

DISCUSSIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Facilitator Guide

Description

“Understanding the Present to Unfold the Future” features an Ameren co-worker who, after experiencing the sudden death of his wife, reexamines life through a clearer lens by overcoming blind spots and embracing his present situation. David shares how he was able to acknowledge and accept what he experienced, extract lessons he learned from it, and move forward. Participants will discuss how we can call upon courage when faced with significant challenges to help overcome fear and take steps to move forward/evolve and grow.

Objectives

Participants will be challenged to:

- Begin new dialogues on issues facing our co-workers and our community
- Learn how to be brave (*as we listen to David's story 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: *“Understanding the Present to Unfold the Future”*

Click on link: [Understanding the Present to Unfold the Future](#)

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: 8:15 minute run time

Discussion Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Presentation

Introducing the Program

Welcome participants. Explain that the story they are about to hear features an Ameren co-worker who, after experiencing the sudden death of his wife, reexamines life through a clearer lens by overcoming blind spots and embracing his present situation. David shares how he was able to acknowledge and accept what he experienced, extract lessons he learned from it, and move forward/evolve and grow.

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.
 - Courage includes the moral strength to persevere difficulty or fear.
 - Courage is the ability to do something that you know may be difficult; yet, you are open to learning different ways of doing things.
 - Courage is prevailing over fear in order to grow.
 - Although you may not be confident when you have little or no experience with something, growth comes when you are always expanding by being courageous.
2. The video discusses a quote, "*Life is like looking at a glass of water. Seeing the half full side and being grateful for it, and seeing the half empty side and asking can I do anything about it? If not, can I accept it?*" How can we embrace and accept changes when we see our glass is half empty, professionally or personally?

Possible Answers:

- Take one minute to set your intention for the day; being intentional help you better focus your time and energy.
 - Do something outside your comfort zone that teaches you that you are capable of more than you thought you were.
 - At work, reframe a problem so that you can approach them from a new angle.
 - Assess my situation and try to determine which elements are within my control.
 - Think about and then identify some potential benefits of the situation.
 - Maintain self-care routines and rituals that ground and support you.
3. David mentions that "*We are all made uniquely. Our experiences, what we go through in life differentiates/impacts us.*" As you feel comfortable, please share one unique characteristic you have, or a unique (unusual) experience you have had, that has impacted you.

Possible Answers:

- Individual responses.

Facilitator may prepare one of their own characteristics/experiences to share if needed.

4. David stated that "*appreciation builds resiliency.*" Being at higher levels on one's mood elevator allows for clearer thinking/improved ability to solve problems.

As we "*elevate our thinking,*" what is one thing **at your organization** you are appreciative of/grateful for?

Possible Answers:

- My co-workers
- My job
- Stable company
- Benefits and/or pay
- Learning and growing
- Focus on safety
- Focus on DE&I
- My team
- My leaders
- Ability to work hybrid (if applicable)
- Ability to serve our customers
- Focus on giving back to the community

Review Objectives

Participants will be challenged to:

- Begin new dialogues on issues facing our co-workers and our community
- Learn how to be brave (*as we listen to David's story and others' sharing within their debrief discussions*) and lead from where you are
- Support Ameren's efforts to build a more inclusive community

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.