

Listening and Sharing in Diverse Groups

Tips for Connecting

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LISTENING

- Listen to understand, not to prepare your response.
- Your attention is a precious gift. Give it generously and fully.
- What are you learning about the other people as they share? What do you know about them now that you didn't know before?
- What connects you to the person speaking? What can you relate to?
- Be curious about the differences you hear between the person speaking and yourself. What intrigues you?
- Be conscious of cultural and communication differences that you may be judging in some way. Don't get distracted by the delivery of the story to the point that you miss understanding the content of the story.
- Did something someone shared make you think about yourself and your own life in a new way? How?

SHARING

- Listen within and be discerning. Ask yourself: "What needs to be expressed now with this particular group of people?"
- Speak from your experience instead of making generalizations; when you share an opinion on a topic, share something about how you formed that opinion. For example, what experiences have you had that helped shape your values?
- Speak to the whole group, not just the facilitator. Look around and notice how your story is being received.
- If you talk with your hands, use words at the same time so people understand your full meaning.
- In dialogues that are less structured, be conscious of the amount of time you're taking. Are you supporting everyone in the group to have a chance to share or will there be a story left untold?
- Value your stories. They are worthy of being shared.