

# Culture, Courage & Conversation

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Co-chair Cohort Session Notes

## What are courageous conversations?

- creates anxiety-pause to think
- identifies weakness about how we provide services
- confronting involve discomfort
- including all viewpoints
- require vulnerability
- expectations versus best practices
- level of trust
- ground rules
- comes from asking tough question
- space to discuss something, bring it to light
- catalysis for change
- evoke emotion
- moving subconscious thoughts to open thoughts
- exploring internal experiences
- identifying and breaking down barriers
- encourage our authentic selves

**TOPICS: racial equity, hiring practices, retention, diversity, white privilege, allyship**

## What role do courageous conversations play in inclusiveness work?

- meaningful inclusiveness work cannot happen without courageous conversation
- inclusiveness work inherently involves risk and vulnerability
- listening sharing must take place for growth and change
- courageous conversations lead to more conversations
- vulnerability leads to increased community
- courageous conversation creates trust, helps support building outcomes
- takes inclusiveness from idea to an action
- creates a common understanding of terms and the work
- creates a foundation for organizational culture shift
- creates options for individuals- take people away from solving problems one way
- break down barriers

- expands individual capacity- can see diverse perspectives
- expands one comfort zone
- increase productivity
- creates a more inviting workplace
- allows self-discovery
- translates to personal life- better understanding of individual story/backgrounds
- triggers growth and promotes personal learning/understanding
- enhances listening skills
- paradigm shift
- institutionalize so it's part of day to day business

### **What is required to have a productive courageous conversation?**

- curiosity
- active listening
- trust
- compassion
- brave, risk
- open dialogue
- willingness to embrace discomfort-work outside of comfort zone
- in workplace-organizational culture to support and encouraged and expected
- stated norms/rules
- consistency throughout organization
- awareness of own triggers
- management of emotional content
- assuming best intentions
- awareness of cultural communication styles
- no expectations of authority
- leaderships suspending their leader position
- learning focused (not just about outcomes)
- practice
- open-minded-willingness to be wrong
- willing to let go
- environment free of fear
- meeting people where they are at in their own understanding
- It's not about blaming- socially, historically

### **How does organizational culture support or hinder courageous conversations:**

**SUPPORT:**

- need organizational buy in- board included
- allowing time and space for conversations
- culturally themed events and inclusiveness considerations
- making it a priority- in formal manner
- demonstrating areas of strength and weakness
- have a diverse staff
- top down leadership
- influences all aspects/departments of an organization
- organization listens to and responds to content of courageous conversations
- professional development to have those conversations

**HINDER:**

- Division within the organization without support
- lack of diversity
- lack of executives/decision makers
- without support employees uncomfortable expressing ideas, thoughts concerns
- long history with inclusiveness can lead to stuck feeling
- stop/go pattern- how to shake up
- staff turnover
- let staff drive day to day needs related to the conversation
- passivity when address important issues
- time
- organizational culture focused on making decisions
- fear of rocking the boat especially when including board
- talk versus the walk