

DISCUSSIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Facilitator Guide

Facilitator Note: *This series includes first-hand accounts from two Ameren co-workers describing their personal experience with PTSD following military deployment and a mass shooting that occurred at the Kirkwood City Hall in February 2008. If you may find these accounts potentially disturbing for your team, you may decline to watch in the video and/or to participate the accompanying discussion. If you choose to show this video to your team, it is recommended to share this information with your team members in order for them to decide if they prefer to participate.*

Description

“Bringing Our Whole Selves to Work” focuses on two Ameren co-workers sharing their very personal experiences and viewpoints about traumatic events impacting their lives, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and their very personal journey, including some misperceptions and misunderstandings and what they have learned. These stories describe the narrating coworkers' insights into the impact PTSD can have on a person, their families, and our communities; and bringing awareness and understanding for those who may have experienced traumatic events or PTSD.

Objectives

Participants will be challenged to:

- Begin new dialogues on issues facing our co-workers and our community
- Learn about personal stories of courage (*as we listen to Nick's and Claire's stories and others' sharing within their debrief discussions*) and lead from where you are
- Support Ameren's efforts to build a more inclusive community

Target Audience

This program is intended for groups, organizations and people interested in building inclusive communities through dialogue and discussion.

Tips for Facilitating

As a facilitator, your role is to encourage discussion. Considering the opinions and points of view presented in this presentation, focus discussion on those conversations and thoughts that affect inclusion, respect, and valuing others. To best facilitate the discussion, **carefully review the video and prepared materials in advance of presentation.**

Guidelines:

- Review all presentation materials and the video in advance of your session.
- As you begin the session, establish ground rules for sharing (**see *Ground Rules Samples***).
- Stress the need to be respectful of others.
- Set expectations for the session by sharing the objectives (**see *Objective Section above***) and agenda.
- Actively manage time to allow sufficient discussion of the topics highlighted in the video.
- You may encounter off topic comments in your session. Prepare to steer the conversation back on topic. An example of something you could say might be “***That is an interesting comment. Let’s discuss it further after the session to allow time to cover discussion items more directly related to the video.***”
- At the conclusion of the session, thank everyone for their participation.

Materials and Equipment Needed

Presentation: *“Bringing Our Whole Selves to Work”*

Click on link: [Bringing Our Whole Selves to Work](#)

Wi-Fi or data connection is needed to view video

Laptop with Video Screen for showing video via virtual platform (*i.e., Microsoft Teams Applications*)

Facilitator Guide

Participant Booklet

PowerPoint Presentation

Time Requirements

Teams Meeting Log-in Preparation: 5 - 10 minutes

Video: 15:53 minute runtime

Discussion Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Presentation

Introducing the Program

Welcome participants. Explain that the stories they are to hear focuses on PTSD. It features two Ameren co-workers, Nick and Claire. After going through life changing experiences, Nick and Claire demonstrate the courage to evolve and grow by sharing their stories as gathering points to help spread awareness about PTSD and to break misconceptions and misunderstandings that arise from time-to-time related to PTSD.

Tell the group that you will be asking questions following the video.

As a facilitator, your role is to encourage discussion. Considering the opinions and points of view presented in this presentation, focus discussion on those conversations and thoughts that affect inclusion, respect, and valuing others.

Provide Sample Ground Rules for Discussion

Facilitators, encourage people to be involved as active listeners and participants. No one else knows another person's thoughts and personal experiences as well as that person. Suggested ground rules are below. The bracketed portions are optional, so, feel free to include or not.

Participate	I encourage you to participate. [You will find you will get more out of the program, likely, enjoy it more and hopefully, even have a little fun.] <i>Note to Facilitator: give advance notice that you will be calling on co-workers by name to ensure you have their attention and to avoid embarrassing co-workers.</i>
Respect	We expect everyone to be respectful. [Not everyone may agree with each other, but when we are respectful, we establish, maintain and even improve the way we relate to one another.]
Open	We hope you will be open.
Educate	We're here to learn and to inform, but we are all students of diversity, equity and inclusion. [Some may not have any experience participating in discussions of this nature or on these topics. And some may not have done so in a work environment. So, we expect understanding as we learn and find ways to talk about these issues, because some of us may not feel we have the "right" words to share our thoughts.]
Share	Sharing our experiences, respectfully, can help us connect with each other. Doing so, also can help us build trust.

As you ask questions, remember to allow people time to think before they respond. Do not jump in too quickly with your own answers. The role of the facilitator is to generate discussion. Ideally, you will be neutral and not share your perspective.

Group Discussion

For large audiences (more than 10-12 people), consider dividing into smaller groups to discuss questions. Key points from each small group can be shared with the larger group and captured on the flip chart at the conclusion of their discussion

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the messages you heard in the video related to courage and evolving?

Possible Answers:

- Courage asks us to take what is different and sometimes uncomfortable and make it a part of how we do business, a part of our culture and a part of who we trust and rely upon.
- Growth involves taking action and proceeding forward in spite of fear.
- Courage can be built over time through repetition and experience.
- Courage includes the moral strength to persevere through difficulty or fear.
- Courage is standing with and supporting others.

2. As a veteran, Nick faced many challenges during his transition from active duty to civilian life. Consider your personal approach to change. How do you respond when adapting to change? How can we provide support to others (at your organization or in your community)?

Possible Answers:

- I can leverage the ability to use different thinking strategies and mental frameworks into planning, decision-making, and managing day to day work.
- I can move from "*my way is the only way*" thinking toward "*there are many effective ways*" of adapting to change.
- I can go outside my comfort zone and embrace the change by taking new actions despite being afraid.
- I can identify what are the benefits of the change for me and what are the potential consequences for me if I do not get on board with the change

3. *PTSD involves a collection of symptoms that develop in people who have experienced or witnessed a life-threatening trauma such as combat or a serious incident.* Nick talked about some stigmas that he believes surrounds PTSD, such as the over dramatization in films of people with PTSD. What are some ways we can increase awareness to reduce inaccuracies about PTSD?

Possible Answers:

- I can connect with community organizations that include opportunities to learn and serve in support of PTSD.
- I can get involved with my organization's Employee Resource Groups.
- I can build my cultural literacy and awareness by learning more about PTSD by partnering with local organizations that are committed to helping raise awareness.

4. Diversity Equity and Inclusion played a significant role in Nick's life and military experience, stating "*the best ideas coming from all walks of life*" which he got to benefit from there. When have you seen benefits coming from ideas based on very different experiences than yours (at your organization or in your community)?

Possible Answers:

- Open discussion.

5. Claire talked about the importance of *empathetic listening*. At its core, empathetic listening is about connection. It's taking in what another person is saying (or not saying) with the intent to understand and relate to them on a human level, putting a special emphasis on understanding the other person's emotional experience. What are some positive outcomes of practicing empathetic listening?

Possible Answers:

- It can build emotional intelligence. When I can really listen and become familiar to another person's emotional experience, I can begin to understand their behavior more clearly and consider how to best respond.
 - It can improve team collaboration. When I can understand others' experiences or what motivates my team members, I can help them take on roles with the team that tap into those motivations.
 - When interpersonal conflicts arise, I may be able to more quickly understand what brought my team to a certain crossroad and respond.
 - It can strengthen my relationships. When I practice empathetic listening, I continuously invite others to be open, which builds trust and creates a safe and inclusive environment.
6. Claire said that "*everyone has a hard story*" and that she is sharing her story in hopes that it may help someone else. When have you shared a hard story that helped someone else? What impact did it have on the other person and how did they respond?

Possible Answers:

- Open discussion.

Review Objectives

Participants will be challenged to:

- Begin new dialogues on issues facing our co-workers and our community
- Learn about personal stories of courage (*as we listen to Nick's and Claire's stories and others' sharing within their debrief discussions*) and lead from where you are
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Closing Comments

Conclude the session by sharing your organization's or group's policy statement or position on diversity. Be sure to thank the participants for their contributions to discussions and for their time.

Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete a brief survey on *Discussions Across Differences* video series:

Click on link: [2022 Discussions Across Differences](#)



Let's keep the dialogue going.