Thank you for attending the 2023 Inclusive Excellence Symposium. As a way of helping to continue the impactful conversations begun at this year’s event, we have created this Small Group Facilitation Guide. The intention of the Guide is to provide support for folks interested in expanding their learning within the community of their workplace through guided discussion and engaging with further resources. Should your area need in-person support for these ongoing conversations, please reach out to us and we will do our best to accommodate that need should capacity allow. In the meantime, we hope you will use this Guide to practice the values of Our Common Ground together and explore the impacts of this year’s incredible speakers on your individual and shared understanding of respect, justice, openness, innovation, integrity, and responsibility.

FACILITATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider the space in which this discussion will take place and how many people may be in attendance; how might you situate the room; will it be virtual or in-person; are there accommodation needs
- We recommend allowing for a discussion of at least 60 minutes if possible
- There is no need to include every question below in your conversation. You may discover new questions that arise or topics of connection that are not addressed in the questions offered here.
- Open the space with a sharing of names, pronouns if folks are comfortable, and a brief overview of some Group Aspirations (we have some recommended below, but feel free to create your own!).
- As the facilitator of the space, you are there to manage time and offer connections and structure. No one in the space is an expert in anything other than their own experiences, so no need to feel like you have “all the answers”.

GROUP ASPIRATIONS:

- Lead with love – recognize that we come to the space with the intention of learning together; no one here is trying to cause harm, but instead we intend to come together in a spirit of compassionate curiosity
- Low ego = High impact – while we will all have our own thoughts, experiences, and reactions in the space, the more we are able to decenter ourselves and recenter the collective, the higher impact we might have as a group learning together
- Move at the speed of trust – give ourselves grace as trust grows in the space; these conversations can be very vulnerable and there is no expectation to share beyond what feels comfortable
CALLING IN COMMUNITY: CREATING POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE
FEATURING: DR. LORETTA ROSS

HIGHLIGHTS AND CONNECTIONS:

• Dr. Ross opened by defining herself as a “fake academic” because she begins with practice. “I am deeply concerned with how we do the work together.” She began as an activist and only later joined higher education as a Clinical Professor.

• The focus of the session was on how we communicate both internally, with ourselves and externally with others, especially those we disagree with. Dr. Ross focused on the importance of connections and the need to engage thoughtfully and to use evidence.

• Our Common Ground values of integrity, respect, openness, and responsibility were key to the session. It focused on the how these values impact our ability to build both a relationship and understanding of another person’s views without fear or hostility. It begins with knowing oneself.

• There were 5 C’s suggested as different approaches: Calling-in, Calling-on, Calling-out, Calling-off and Cancelling. She was clear that Calling-out should not be the leading approach.

• It is “the friction of ideas that lead us to do our best thinking” and so the challenge is to not “exile, silence or punish those who rise issues we do not want to deal with.” Dr. Ross focused on exploring how we can lead with “love, grace and forgiveness to invite conversation.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• Dr. Ross suggests that in order to ask someone to give up their fear or hate, you must be there for that person. To do that one must seek to understand their realities. What emotions and/or thoughts did this suggestion for a process bring up for you? Where there experiences that you connected with or remembered?

• Dr. Ross suggested that “calling-out culture” leads to us “turning on each other” and is rooted in “fierce individualism and a spiral of expecting perfection” from others. Do these two ideas raise any new questions for you? Are there examples of either “fierce individualism” or expecting perfection that you have experienced?

• Dr. Ross asks us to “build-up our own integrity” through kindness and compassion, rather than tearing others down or seeking to create a false dualism. She suggests that we focus on integrity [Who we know ourselves to be and what we know about ourselves.], rather than reputation [What others see you as]. Does this difference between integrity and reputation seem important? Why? Why not?

• Dr. Ross gave us 5 C’s as possible types of action; however, she said the first step was “self-assessment” of our own level of readiness. What do you think she meant by the suggestion to heal our wounds first?
FURTHER RESOURCES:

- Dr. Ross offers ongoing online courses on the practice of Calling In, along with other important resources, through her website: https://lorettajross.com/calling-in-offerings

- Dr. Ross referenced colleague and collaborator, Ngọc Loan Trân, as the person who potentially coined the phrase “calling in” for this work. Read more by Ngọc Loan Trân on their website: https://www.loantranconsulting.com/blog/calling-in-creating-change-without-cancel-culture or in the book The Solidarity Struggle: How People of Color Succeed and Fail at Showing Up for Each Other in the Fight for Freedom (link to Phoenix Bookstore ordering)

- Article referenced by Dr. Ross for K-12 education: https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2019/speaking-up-without-tearing-down

- Dr. Ross’s Instagram handle: @lorettajross