



interreligious institute

Video 4

Good Practices for building Community Across Difference

Discussion Guide

1. Know Thyself: Having knowledge of what your and your community's deeply held values around caring for your neighbor are, is foundational to building relationships.
 - a. What are your community values, either from scripture, tradition, or culture, that relate to building community? Are they hospitality, caring for strangers or neighbors, are they rooted in love, compassion, justice?
 - b. What do each of those words mean? Do you know of other meanings?
 - c. How do these values manifest in your everyday life?

2. Build Relationships. Relationships are foundational to responding to any crisis, or to any long-term social change.

Can you remember or tell a story of someone who stood with you or helped you in a hard time? This could be a friend, neighbor, family member, or stranger? What did they do or say that helped you?

3. Build Networks. Beyond individual relationships, building networks across groups, organizations and communities in your own city or town- and across the country- helps bolster the infrastructure we can all draw from in responding to crisis or building stronger communities.
 - . Community mapping: Brainstorm a list of people and organizations who are building community.
 - i. How many of those listed do you actually know? Who's missing? Are any of them working together? How can you deepen your own involvement in your immediate community and in some of these others listed? Are there opportunities for collaboration or supporting each other?

4. Show Courageous Leadership, while taking into account the needs and desires of directly impacted communities and finding ways to center the voices of those most affected by bigotry and hate.

When did I ignore injustice because of fear? What can I do better next time?

Video 4: Good Practices for Building Community Across Difference, Page 2

6. Share Solidarity (or Unity or Public) Statements. These symbols of solidarity matter in giving a message of support to those impacted, as well as putting forward a message of love, justice and togetherness to the broader community. It's critical that the messages of love outweigh those of hate.
 - a. Activity: Draft a message that you can be ready to adapt and share at the appropriate time.

7. Show Up- We get people are busy and physically showing up for interfaith events, vigils, and solidarity actions matter. They help breakdown the isolation we can feel when communities are under attack. They show people are not alone. They show that more people do support creating communities that are safe, free of bullying and harassment.
 - b. What events are happening in my community that I should get off my couch for in solidarity?

8. Storytelling- The human brain fundamentally remembers stories and experiences over facts and data. When someone is afraid or angry or sharing mis-information about Muslims, acknowledge the emotion and then follow up with "I'm afraid too that our community won't be safe for my Muslim friends kids and families. They are experiencing extremely high amounts of bullying and their houses of worship have often been targets of attack...."
 - c. ACTIVITY: Write a story with the following prompts. Choose 1.
 - . The last time I was truly afraid was when I was...
 - i. The first time I remember witnessing or experiencing bigotry or hate, I was.....
 - ii. The reason I worship the way I do is because..... orwhen I was young, I learned that God...
 - d. ACTIVITY: I AM From poem from Mini-doc discussion guide

9. Visit other communities & houses of worship, to learn and connect.
 - e. Activity: Schedule a visit with a house of worship in your community that's different from your own

10. Use your own social media platforms- Share stories of hope, of friendships and solidarity in moments of crisis like a hate crime. These do matter.
 - f. Activity: Draft a social media message that you can adapt and share at the appropriate time.

11. Continue the Conversation - whether verbally or through other opportunities for interaction and connection, it's important to realize that change takes time and patience.
 - g. What's one next step that I can take?
Who are the one or two people in your circle of family, friends, or neighbors that you can share this video with and invite into the conversation?