Guide and Tips for Planning a Town Hall on a College Campus

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Overview

A town hall meeting is a large gathering of people (e.g., 50 or more) who wish to speak about a specific issue and listen to other people's comments. A difficult dialogue meeting involves a small group. Town hall and difficult dialogue meetings (hereinafter, The Meeting) vary in format from having no structure to having a fairly rigid structure with specific topics discussed. We recommend structured meetings for the most substantive results. Successful Meetings are more likely to occur when they are planned and implemented as solution-based dialogues. The Meeting, by itself, will not resolve issues, but can be a good first step toward identifying important issues. Meetings are often used for developing a foundation for additional discussions.

What follows is a guide to holding a successful town hall followed by some advice for holding a difficult dialogue. The guide is divided chronologically, with instructions and tips for 9 steps in the planning and implementation process. Tips for town hall planners are provided for each step, and in some cases Exercises are suggested that can help planners practice the activities that would occur during the actual planning and implementation of the meeting. In the Exercise portions of the guide, the term “committee” will be used to refer to those individuals who would be using the guide to learn how to host a successful Meeting (recognizing that such a group may just be the personnel in the Diversity & Inclusion office of your institution). We also offer some sample templates in the appendix.
Step 1: Forming a Planning Committee

*Understand the unique characteristics of your campus.* Before organizing your Meeting, it is important to understand your campus’ unique issues, challenges, and opportunities on diversity and inclusion issues. This information will help you know how to focus the discussion and give your program and presentations credibility. A good way to make your event as successful as possible is to form partnerships with a variety of organizations and other likely allies and work with them to plan and hold your event. These relationships will raise the profile of your Meeting and increase public awareness and attention. Consider involving students or student groups on the planning committee.

**Exercise:** The issue of sexual assault and the societal climate toward violence against women that has recently become more visible due to statements made by the 2016 United States Presidential candidates. This has sparked campus conversations due to revelations of sexual misconduct allegations involving students that occurred off campus. Although the alleged behaviors don’t rise to the level of criminal proceedings, they have prompted calls for a university-wide dialogue. Make a list of all potential collaborators and imagine a task for each.

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Step 2: Being Clear on Purpose and Objectives

It is crucial that all parties – the hosts, any panelists, the audience in attendance, and other relevant constituents – understand why the town hall meeting is taking place and what it is intended to achieve. Before any decision is made to hold a town hall, there needs to be clear and conclusive discussion as to what objectives are to be achieved. “Well, we might as well hold one; it can’t hurt, might help” should never be the logic by which hosting a town hall occurs.

This also means the planners-hosts should be prepared to state the purpose of the Meeting when publicizing the event and inviting specific constituents. Misunderstandings regarding why a town hall is being held and what it aims to achieve are the most likely reasons why a town hall will be judged a failure by participants and observers. Here is a non-exhaustive list of potential objectives to be achieved at a town hall, some or all of which may be desired:

* Give individuals an opportunity to express their views in a structured public forum (in contrast to the unstructured flame wars on social media or email);

* Opportunity for members of the campus community to engage in constructive dialogue with university officials on a subject matter upon which there is disagreement and/or confusion;

* Provide an opportunity for groups of individuals who have been having dialogues on related issues to come together, report, and to learn from each other's experiences;

However, the most effective Meetings are those that are action-oriented. Actions seek to change the environment in which the problem itself exists (as opposed to changing the person). Actions are also designed to build the power of the group to take future actions and address other problems. Below are some action-oriented objectives for the Meeting.

* Opportunity to engage those who might not otherwise seek out information about the topic, and cultivate new leaders;

* Provide an opportunity for people to become involved in social justice issues and provide communicative space in which previously or historically marginalized voices can be heard;
* Opportunity to build consensus via dialogue regarding a topic that can be controversial, but for which the campus needs some *modicum of agreement* before action is taken;

* *Begin the process of changing attitudes and behaviors.*

Make a list of 3-4 goals for your session and discuss at the first planning meeting.

**Exercise:** A significant number of students on your campus are asking for a university response to the national issue of controversial killings of people of color by law enforcement officials. How could a town hall help the university address the situation? What could university officials hope to achieve by hosting a town hall meeting? Are there any goals university officials would like to achieve, but which may be unrealistic for a town hall meeting? Identify 2-3 achievable goals:

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Step 3: Selecting the Place, Date & Time

Setting is important for creating a comfortable atmosphere capable of sustaining productive dialogue. As with most event planning, you want to secure a location that is as accessible and neutral for as much of the community as possible. Hosts should choose a room large enough to handle the size of an expected crowd, and ensure there is proper technology (microphones for panelists, moderators, audience Q&A, as well as tables, chairs, etc.) and be prepared to quickly and smoothly replace faulty equipment should it be necessary. If you have multiple campuses, consider hosting a video conference to off campus site(s).

Setting also includes both the date and time for the Meeting. The committee should select a date and time that minimize schedule conflicts for those most likely to attend, in order to attract a good crowd. No two Meetings are alike. Your meeting’s content, format, and objectives will depend on the particular concerns and needs that you and your campus partners have identified. When selecting a time, think about who you want to attend, your target audience. If you need to know how many people will be coming, arrange a way for individuals to RSVP. As long as you receive a satisfactory number of RSVPs, the event should not be rescheduled.

The Meeting generally lasts from 1 1/2 hours to 3 hours.

**Exercise:** Write out a draft agenda giving topic titles in sequence, with times attached, and any other information you choose to supply (e.g. goal of discussion, format, reasoning, etc.). Also include anything else that takes time at the meeting, such as any opening or closing activities.

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Step 4: Determining a Format

Your format will depend on what you are trying to achieve. One of the most common formats is a briefing by a panel of three or four people and a moderator. The panel discussion typically lasts from 35-45 minutes and the question and answer period usually lasts about 30 minutes.

Another format possibility is a media roundtable. This would typically include two to four panelists who bring different viewpoints to the issue. They have a moderated discussion designed to highlight the issue and then take questions. In short, the Meeting may be structured in a variety of ways, such as:

- an interview of an expert (or an affected person) by the moderator
- a conversation between two panelists
- a discussion with a number of people on stage and then open the discussion to comments and questions from the audience
- a video presentation followed by an audience conversation

If your goal is to encourage participation/attendance by those who would not usually participate in diversity and inclusion issues, consider featuring a prominent individual at the town hall meeting who people believe would be interesting or whose views are provocative, entertaining, or otherwise stimulating. This individual would share his or her views and respond to comments from the audience.

It is equally important to have people representing a wide variety of viewpoints participating in and attending the town hall meeting, balanced against the logistical considerations for a feasible meeting that can occur within the stated time period. It is strongly recommended that there is a clearly stated limit for the amount of time spent on presentation, which is necessary to maximize opportunities for audience participation. This may mean not everyone will have a chance to speak, and some may feel frustration. The committee should provide additional or alternate opportunities for people to state their opinions, e.g., provide comment cards and a drop box at the event, and/or provide a web page to receive follow-up questions and comments. Below are examples of how a Meeting might be structured. You should change certain elements to meet the needs of your campus.
### Model 1: Difficult Dialogues Format (45 - 90 Minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 minutes</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Ground rules and agenda are covered, topic is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 60 minutes</td>
<td>Small group activities and discussion (can use a video, rhetorical questions, data, facts)</td>
<td>Facilitator(s) guide small groups, preferably circles, through discussion and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 20 minutes</td>
<td>Plan of Action: Focus on finding creative solutions</td>
<td>Make sure you have a note-taker and flipcharts if possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Model 2: Town Hall Format (60 – 90 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 minutes</td>
<td>Moderator Introduction</td>
<td>Moderator identifies the issue; introduces panel members; covers ground rules and agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 30 minutes</td>
<td>Expert Presentations</td>
<td>Panel of experts presenting opposing view or panel of experts and affected persons together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 30 minutes</td>
<td>Audience Participation: Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Always use microphones with a bigger audience. See section in guide on audience participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 20 minutes</td>
<td>Plan of Action: Focus on finding creative solutions</td>
<td>Next Steps – Can be as simple as a plan to continue the discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 5: Identifying Key Players

Upon acknowledging whatever event(s) that led to the need for a Meeting, it is important to accurately identify all the ‘key players’. These individuals/groups would be those directly impacted by the initial event(s) as well as those who would be most affected by any proposed actions to address the event. During this brainstorming portion of the planning process, it is better to overestimate than underestimate the potential key players.

After the broad list has been created, it is then necessary to determine if there are ‘categories of constituents’ that would constitute a feasible panel. For instance, can one student represent the entire student body or is it necessary to consider the student body as consisting of subpopulations from which multiple representatives should be chosen? Does productive discussion of the Meeting topic require inclusion of ‘experts from the field’, and if so, how many different perspectives are necessary? For instance, will a representative of law enforcement be enough for a legal controversy topic, or should there also be a lawyer and/or judge present to represent the court perspective?

Once the list of key players has been identified, the hosts should reach out to prospective panelists. Where possible, it may be beneficial to identify and invite prospective panelists who are alumni or former employees of the institution (they will be more likely to have an ‘institutional memory’ that can help contextualize conversations), although some topics may be sensitive in ways that argue against such an approach (e.g., former employee might harbor ill will against the current university administration, and thus be discredited as biased). Trusted, well-respected speakers are key to your meeting. The most interesting panels usually feature experts with a broad range of experience, such as academic researchers and individuals who have personal experience with the topic at hand from both sides of the discussion.

*Involve students in the planning process, if possible.*
Step 6: Identifying the Moderator

The final key player for any Meeting is the moderator. The Meeting should have one or more experienced moderator(s), depending on the size and the nature of the topic.

Characteristics: There are two important characteristics required of a moderator: 1) They must have strong communication skills, preferably honed via prior experience as a moderator, and 2) they must be perceived as either impartial or capable of being objective regarding the particular controversy. The moderator can make or break a Meeting, as their ability to manage the conversation in terms of efficient coverage of the topics while ensuring that all relevant constituents get an opportunity to express themselves is crucial to the Meeting being deemed both fair and productive. Frequently, there will be campus employees who have served as moderators (or in similar capacities) before. In most cases, it is unwise to have the university president, or other upper administration officials near that high of a level, serve as moderators because of the possibility of the perceived bias.

Roles: The moderator sets initial ground rules, summarizes comments made, diffuse tensions, and builds understanding among participants. Ideally, the moderator should have some familiarity with the issue, but that knowledge may be secondary to his or her skills in keeping a meeting moving and on point. The moderator also plays a crucial role in welcoming diverse points of view in reminding the audience to respect opposing views. The moderator should thoroughly understand the objective of the meeting, should ensure adherence to the time schedule, should not allow the agenda to be hijacked by either panelists or audience members, should be able to insert questions or topics to keep the meeting moving as necessary, and, should be skilled enough to achieve a consensus among the key stakeholders on a definitive path forward (if that is part of the outcome). Generally, frustrations from town halls usually come from just talking. A recent participant at a town hall meeting voiced her frustration as follows, “it’s not enough to talk. We have to harness these emotions into a plan.”
In summary, the successful, inclusive moderator:

- Does not “lead” the discussion, but helps direct it toward a positive and productive outcome;

- Needs to be clear about the sequence of discussion, as well as the set agenda and timeline to ensure there is adequate structure during the Meeting, yet also allowing for flexibility where appropriate; and

- Helps channel the issues raised by participants into organized and recorded ideas while encouraging people to share their thoughts and opinions.
Step 7: Publicizing the Event

One of the primary reasons for holding a Meeting is communication – and that begins with effectively publicizing the event itself. Failure to learn of the event can be interpreted by some constituents as evidence of a lack of transparency, which can exacerbate any previous hurt feelings as well as poison future interactions due to mistrust. Be sure to employ appropriate university communications and marketing resources to ‘get the word out,’ but don’t stop there. Especially when communicating with students and faculty, ‘traditional’ channels of communication such as bulk email messages may not be enough. It is always better that the public receive repetitive messages advertising the event rather than never receiving any message at all.

Do you make the Meeting open completely, select specific constituents, or ask people to RSVP to gain entry?

While the former option is the most likely choice for a town hall (would you want to live in a ‘town’ that didn’t allow visitors?), it is always important to consciously consider the options. If the hosts feel that the event they want to hold would be best served by limiting participation only to specific constituents, then they probably are more interested in holding a ‘mediation’ event rather than a town hall. RSVP’s may be the best option for a difficult dialogue meeting. However, how much notification time exists prior to the event (e.g., it is being advertised a month ahead of time? Are notifications being sent out more than once, weekly, daily?), and the number of channels being used to publicize the event (email, twitter, Facebook, posters around campus or in shops in the local community) have the de facto effect of molding the size and type of audience to be expected.

In terms of how to frame the Meeting, i.e., what to ‘call it’, it is important to balance clarity with language that does not imply bias. For instance, if the Meeting has been precipitated by allegations that an employee sexually assaulted a student, the title of the Meeting could be “Meeting to Address the Safety of Students on Campus” rather than “Meeting to Address the Sexual Assault of Students by University Employees” (too biased) or “Meeting to Address Campus Safety” (too vague).
Step 8: At the Meeting

Agenda

Having a printed schedule and agenda for the meeting, with copies for attendees, is a good idea or you can go paperless by providing a link to the schedule and agenda. It is not necessary to provide too much detail as to all of the topics that will be discussed (see the reasons below in Timing & Tempo). This will create reasonable expectations on the part of attendees as to the structure of the event. This handout can also allow hosts to include specific instructions concerning audience behavior (e.g., whether video recording is allowed, or whether questions will be spoken aloud by each individual or written down and submitted to the moderator).

Ground Rules

Some are necessary to facilitate a productive meeting, including:

- Rules governing when someone will be recognized to speak (i.e., the moderator recognizing someone rather than anyone just being able to yell out their question)
- The schedule indicating whether there will be opening remarks (by the panelists or perhaps school officials), with details as to when the audience Q&A occurs. This lets the audience know they will be provided an opportunity to express themselves, but also when exactly that time will happen within the event.
- Clearly stated rules regarding what, if any, restrictions on language there will be. Some topics can elicit language that some may find objectionable, or there may be inclusion of images (via PowerPoint or slideshow, for example) of a mature theme. The hosts, via the moderator, should make clear to the audience whether such language/images are possible and suggest actions that potentially offended audience members can take in advance (i.e., the chance to leave now with small children rather than stay and complain after the fact).
- In contrast, it is recommended that the presence of security/campus police not be spotlighted as a means of deterring bad behavior. Regardless of whether such measures have been put in place, announcing it may be
perceived as antagonism and thus make bad behavior more likely. If campus officials genuinely feel that there is a strong risk of dangerous behavior, it is better to not host the event.

**Participation**

There are many opportunities for audience engagement in a Meeting. Before the program, consider using a website or email to pose key potential questions. During the Meeting, use raised hands or electronic keypads to poll audience members’ opinions about key issues or possible answers to questions. Offer a standing microphone at which audience members can line up with questions, or pass a hand-held microphone around the room during the Q&A.

**Question & Answer Period**

A Q&A session is indeed a useful way to engage your audience. It can provide a platform for personal testimony and can spur questions that may not have been asked during speaker presentations. Here are some general tips for a successful Q&A period.

- Brainstorm ahead of time some potential themes that may arise to help make your Q&A as meaningful as possible.
- Being prepared is key; also allow for some flexibility and fluidity with the agenda. An issue or theme you didn’t think of may be identified by audience members as very important, so you will want to allow for enough flexibility to respond accordingly.
- Build in as many ways to gather feedback as possible. Hand out note cards for audience members (or remind them) to write down questions that occur to them during presentations.
- If yours is an in person event, require the use of microphones to ensure voices are heard.
- Have assigned note takers during the discussion to record themes or questions visually, where everyone can see it.
- Encourage everyone’s participation and remind the group this is an opportunity for discussion on the community issue identified, not to resolve individual issues (This is particularly important in using your town hall meeting as an environmental prevention strategy to address a campus issue!)
• Open the Q&A by identifying someone who wishes to speak or by asking a “prompt” question.
• Direct a question to other speaker/members of the panel or audience members.
• Redirect attention from participants who begin to monopolize the discussion. (This is particularly important if you have adults/experts and young people in the audience, and adults/experts are dominating the conversation.)
• Encourage people wishing to engage in continuing discussion about personal needs or issues to delay until after the Q&A are concluded. (Hint: have a flip chart in a conspicuous place that reads “Parking Lot” on the top, and make sure a volunteer records any lingering issues needing to be revisited.)

Recording

It’s worth considering whether to record the Meeting – audio and/or video. There are multiple reasons for doing so. Having a record of the proceedings can: help clarify or correct any misconceptions as to what actually took place (see Aftermath below), allow for later access to the information provided at the event by interested parties who for various reasons were unable to attend the event, signal transparency on the part of the university administration, and even be analyzed in order to help improve similar events in the future.

The reasons for not doing so – wanting to create a safe space for attendees who otherwise may not feel comfortable expressing themselves, fear of ‘putting on the record’ comments from university representatives that may come back to haunt the administration – may precipitate against holding the event to begin with. Again, it should be emphasized that a Town Hall Meeting is distinct from a ‘meeting of affected parties’ (mediation may be more appropriate), and once the decision has been made to host a Town Hall Meeting, it is better to err on the side of openness.
Conclusion

The hosts and moderators should think about and prepare for how they want the event to conclude. Whether it includes final remarks by a university official or the panelists, or summarizing commentary by the moderator, the goal is to put an exclamation point on the event rather than have it merely dissolve into ‘we’re out of time, thanks for coming’ platitudes.

In addition to thanking everyone involved, whoever is speaking last should consider including instructions or suggestions for the audience – a call to action, so to speak. Help frame audience reactions to the Meeting by articulating what conclusions the audience should draw from the proceedings they just witnessed, as well as how they can best use the information that was shared. There are questions that should be answered before the Meeting by the planning team: Is this a one-time event or just one of what will be multiple conversations; and if the latter, has the next event already been scheduled and what are those details? The answers to these questions should help frame how the conclusion is conducted.

After the discussion is over, collect evaluations from all audience members. Consider directing everyone to a website to continue the discussion.

Exercise: Identify behaviors that hinder the group process at the meeting.
Brainstorm strategies on how to deal with each of the behaviors.

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**Evaluating the outcomes**

Often the success of events such as town hall meetings is measured by the number of attendees and level of participation. While it is important to track the number of participants and hopefully meet targeted attendee numbers, the true impact is measured in other ways. Suggestion and comment boxes are a great way to ensure that participants have an opportunity to give feedback about the event. You may choose to ask attendees to complete an online evaluation after the event to provide comments and rate their satisfaction with the event, or you might use one of the methods outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Measure</th>
<th>Evaluation Method</th>
<th>What it Tells You*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Attendees</td>
<td>• Roster/sign in sheet</td>
<td>• Effectiveness of PR efforts in reaching those who attend. If you have a significant number of a specific audience, you have targeted (e.g. hospice volunteers) then you know that you succeeded in reaching that audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Registration</td>
<td>• Interest in topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of Attendees</td>
<td>• Evaluation of participants’ satisfaction of the event.</td>
<td>• Perception of attendees – often this measures the difference between their expectation and the actual experience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Include a question about accessibility of the location.</td>
<td>• Access to location – the results will be limited to those who actually attended the event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in Attendees’ Knowledge</td>
<td>• Pre and post test related to subject matter presented or discussed</td>
<td>• Whether or not there is short-term retention of information presented or discussed</td>
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</table>
| Attitude Change                  | • Open-ended question - “Based on information shared at the event, has your perception about the issue changed?”  
|                                  | • You can also administer pre- and post-event true/false questions specific to the information discussed. | • This measures changes in perceptions of participants. |
| Intent to Change Behavior        | • Post-event evaluations asking participants to state their intentions related to information presented | • Whether participants intend to take action based on information learned at the event |
| Behavior Change                  | • Follow up questionnaire 3-6 months after event. Since attendees might intend to do something immediately after the event and then never actually do it, the best way to measure behavior change is to survey attendees 3-6 months after the event. This way, you can ask attendees what they did or did not do after the event- a much easier question to answer accurately. | • If the attendee changed behavior based on information learned at the event.  
|                                  |                                                                      | • **Note:** Self-reported behavior change is not a 100% accurate measure. |
Step 9: After the Meeting

Soon after the Meeting, a debriefing should occur in which decision-makers (campus officials, relevant constituents) discuss:

a) Whether the Meeting achieved the desired objectives, and if not, why not?

b) How best to use the knowledge gathered from the Meeting to move forward?

These next steps may include altering the preconceived notion of whether to hold subsequent Meetings (it is *almost always* better to add another Meeting when one wasn’t expected than to decide not to hold one when one was expected/had been announced). Some possible next steps following the Meeting include:

- Commit to holding on-going dialogues on your campus in small groups that provide more opportunity for thoughtful discussion and exchange of ideas.
- Organize dialogues and other events (such as community service events) that can help to foster collaboration.
- Recruitment of campus volunteers for a speakers’ bureau or to participate in other awareness activities, such as “brown bag” seminars at libraries or other campus places.

One ‘next step’ that is key is publicity. Talk of what occurred at the Meeting is inevitable (see Recording), and thus it is important that the hosts of the event prepare for their own messaging. If possible, it’s a great idea to get reactions from attendees at the conclusion of the event. Positive quotes from attendees are excellent additions to PR statements, while negative comments can be very helpful in analyzing what needs improvement for future events.

Has the Meeting produced discourse revealing consensus on actionable items? Does the information presented and voices heard provide campus decision-makers with the knowledge they need to feel compelled to act? In terms of planning for and properly executing a town hall event, answering these questions is less urgent than being aware that answers will be needed soon after the event is held.
A Note of Difficult Dialogues

Difficult Dialogues sessions differ from a Town Hall Meeting in the following ways:

- Pre-registration for attendees, rather than being open to the public;
- Focused discussion;
- Smaller groups most preferably circle, rather than one large audience;
- Emphasis on everyone getting a chance to speak, rather than a format that encourages anyone to speak but is not dedicated to encouraging everyone to do so;
- Individuals share their perspectives without a Q&A (it’s not a debate), rather than a format in which back-and-forth is accepted (or even encouraged);
- Multiple facilitators who are focused on empowering expression by participants in several small-group activities, rather than a moderator who is focused on facilitating informative discussion between panelists and the audience, including Q&A;
- Content experts for follow up (counselors if topic is a trigger);
- Note takers.

Given these differences, the following are recommendations for holding a successful Difficult Dialogues session:

1) Qualified Facilitators are invaluable. Whether they have a background in counseling, academic background in disciplines such as psychology or sociology, or prior facilitator experience, it’s crucial that the facilitators understand both the objectives of difficult dialogues and the methods by which those objectives can be achieved.

2) Give everyone the space to speak their own truth. Sessions are not about correcting misperceptions via confrontation or cross-examination. Participants are allowed to present their thoughts without interruption or questioning the validity of their perspectives. A key assumption of the Difficult Dialogues session is that by allowing everyone in the room from
which to express themselves, a safe space for diverse voices becomes informative and educational for all.

3) Structured activities transform individual perspectives into collective lessons. Sorting participants into small groups ensures everyone can share their own perspectives, and guiding them through activities designed to help participants navigate sensitive topics also helps crystallize lessons for the groups. One example of such an activity – “Cultural Competence” – can be found at http://www.coedu.usf.edu/main/Diversity/documents/DifficultDialogues-ActivitiesthatEncourageConstructiveDialogues.ppt.

4) Discussion of solutions promotes optimism and empowerment. Although not appropriate in every situation, concluding Difficult Dialogues sessions with activities in which participants work together on creative solutions to the problems raised in earlier discussion can foster a sense of interdependence within and among the groups. The creative thinking involved in group discussions about potential solutions can also ensure that the session ends on a high note, one in which attendees leave feeling like improvement is possible.
## Some Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Behavior

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Type Occurs When</th>
<th>Strategies To Deal with Behavior</th>
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| Silent Members do not participate. | - Invite their participation, e.g., “I’d like to give those who have not participated an opportunity to do so.”  
- Highlight the importance of full participation. |
| Monopolizing - An attendee dominates the discussion. They may repeat themselves or interrupt. | - Acknowledge their contribution, and then call on someone else. |
| Intimidating – An attendee has strong opinion on an issue and intimidates others and discounts their ideas. | - Acknowledge their position, emphasize that not everyone feels as they do. Explain for the meeting to be successful everyone must be heard.  
- Describe the impact of their behavior on the meeting: e.g., “When you speak so adamantly, and dismiss others’ ideas, some members may be hesitant to put forth ideas that may be critical to our success.” |
| Overly Agreeable – An attendee doesn’t take a firm position/agrees with everyone. | - Be direct. Ask everyone to describe their position on the item/issue. |
| Negativity - Attended presents a negative or critical attitude. May find fault with the process or describe the meeting as a waste of time | - Help prevent this by ensuring the right people are invited to the meeting, i.e. that everyone has something to contribute or to gain.  
- Get them involved by giving them a role. |