



DESIGNING THE ARC OF DIALOGUE ON **EBOLA**

The 2014 Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone has claimed more than 6,000 lives and devastated the social fabric of those countries. Countless local and international organizations as well as individual volunteers have committed time and resources to treating those stricken with the disease, while medical researchers scramble to find a cure. But the crisis has also fueled fear around the world which has contributed to the stigmatization of the disease and backlash against Africans living or traveling abroad. As the world works to figure out the best ways to respond to the epidemic, we invite Sites of Conscience to facilitate constructive dialogue on Ebola with their visitors by lifting up questions around health justice, government accountability, stigmatization, and xenophobia. Below is a blueprint for engaging Sites of Conscience visitors in dialogue on an important contemporary issue, with overtones of our collective past.

PHASE I - COMMUNITY BUILDING

PURPOSE	Phase 1 asks participants to consider why we have come together to engage in the dialogue process. Why is this important to us? Facilitator establishes guidelines and stresses safe space for learning and challenging our assumptions together.
GUIDELINES/ AGREEMENTS	What are the group agreements or guidelines we want to establish to guide our dialogue and help us establish the "container" that the dialogue occurs within? Sample Agreements: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Withhold judgment and seek first to understand the perspectives of others.2. Be aware of your own "voice" and the need for everyone to be heard.3. Respect the confidentiality of the group.4. Feel free to change your mind during the course of the dialogue.5. Be willing to examine your own assumptions.
GATHER ALL VOICES	This initial question helps to build the "learning community" and break down artificial barriers between people by asking non-threatening questions that allow participants to share information about themselves and learn about others.
SAMPLE QUESTIONS (LOW STAKES QS)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What were some of your initial thoughts on contagious disease?2. What images come to your mind when you hear "Ebola"? How, if at all, do these images contribute to the way you think about Ebola?



PHASE II - SHARING OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

PURPOSE	Phase 2 invites participants to think about their own experiences related to the topic, share these experiences with the dialogue group, and begin to make personal connections to the topic. The facilitator helps participants recognize how their experiences are alike and different and why.
SAMPLE QUESTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have you or anyone you've known been struck with a life threatening illness? How did people react to the news of their illness?2. What is one act of compassion that you valued during your own experience with illness?

PHASE III - EXPLORING BEYOND OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

PURPOSE	Phase 3 invites participants to explore the dialogue topic beyond participants' personal experiences. These questions help participants engage in inquiry and exploration about the dialogue topic in an effort to learn with and from one another.
SAMPLE QUESTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What aspects of your own experience with illness might you have in common with a person or a family who has been affected by Ebola?2. How have media accounts affected how you and others see the issue?3. Ebola has mainly affected Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. Why do media reports often describe the crisis as happening in Africa instead of calling out specific country names?4. There has been backlash against African immigrants in the U.S., Europe, and other countries. What is our responsibility to helping prevent the backlash?

PHASE IV - SYNTHESIZING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE	The facilitator helps participants identify and make meaning from the "threads" that connect the ideas, perspectives and insights generated through the dialogue.
SAMPLE SYNTHESIS AND CLOSURE QUESTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What, if anything, did you hear in this conversation that challenged your assumptions? What, if anything, did you hear that confirmed your assumptions? Tell us about how your assumptions were challenged.



SAMPLE SYNTHESIS AND CLOSURE QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

2. What, if any, new information did you learn? How will you use this new knowledge?
3. What impact, if any, will this dialogue experience have on the way you perceive the Ebola crisis?
4. What is one idea or insight that you will take away from today's experience?
5. If you could continue or replicate this conversation with anyone in your life, who would that be?
6. As you reflect on Ebola, what values do you think should guide the way we respond to Ebola within the healthcare system, in schools, and in local communities?