

Interviewing for Trust and Understanding

An Exercise by Essential Partners



essential
PARTNERS

Bold Explorations in Community

I. Silent Reflection

- Imagine a conversation that, right now, feels impossible to have or where your own resistance to having the conversation feels prohibitive. You will be sharing some of the general context around this conversation, so choose something that you feel comfortable speaking about. Bring to your mind the other party in this conversation—either the specific person/people that you know or the group/representatives of that group.

After bringing the specific person/people, and context of the conversation to mind, write down (on a separate sheet of paper) three words that describe your feelings about having the conversation.

- Place the paper to the side where you cannot see it (pocket, bag, under the chair).

II. Pair Work

- Pair up with a partner. Each of you will take turns asking and answering questions of each other in rounds. Questions are on the next page. Choose one person to be the interviewer for the first round and one person to answer questions. Each round follows the format below:

- (1 min.) The person answering questions shares briefly about the context of conversation
- (10 min.) The interviewer asks questions found on the back of this sheet, allowing the other person to answer fully between questions. Feel free to ask follow up questions of curiosity, if it feels helpful. However, try not to vary too far from the questions listed.
- (1 min.) After the interview, the person receiving the questions writes down on a new sheet of paper three words that describe their feelings now about having the original conversation.
- Switch roles and begin again.

III. Pair Debrief

- After both parties have been interviewed, share with each other what you have written and what you noticed about being interviewed in this way.

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Interview Questions

1. Help me understand why this situation is so important to you.
2. How do you feel misunderstood by (him, her, them) and how has that impacted you?
3. What do you know about the opinions of the other party regarding this situation?
4. What would you like better understood about you and your perspective? (*alternate: What do you wish he/she/they understood about you and your perspective?*)
5. What would you like to understand better about the other's perspective?
6. What values do you imagine you have in common with the other party?
7. What would shift for you, and them, if you could have this conversation and it went well?
8. If this conversation were to happen, what would you need? What would you need from the other person(s)? What would you need from yourself?