

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

Purpose:

To provide a respectful space in an informal setting (living room, dining table, etc.) for participants to explore their perspectives on the recent refugee claimant arrivals in Manitoba; and to enter into dialogue that deepens each person’s understanding.

Pre-Conversation Preparation:

Assemble between 8-12 people including the Host; print one copy each of (a) the Agreements (located near end of toolkit), and (b) the Round 1 question (located at end of instructions); bring enough index cards for those invited; and select a timing device (process will take ~90 min).

Conversation Process:

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

1. **Opening - Group Check-in:** go around room and invite people to answer the question:
“What do I care about/value that has brought me here today?”
2. **Agreements:** Point to and read over the Agreements, acknowledging that these are simply a guide to help all feel safe and respectfully engaged. Remind people that this is intended to be a group conversation (i.e., no side conversations).
 - **Open-mindedness:** Listen to and respect all points of view.
 - **Acceptance:** Suspend judgment as best you can.
 - **Curiosity:** Seek to understand rather than persuade.
 - **Discovery:** Question assumptions, look for new insights.
 - **Sincerity:** Speak from your heart and personal experience.
 - **Brevity:** Go for honesty and depth but don’t go on and on.
3. **Process:** Explain that through some facilitated reflection, together you will create your discussion questions. Pass out index cards. Refer to handout with the Round 1 question.

Round 1:

- a. Ask people to write down their response, on an index card, to the following question:
Regarding the recent Refugee Claimant/Asylum Seeker arrivals in Manitoba...what is one question or concern you have and why? (Be as specific and focused as possible in your explanation.)
- b. Without anyone providing feedback or response, have each person read their concern and then place it on the table (or anywhere it is visible for all to see). Emphasize to the group the importance of simply hearing people’s answers (not evaluating them).
- c. Pick 3 concerns/questions to focus on for this conversation; if some can be grouped and considered together, do so.

Round 2: The Host reads out the first concern/question, encouraging each person to participate in the discussion. To allow time for all to speak, individual sharing should be kept to approximately 2 minutes.

Round 3: The Host reads out the second question/ concern, encouraging each to participate.

Final Round: The Host reads out the third concern/question, encouraging each to participate.

4. Closing:

- a. Go around the room and invite each person to respond to the either question:
 - ❖ What are your hopes around this issue?
 - ❖ What's one action you will take as a result of our conversation?

- b. Share resources in *Bread & Borders: Exploring Fears, Facts & Impacts about Refugee Claimants in Manitoba*, as appropriate. In particular, it can be helpful to provide a copy of the *Common Myths/Misconceptions About Refugees* document once the Final Round has concluded as this may help to stimulate further dialogue or address unanswered questions. Share with the group at this time, and only at this time, so as to not pre-empt the purpose of the activity.

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

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

Adapted from:

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

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

On an index card, write down your response
to the following question:

***Regarding the recent Refugee Claimant/
Asylum Seeker arrivals in Manitoba...***

***What is one question or
concern you have and why?***

***(Be as specific and focused as possible in
your explanation.)***