred names. The same dynamic applies to pronouns. Be aware
that people use different pronouns (e.g., she, he, they, them, his, her, etc.) and their importance to individuals especially as it relates to gender identity.

**Give Plenty of Examples to Explain Constructs**
A dialogue facilitator might use intergroup concepts to stimulate dialogue. However, intergroup relations concepts, particularly theoretical constructs, are very complex. Thus, it is important that facilitators give plenty of real world examples to explain ideas. So, for example, a facilitator might present the definition of a construct and then follow-up with a story that he/she/they read in the newspaper that exemplifies the idea. Or, the presenter might tell a story about an experience that he/she/they witnessed, again to explain the construct from a different angle. Finally, the facilitator might ask participants to share their own experiences related to the concept being presented.

**Learning Styles**
Be aware of the multiple learning styles that participants bring to your dialogue. Some learn by observing, others by doing. When teaching concepts to stimulate dialogue, try to plan your pedagogy so that they address as many learning styles as possible in order to maximize the dialogue objectives. So, for example, a facilitator might introduce a construct with an interactive exercise, write about it on a smartboard, followed by a story, and conclude with a dialogue.

**Be Inclusive**
It is important that the dialogue be inclusive of many different groups. Even though dialogue groups might focus primarily on one social identity (i.e. race/ethnicity) use examples and exercises that include ethnic/racial minorities, disabled persons, people who are gay, lesbian, and bisexual, social class status, Whites, White males, women, and other social identities. Participants will feel affirmed, begin to trust the facilitator, see them as an advocate, and participate more in the dialogue. This is critical because participants should begin to see the linkages between greater understanding among their dialogue group members and transferring that understanding to other groups.

**Compare Group Experiences**
The practice of including multiple social identities in intergroup dialogues is a very powerful tool. First, as mentioned above, it allows the facilitator to affirm different identities present in the dialogue and consequently develop trust and respect with the participants. Additionally, including the experiences of many different groups allows participants to examine the similarities and differences between groups. For example, there are similarities that can be drawn between the fear that undocumented Latino workers have of being discovered, losing their jobs, and being deported and the similar fear of retaliation that gays and lesbians face of coming out or being discovered. Comparing and contrasting experiences between groups allows participants to better understand the issues of other groups as well as understanding their own group and experiences.

**Use Relevant Experiences**
It is important to use experiences that are relevant to the participants. Often, facilitators fall into the trap of providing audiences with experiences and information that is relevant to
the presenter and not to the participants. For example, a staff member who is a facilitator might be interested in office and supervisory issues whereas students are interested in examples that include dating, classroom experiences, Greek life experiences, and other student life issues.

**Use Interactive Strategies**
Interactive strategies such as simulation exercises, educational puzzles, group work and group interaction are ideal for involving participants in their own education. These types of approaches empower groups to "discover" the world. Moreover, it allows participants to use all their senses and capitalizes on different learning styles in order to maximize learning.

**Modeling**
Modeling is a technique that can be used to establish a climate of non-defensiveness and honesty. So, for example, a heterosexual facilitator might relate their own growth and development with respect to understanding gays (e.g., hating and fearing gays to learning about and understanding gays). Another facilitator might relate a story about how they feared African Americans, but because of experiences learned that the fear was not warranted. Modeling sets up the conditions for participants to, in an honest way, begin to recognize, acknowledge, and examine their own issues.

**Storytelling**
The use of stories in dialogue is a powerful technique for creating consciousness and awareness of intergroup relation's concepts and issues. Through story telling, participants bond and understand each other on a personal/individual basis and gain a deeper understanding of the different groups to which we belong. Stories are interesting and convey emotion, history, pain, joy, spirituality, friendship, forgiveness, and other ideas. They represent an effective tool in intergroup dialogue for explaining constructs, engaging participants, eliciting emotions, and breaking down barriers between groups.

**Metaphors**
Webster's Dictionary defines a metaphor as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them." Like stories, metaphors permit dialogue participants to express themselves in an interesting and deep manner about diversity-related issues and experiences. For example, participants might be asked to use a metaphor to describe their perceptions of race relations in America. So, someone might provide the following metaphor: "Race relations in America remind me of the relationship between the earth and the sky. The earth, representing ethnic/racial minorities, sends water to the clouds through the process of evaporation and makes the sky look beautiful. For their part, clouds, which remind me of Whites, return the water back to the earth and enrich it. Both the earth and the clouds are equally important and need each other in order to live and make life interesting."

**Group Work**
Group interaction is a good technique for getting participants to know each other, share ideas, and discuss the issues in small groups. Small groups are excellent for getting everybody to express their ideas. Some participants are reluctant to raise issues in large dialogue groups. Small group work allows for everybody to participate and represents an opportunity for participants to teach each other.

**Collages/Art Work**
Collages and other forms of art tap into the creative and visual side of participants. Here participants might be asked to create a collage depicting intergroup relations or intergroup concepts and ideas. Next, they might be asked to do a presentation and explain their art piece.

**Fishbowl Discussions**
This is a great strategy for creating greater understanding about intergroup issues because it allows participants to enter the world of other groups. Fishbowl discussions entail placing all members of one group (e.g., African Americans) in a circle in the center of the room surrounded by the other participants (e.g., White). The facilitator then leads a discussion with the African Americans only for a specified time (e.g., 20 minutes). Next, the White participants are then placed in the center and the facilitator leads a discussion with them. Finally, both groups come together and discuss as a group any issues that emerged from the fishbowl discussions. For many participants, this is their first opportunity to "listen in" on a discussion involving groups that they normally don't get to hear. In other words, there is very little intergroup interaction that takes place and the fishbowl discussion allows individuals to learn about other groups' opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences.

**Reflection Sessions**
Reflection sessions are designed to get individual participants to think at a deeper level about experiences, issues, or concepts. Through questions, exercises, and other techniques, participants critically examine their thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, and the change process on the way to gaining a better understanding of groups, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. Critical to this process is an examination of the dynamics of taking action toward change.

**Journaling**
Journaling is another form of reflecting. This reflection, however, takes the form of writing. Thinking about issues through writing allows participants confidentiality, which also permits them to explore issues of diversity in a very honest way. Additionally, some are better able to communicate thoughts and feelings through writing compared to verbalizing them.

**Personal and Group Affirmation**
Affirming participants and the groups they belong to for being honest and sharing, respecting others, and making contributions to the training process allows for the creation of a safe space, the development of trust between facilitators and participants, and maximizes honesty among the participants.

**Visual Imagery**
Visual imagery is a technique that permits participants to explore and examine issues and experiences both cognitively and affectively. Here, a facilitator might have participants imagine that they are in a foreign country, not knowing any one personally, and unfamiliar with the language or culture of that country. Next, the participant might be asked to think about similar dynamics involving American Indian students leaving a reservation and coming to a college campus.

**Types of Intergroup Dialogue Participants**

It is important for facilitators to be aware of the possible dialogue participants they might encounter in their group. Managing the dialogue process involves identifying the type of participants that might be present in the group and learning how to manage them. Below are some examples.

**The Talker**

Intergroup dialogue participants vary in the quantity and quality of what they verbally contribute to the group. Inevitably most groups will have a participant who shares or talks too much. Thus, the facilitator is confronted with the task of cutting them off so that others may speak. There are several techniques for doing this to both minimize disruption to the group as well as avoiding appearing to be rude.

a) At the beginning of the dialogue session remind participants that your role as a facilitator is to make sure that all voices are heard. Thus, if you cut someone off during the middle of their long monologue, it is not that you are trying to be rude, but that you are trying to make sure that all participants have equal time for sharing.

b) Another approach to handling the “talker” is to just interrupt them and deflect the dialogue to someone else who has not spoken. So, for example, you might say something like this: “Excuse me, let me stop you for a second. The idea that you just raised made me wonder whether anybody else in the room has experienced something similar. How about you, Debra? Have you also felt the way John does?” What this technique does is that it takes the dialogue away from the talker in a gentle way and gives it to another participant.

**The Debater**

Often what happens during the intergroup dialogues is two individuals get involved in a debate that resembles a tennis match rather than a dialogue. The dynamics of the situation are such that both participants become lost in trying to convince each other that he/she/they is right, and the other person is wrong. As the debate continues, two things happen. One is that the other group members become agitated because these two individuals are locked in battle over their own issues. The other is that as the debate grows, conflict and tension between the debaters increases. Here are two suggestions for addressing this situation.

a) Remind dialogue participants that the purpose of the dialogue is not to convince others about personal positions. Rather the objective is to share different viewpoints in order to lay the foundation for education, awareness, and critical thinking to take place. It is important for participants to adhere to the ground rule that it is OK to disagree. That is, agree to disagree and move on.
b) A second approach is to call a “time out” and interrupt the debate. So, a facilitator might raise their hands to symbolize a time out and ask the participants to stop the debate. The facilitator might also summarize both viewpoints and ask other participants to express their views, thus effectively deflecting the debate away from the two participants.

The Quiet Participant
On the other end of the spectrum is the participant who is very quiet and does not share with the group. First, it is important to understand that because the person does not speak up does not mean that they are not learning or growing. Some participants learn through quiet reflection. However, during an intergroup dialogue, it is important for all participants to share otherwise the rest of the group will not benefit. Here is a suggestion for handling the quiet participants.

a) One technique is to “call” on the quiet participant and ask them to share. For example, a facilitator might state the following: “We have not heard from Jose. What do you think about this issue, Jose?” Sometimes this approach entices the participant to share. Other times, when called to participate, the quiet participant finds it difficult to talk and remains silent. It is important to allow for some silence (for example, 20 seconds) to allow the participant to think about sharing. However, it is not appropriate to allow the silence to continue for a long period of time. If the participant does not share after 30 seconds, ask the participant to think about the question and inform him or her that you will call on them again a little bit later. It is also important to be aware of cultural dynamics that dictate the communication style of members of some groups.

The Emotional Group Member
Because the intergroup dialogues are dealing with emotional and psychological pain related to incidents of discrimination and oppression, the dialogue process can entail emotions such as crying, anger, distress, and defensiveness. Emotions are a critical part of the dialogue process because it balances the process out by dealing with the cognitive as well as the emotional. It signifies to group members that intergroup issues do indeed hurt people. But what can a facilitator do if a group member is crying so much or exhibits lots of anger to the point that it becomes a distraction or disruption to the rest of the group? Here are some suggestions.

a) Call for a brief recess to try to calm the participant down. Sometimes group members can help by hugging and consoling the distraught participant or just listening to the angry individual. Here it is important to affirm their anger or pain rather than trying to educate them about the issue. Let the participant be heard.

b) If the participant is too angry or emotional and cannot calm down, the facilitator may ask them to leave the room and with another facilitator to process the pain. It is important to discern the issue impacting the student. Depending on the severity of the issue, the student may have to be referred to the counseling center.

The “Not I” Group Member
Often, intergroup dialogue members will make statements or express viewpoints and not take responsibility for them. That is, they will make a statement such as “Well, I heard that some people believe that affirmative action should be abolished because it discriminates against Whites.” or “I read somewhere that all Whites are racist.” More often then not, what the participant is doing is stating his/her/their viewpoint, but not taking responsibility for it. When this occurs, it is important for the facilitator to turn it around and ask the participant what they believe.

a) Ask the members of the group to use “I” statements rather than attributing attitudes or viewpoints to other people. For example, a participant taking responsibility for her statement might state the following: “I believe that affirmative action should be abolished because it discriminates against Whites.”

The “Odd One Out” Participant
Intergroup dialogues are designed to maximize freedom of expression and allow for many viewpoints to be expressed. It is the expression of multiple and discrepant views that permits the growth, development, and understanding of participants. One situation that often occurs during intergroup dialogues is when a participant holds viewpoints that are very extreme as compared to the rest of the group. An example is the participant who blames a sexual assault victim by suggesting that she was raped because of the way that she was dressed. Or the group member who believes that homeless people are without homes because they are lazy and don’t want to get a job. Here it is important for facilitators to insure the “safety” of the participant holding extreme views from any backlash emerging from the other group members who hold the opposing viewpoint. What can a facilitator do in this situation?

a) Deflect the dialogue away from the person with the extreme viewpoint and open a general discussion about why these attitudes toward the homeless exist in society? As stated above, participants must take responsibility for their opinions. However, the pressure on one person expressing an extreme viewpoint against the majority can be a “crushing” experience.

Dialogue Dynamics
Homogenizing Effect - Members of the in-group are convinced that there is no discrimination in the world and that people are treated equally. This worldview manifests itself in statements designed to indicate that we are or should all be the same. Thus, individuals make statements such as “Why can’t we all just be Americans, why do we have to use ethnic terms such as African American or Chicano?” Or “We are all human, we are one big family, we are all the same.” The same is true when individuals suggest the only explanation for social phenomena is prejudice and discrimination. That is, they believe everything is tied to bias.

Denial of Experiences - One common response during discussions of issues of diversity is the denial of another person’s experiences. For example, if an African American relates a personal story about a security guard in a shopping mall following him around the store assuming that he is going to steal something, another student might respond by indicating that she/they has been in that very same store and the security guard did not follow her
around. Thus, the implication is that if that act of discrimination does not happen to “me” then it must not happen to “you.”

The Exception to the Rule - Individuals often use the exception to counter a viewpoint. For example, when discussing sexual assault perpetuated by men against women, a male student may counter by suggesting that there are recorded cases of women raping men. This statement is usually followed by the question: “Aren’t you also concerned about those cases?” Often these statements are indicators that the person is in a defensive posture.

One Criterion Argument - Cases and issues of diversity are very complex and to reduce arguments to one criterion is simplistic thinking. Thus, an individual might make the point that it is fair to discriminate against women who want to be firefighters if they do not have the strength to carry a person out of a burning building. The same point is used to argue against allowing women into the military. In this scenario, a complex situation is reduced to one criterion: strength. Firefighting involves many different tasks above and beyond strength including handling a fire hose, crawling through small spaces, using an ax, arson investigations, driving a fire truck, as well as many other duties that make both men and women qualified.

The “Rumor” Argument - One common occurrence during discussions related to diversity is making an argument based on rumor. “Well, I heard that the University receives a lump sum of money, say $30 million, for recruiting a certain number of minority students,” is an example of such a statement. Or “I have a friend who knows someone who was denied acceptance to Stanford and at the same time a Chicana with lower scores was accepted.”

You’re Not Objective - One strategy that participants often use in resisting grasping the complexity of diversity issues is to accuse the facilitator of not being objective. Thus, a female facilitator trying to educate about inequities in pay between men and women is accused of being biased in favor of women. This objective of this approach is to dismiss good evidence by shifting the argument and personalizing the discussion.

One Case Argument - Here participants argue their viewpoints based on one true case that they are familiar with or that is well known by the public. So, for example, they may state women should not be allowed into military academies and cite the VMI (Virginia Military Institute) case as proof. Moreover, they only focus on the female cadet voluntarily leaving, rather than examining the possibility that she may have been pushed out.

Stereotypes - This strategy assigns natural attributes to groups and people use it to justify social roles relegated to particular groups. Thus, Latinos are naturally good with plants and that is why many of them are gardeners and landscapers. Women are nurses because they are naturally good nurturers. This argument ignores the effects of social role constraints on groups.

You Just Don’t Get It! - This is a defensive posture designed to cut off the discussion. It gives the facilitator or other participants the message that you are not part of my group
and you will never be able to understand it. Part of this response could be related to social identity development. That is, the participant might be at a stage where they are angry with the out-group and won't allow members of that group enter the world of their respective social identity.

**What You Consider an Offensive Comment, I Consider a Compliment!** - Often participants will dismiss the negative experiences of other participants by reframing those experiences as positive. For example, an African American female might share an experience, which upset her because someone went up to her and, curious about her "dreadlocks," touched her hair. Responding to this experience, another participant might state that if someone touched her hair, she would consider it a compliment because it might signify that people like her hair. This approach serves to minimize the negative experience of one group member and suggest that it was not an insensitive occurrence.

**We Are All Getting Exploited, So That’s OK!** - Here participants defend their position by suggesting that the in-group is also being oppressed. For example, when it is pointed out that women are depicted in advertisements as sex objects in order to sell products, participants often get defensive and point out that the same treatment is accorded men. The implication is that both men and women are exploited and therefore, stop "whining about it." This is different from someone who acknowledges the oppression of both men and women and suggests ways to eliminate that oppression.

**Exercises for Creating Dialogues**

**Active Listening Exercise** This exercise is designed to demonstrate to students how to “actively listen” to one another. Facilitators demonstrate the correct and incorrect way to actively listen. Afterwards group members are paired and practice the technique with one another.

**Nametags** Nametags are worn by each participant with their preferred “first” name only as well as their preferred pronouns in effort to encourage the bonding process and each person to be recognized as an individual.

**Personal Identity Tag Exercise** This exercise is designed for participants to understand personal identity and help contrasts it with social identity. Participants write five qualities or characteristics about themselves on separate "post-it" notes. The characteristics selected should be those that are not seen by other individuals. That is, the participants should be instructed to select invisible characteristics such as intelligence, humor, or outgoing rather than "blue eyes", curly hair, or other visible personal qualities. The participants then stick the notes on their clothing so that other participants can read them. Participants are asked to find as many people who share one quality that they have identified about themselves and link arms with them. The goal is to have all participants linking arms showing that the entire group has overlapping qualities.

**Cultural Walk (Social Identity)** This exercise aims to teach participants about the many groups that we belong to and the commonalities and differences among people. Participants are asked to form a line (shoulder to shoulder) on one side of the room. The
facilitator then tells them that he/she/they is going to give them a set of instructions, they must think carefully about the instructions, and they should follow those instructions. Next, the facilitator announces one by one a diversity of groups and participants are asked to crossover to the other side of the room depending on whether they perceive themselves to belong to that group. Example: The facilitator announces, "If you perceive yourself as belonging to the gender identity group called 'female', please crossover to the other side of the room." Once the participants have crossed, the facilitator asks those who crossed to "look around you to see who is in your group, look across to see who is in the other group, and to go back to and rejoin the original group again."

**Hula-Hoops Exercise (Social Identity)** The objective of this exercise is to demonstrate visually and interactively the concept of social identities (the multiple groups to which we belong). Five or seven Hula-Hoops are each labeled (one label per hula-hoop) with different social identity tags (i.e., gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, educational background, socio-economic status). Participants are asked to volunteer and identify their social identities as each hula-hoop is handed to them. For example, a student may respond to the ethnicity hula hoop as African American, the gender hula hoop as male, the socioeconomic hula hoop as middle class, and so on and so forth.

**Skits, Scenarios, News Paper Articles, etc.** A short video, newspaper article, scenario, skit, or other stimulus will be used to get the dialogue going at the beginning of each session.

**Personal Affirmation Exercise** This exercise focuses on affirming each other (e.g., "I want to thank participant X for her support during the dialogues."). Group members may write something positive on the back of other members' nametags to affirm on another.