

Having Conversations @ the Library Resource Kit

Introduction

The *Having Conversations @ the Library Resource Kit* was created to give libraries the tools needed to **host and facilitate community conversation programming and events**. Inviting community members to visit the library for facilitated conversations demonstrates for our communities the way libraries serve as more than just storehouses for books. Hosting community conversations at your library will signal to your community that **they belong** in the library, that **they matter**, and that you **center them in your work**. Libraries can be where strangers meet and realize that they're neighbors. Libraries can be where people become the resource, not just the people who use the resources. Libraries can be where connections form, and where relationships blossom into broader understanding, care, compassion, and civility.

Community conversations create safe spaces for people to meet, exchange ideas, ask questions, and reflect. Facilitated community conversations typically:

- Center on a topic or theme
- Designed for a small group setting (4-6 members per group)
- Follow a format, including timed sections

The goal of community conversations is to **build connections between community members**. During community conversations, **people do not argue, debate, or lecture**. During community conversations, **people listen, ask questions, and reflect**. Although learning may occur during a community conversation, conversations are **not informational, educational, or instructional programming**.

Having Conversations @ the Library includes resources and reading on **the value of conversations to creating and supporting strong communities**. Communities are made up of the people *in it*. They are defined by more than just geographical locations. It can be difficult – especially in politically divided, emotionally charged, and unsure times – to welcome conversation with neighbors, family, friends, and colleagues. Still, conversations

are the key to understanding not only our place in the world, but the way others contribute to our lives. **Facilitating conversations can be difficult and, for many, too intimidating to want to try.** Let this kit be a resource *for you* if you are unsure, curious, or afraid.

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Important note on the purpose of this kit: Although members of a library's community may be invited for conversations and dialogue to support strategic planning, identification of needed resources, or to meet other institutional goals, the *Having Conversations @ the Library Resource Kit* has **not** been curated with those types of conversation programs or events in mind. Community-centered planning and development can be found in other resources and toolkits, some of which have been supported through professional development and training facilitated by Colorado State Library consultants. **This kit is not intended as a resource for community-centered planning and library development.**

Our Goals

To ensure...

- Libraries have resources to respond to the increased need of cohesion and civility in their communities
- Civility, productive discourse, understanding, compassion, and connection are articulated through library programming
- Libraries have access to materials and resources for planning, promoting, implementing, and evaluating community conversation programs and/or events

Inside this binder

- Activities & Programs
- Worksheet: Identifying Community Resources
- Worksheet: Facilitating Community Conversations
- Additional Resources
- Kit Contents List (on clipboard)
- Feedback Form (on clipboard)

Feedback and Sharing

Please help us improve this kit by sharing your comments, experiences, and suggestions. You can contact Kit Support (KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org) for guidance at any point along your journey. When you return the kit, please fill out and include the Feedback Form found on the clipboard. With your permission, we will update this kit's Online Resources page <http://cslkits.cvlisites.org/lets-talk-about-it/> with the ideas and activities your library shares. Help us learn from your experiences and share those learnings with others.

Loan period

The loan period for the *Having Conversations @ the Library Resource Kit* is 2 months. If you would like to keep it longer, please contact Kit Support (KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org) to make arrangements before the loan period expires. If it is not on hold for another institution, we will do our best to extend the loan by another month.

Returning the kit

As you prepare to return the kit, please verify that it is complete using the *Kit Contents* checklist on the clipboard. Also, be sure to include your completed Feedback Form so that we can improve the experience for everyone.

Having Conversations @ the Library Kit Contents

Please verify that this resource kit is complete before returning it to Colorado State Library at Courier Code 912. You may copy any of the pages from the binder, or download a copy from the key shaped USB drive.

You can also find information at <https://cslkits.cvlites.org/programs/#conversations>

Contact KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org with any questions.

Items

- ❑ Green key shaped USB “flash” drive
- ❑ **Resource Kit binder** – Documents for each of the following are contained within a plastic folder. The materials *can be copied* but *must be returned* with the kit.
 - ❑ **Activity:** Reading about Talking (Book Discussion Group)
 - ❑ **Activity/ Library Program:** Preparing for the Family Gathering (Program)
 - ❑ **Two** Living Room Conversations card decks (not to be checked out or loaned)
 - ❑ Conversation Agreement
 - ❑ Great Gatherings Conversation Guides
 - ❑ Family & Friends Tip Sheet
 - ❑ Building Better Conversations
 - ❑ Talking about Race
 - ❑ Connecting across Generations
 - ❑ Sharing Hopes & Aspirations
 - ❑ Exploring Current Events
 - ❑ **Resources:** Living Room Conversations
 - ❑ Living Room Conversations + Libraries Flyer
 - ❑ Consultation Card
 - ❑ Planning a Living Room Conversation
 - ❑ Conversation Agreement Table Tent (master copies)

- ❑ Unpacking Conversation Agreements
- ❑ Conversation Topics Guides
 - ❑ Communicating with Care
 - ❑ Belonging
 - ❑ Weaving the Social Fabric
 - ❑ Social Identity
 - ❑ Empathy
- ❑ Community Conversations Checklist
- ❑ Sample Communications Plan
- ❑ **Resource:** American Library Association Libraries Transforming Communities – Facilitation Skills Guide (**3 copies**)
- ❑ **Resource:** Worksheet – Colorado-based Resources
- ❑ **Resource:** Let's Talk! Learning for Justice Conversation Guide
- ❑ Community conversation tools
 - ❑ **Five** Conversation Agreement Table Tents (printed on card stock, ready to use)
 - ❑ **Two** 3-minute sand timers
- ❑ Books
 - ❑ *The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love, & Truth*; edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson
 - ❑ *High Conflict*; by Amanda Ripley
 - ❑ *We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations that Matter*; by Celeste Headlee
 - ❑ *Think Again*; by Adam Grant
 - ❑ *The Righteous Mind*; by Jonathan Haidt
 - ❑ *Fostering Dialogue across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts guide from Essential Partners* (spiral bound); by Maggie Herzig and Laura Chasin
- ❑ Clipboard with evaluation form to **complete** (we really want your feedback)

Activity:

Reading about Talking – Book Discussion Group

Introduction

No librarian needs a program map for a book discussion group... *right?* Well, this is one anyway! The “Reading about Talking – Book Discussion Group” program expands upon the idea of a **themed reading group or book club**. The themes of this book discussion group are communication, conversation, civility, and community. Ideas to expand upon this program or series can be used to supplement or in lieu of the program described below.

This booklist has been curated by Annie Caplan, librarian and Library Partner at Living Room Conversations, and Cristy Moran, librarian and Adult Library Services Senior Consultant at the Colorado State Library. These books are about conversation, what it means to talk and to listen, how people communicate, why it matters how we communicate, and how to have better conversations. There are 5 books included in the “Having Conversations @ the Library” Resource Kit, but there are many more. 5 books is a good start *or* it may be too many. How you design your own book discussion group and meetings is up to you and up to the community you serve and the participants.

Intended Audience

Adults

Activity Goals

By facilitating this program libraries will:

- Foster an environment of sharing, respect, and civility in and for their communities
- Provide opportunities for meaningful conversation among neighbors, friends, family, and colleagues
- Challenge their community members to reflect upon the ways that they communicate successfully or not, and to enact positive behaviors and habits to improve their communication

Materials Needed

This is a book discussion group program. The following are a list of books that are recommended for your book discussion group and some additional resources to help facilitate or inform discussion on them.

Books

A single copy of each of these books is included in the kit. You are encouraged to use these books as a starting point for your group – you may find some, all, or none of these meet your needs.

- *High Conflict*; by Amanda Ripley*
- *We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations that Matter*; by Celeste Headlee*
- *The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love, & Truth*; edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson
- *Think Again*; by Adam Grant
- *The Righteous Mind*; by Jonathan Haidt

***Note:** There are 8 copies each of *High Conflict* and *We Need to Talk* available in the [Book Club Kits](#) available through the Colorado State Library. You can **request these copies for your library** so you have enough copies for your book club participants. [Learn how to request these copies here](#). If you already have an account and know how to request book club kits, [visit the catalog](#) and get to requesting!

Discussion Tools

The additional materials here are supportive of the books in this list, but are neither the only materials available nor are they required. You may find them helpful.

- For *High Conflict*:
 - [Discussion Questions for High Conflict](#) (Author's website)

- For *We Need to Talk: How to Have Conversations that Matter*:
 - [Teaching Guide: We Need to Talk from Harper Collins](#) (PDF, includes discussion questions)
 - [Celeste Headlee Discusses Her New Book: We Need to Talk](#) (24-minute video on YouTube, interview)
- For *The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love, & Truth*:
 - [Resources from Teaching Books](#) (includes links to external content about the authors, related content, and discussion questions in and beyond lessons)
- For *Think Again*:
 - [Think Again Discussion Guide](#) (PDF, Author's website)
- For *The Righteous Mind*:
 - [For Teachers & Book Clubs](#) (Author's website, includes links to videos and other external content)

Description

The following is a recommended outline for a “Reading about Talking – Book Discussion Group” program or series. As designed, the group will meet 6 times over the course of either 3 months (if you schedule a bi-weekly meeting) or 6 months (if you schedule a weekly meeting).

- **Meeting 1:** Introduce the Group to the Reading List, your schedule, share resources for your next book or all the books, view any, some, or all of the following and lead a discussion after.
- **Meetings 2-6:** Use the discussion guides to lead discussion on each of the books as you schedule them to be read. Alternatively, ask the members of the group to each facilitate or lead the discussion for different books. Provide them with the discussion questions, reach out to them between meetings to check on their progress through the book or address any concerns they have about their role. If any concerns arise, prepare to offer to tap into their facilitation or to facilitate the meeting in their stead.

Possible Ways to Expand Upon this Series

- Host a post-series **Sweets & Treats Exchange** after the last meeting of your “Reading about Talking” series and invite members to contribute a food item that is

meaningful to them and ask them to share something meaningful they've gotten from the group *in exchange for their sweet or treat*

- Host Living Room Conversations at your library (see the *Living Room Conversations Folder* included in this kit)
- Facilitate and/or design programs centered on conversations, civility, and community at your library (see the *Preparing for the Family Gathering Program* included in this kit for an example)
- Invite speakers from Colorado-based organizations listed in the *Worksheet - Colorado-based Resources* document in this kit to facilitate a program or community conversation series at your library
- [Request the "Let 'Em Be: Passive Programming for Adult" Resource Kit](#) from the Colorado State Library to create passive programming for adults that is centered on the themes of community, togetherness, and kindness
- [Be a Storycorps location!](#) You can [borrow the "Storytelling Kit"](#) from the Colorado State Library and use the recording tools to record your own Storycorps content.
- If you would rather just use Storycorps content as a part of programming (including for your "Reading about Talking" series) you can do that too. Storycorps provides a lot of [free, streamable content](#) on their website.
- Explore the [Engaging Differences videos and resources](#) and find ways of incorporating some of them into programming at your library

Library Program/ Activity – for Community Members: Preparing for the Family Gathering

Introduction

Most of the activities and resources included in the *Having Conversations @ the Library Resource Kit* are for librarians and library staff, with the goal of supporting planning of and implementing community conversations. **This activity, however, is a program for library users and community members** to support them during the times when they're *not* in a community conversation at the library. Difficult conversations occur “in the wild” more often than at the library. We find ourselves caught off-guard by things that people in our lives say, conversations we feel imposed upon us, and in situations where there aren't the guard rails of “Conversation Agreements” in the style of those shared in this resource kit. This activity is designed to support people who find themselves in *those* moments with resources, strategies, and an opportunity to role play and practice.

Intended Audience

Library users/ visitors and community members, adults (possibly teens)

Activity Goals

Through this program, participants will:

- Discover resources for navigating difficult conversations that arise in settings with family and friends
 - Develop strategies for dealing with difficult or challenging conversations
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- Practice responding to – or leaving – difficult conversations
- Reflect on ways they have demonstrated negative and positive behaviors during difficult conversations to inform future situations

Materials Needed

These materials are included in the Resource Binder. Printout and card decks must be returned; however, copies of the materials may be made and shared. Links are provided so you can access them online directly from Living Room Conversations.

- **Two** Living Room Conversations card decks (not to be checked out or loaned)
- [Conversation Agreement](#)
- Great Gatherings Conversation Guides
 - [Family & Friends Tip Sheet](#)
 - [Building Better Conversations](#)
 - [Talking about Race](#)
 - [Connecting across Generations](#)
 - [Sharing Hopes & Aspirations](#)
 - [Exploring Current Events](#)

Description

This library program can be run as a complement to your library's existing community conversations program or independent of any additional series. It is recommended that you **schedule for a 60- or 90-minute duration** to give participants ample time to do several small group or paired-off conversations after an initial presentation on the Family Tip Sheet and the Great Gathering Conversation Guides (these guides should be provided to participants to take home).

Start with an agenda to allow our participants to know what to expect is a best practice in all programs and instructional situations. Allowing others to know what they should expect gives them the opportunity to consent to the experience. **Consent is key to a healthy shared experience in community conversations as well as all relationships.** Providing an agenda, sharing it with your participants, and offering them the opportunity to continue with the program as designed will model the positive skills and behaviors this program hopes to inform.

Timing – that is, setting boundaries on time spent on sections of conversation activities and then respecting those boundaries by stopping and progressing to the next section – is crucial to the Living Room Conversation format.

Boundaries are *healthy*. Expressing our boundaries empowers us to both set them and maintain them. Respecting the boundaries set by others is a demonstration that we care about others and *their* boundaries. **Setting timers and adhering to those timers is important to this activity.** In addition to respecting your participants, it provides you the opportunity to model a best practice of healthy conversations.

Program Outline (60-minute session)

10 minutes: Introduction

- Present Agenda/ Overview that includes the time break-down of each section of the “Preparing for the Family Gathering” program

20 minutes: Family & Friends Tip Sheet Review & Discussion

- Distribute copies of the [Family & Friends Tip Sheet](#) to participants
- Pull up the [Family & Friends Tip Sheet web page](#) on a projector/ screen so you can walk through as your participants read along
- Lead a discussion using some of the following prompts:
 - What are the most challenging tips for *you* to follow? What can you do to overcome those challenges?
 - What are some of the reasons family and friend gatherings serve as fertile grounds for challenging or explosive conversations?
 - What are some “red flags” you have experienced that a conversation is getting out of hand or is *about* to get out of hand?
 - What are some characteristics of healthy, positive conversations?

25 minutes: Conversations in Small Groups (or Pairs)

- Depending on the size of your participant group, divide the participants into pairs or small groups of no more than 4 individuals each.
- Ask that pairs or groups be comprised of people who do not know each other well. (This is not necessary, but is helpful.)
- Each deck has 16 cards. Distribute 2 cards to each pair or group.
- Once each group has their cards, provide the following instructions to the participants:

- “Each group will have 5 minutes to use the prompts on 1 card for a conversation. I will set a timer and at the time that the timer sounds, we will use the second card for another 5-minute conversation. At that time, we will regroup and discuss as a large group what it was like to have a conversation with someone you don’t know well using these prompts. Before we do that, however, we must all agree to a few things about the space we will hold for one another in these conversations.”
- Read aloud the Conversation Agreements card. You may also project the [Conversations Agreements webpage](#).
- At the end of the first 10-minute round of conversations, ask the groups to exchange cards with other groups so that each pair or group has new cards. Follow the same protocol for the next 10 minutes, ensuring you are mindful of the time and adhere to your own parameters.

10-15 minutes: Debrief & Discussion

- At the end of the Conversations in Small Groups Activity ask participants to regroup and reflect on their experience in small group conversations facilitated by prompts on the cards. Ask them to refer to the Core Skills listed in the Family & Friends Tip Sheet for a discussion using the following prompts:
 - During your conversations, how difficult was it to *practice generous listening*?
 - Did you *assume good intent* from your conversation partner(s)? Did you enter your conversation with good intent? How could you tell? How did you live up to good intent on your end of the conversation?
 - It **will** be difficult to be *genuinely curious* about divisive topics or opinions shared by family and friends. How might you be able to navigate from a challenging *topic* to your conversation partner’s *feelings or experiences*? How might that be helpful in avoiding confrontation?
 - What responses can you prepare and practice that can demonstrate *respectful engagement* to conversations that you find challenging? Practice one of those responses now. How might that succeed as diffusing tension?

End of Program: Distribute Evaluation & Resources

- Your library likely has its own program evaluation that you’d like to share with your participants. It is important that we encourage feedback about our programs and, for community conversation programs, it is important that we model listening and reflection. If you do not have an evaluation to use, please consider asking participants to **answer these questions on an index card**:

- “What is one thing you enjoyed about this program?”
- “What is one thing you wish we had included in this program?”
- Distribute the **Great Gatherings Guides, Family Tip Sheet, and Conversation Agreement hands out** (and, if possible, the links to find them online). These are available in this kit *for copying* and also at the links throughout and below.

Things to Consider for Your Program

Conversations and discussions *about* conversations are fluid and most successful when centered on local context; that is, when the people involved, the places where they occur, and the cultures of the community having them are allowed to inform the process as well as the conversations themselves. For this reason, your “Preparing for the Family Gathering Program” may look different from the suggested program outlined in this kit.

For a 90-minute version of the “Preparing for the Family Gathering” Program, consider **allowing more time for the Debrief & Discussion section** at the end.

Refer to the materials provided by Living Room Conversations and the other partners whose resources are shared in the “Having Conversations @ the Library” Resource Kit for ideas on how to update or adapt this program to meet your needs. Please do, however, **always start with an agenda, set boundaries, adhere to time limits, and empower your participants to consent to your program as designed.**

Worksheet: Colorado-based Resources

Introduction

Connecting with community conversation facilitators or programs – some of which are listed in the Resources section of this kit – is one way to learn more about how you can host one yourself or one way to provide an educational program for your library community members. Some of the organizations whose content has been shared in this kit are Colorado-based. Having a local contact who is familiar with Colorado, our diverse landscape, and our diverse communities therein can be especially helpful to libraries who would like to engage in community conversation programming. Examples are provided in the table below, as are blank rows for you to fill on your own and based on your own networks and connections.

Please *do not keep* this document. Instead, **use this worksheet for making copies.**

To maximize its usefulness, be sure to update the worksheet regularly and make it accessible to relevant library staff. A template of this worksheet can be found on the website at <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/TOPIC/> and on the included USB flash drive.

Colorado-based Conversation Resources

Contact Name, Title, & Organization	Contact info	Notes
Annie Caplan, Library Partner @ Living Room Conversations	annie@livingroomconversations.org	
Josephine Jones, Director of Programs @ Colorado Humanities and Center for the Book	jones@coloradohumanities.org	
Program or Entity	URL	Notes
Center for Public Deliberation @ Colorado State University	https://cpd.colostate.edu/contact/	
Random Acts of Kindness	https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/	

Additional Resources

Having Conversations @ the Library Resource Kit

We have included a green key in this kit. It is a USB 'flash' drive containing these pages from the binder and other resources. You can also find updated resources regarding this kit on <https://cslkits.cvlisites.org/>

Living Room Conversations for Libraries Resources

Library Partner Page

<https://livingroomconversations.org/libraries/>

Libraries are perfect venues for the Living Room Conversation events and the organization has library-specific resources and a library partner to help plan and host an event. Contact information is available for Annie Caplan, a former librarian and the official Library Partner.

Host Toolkit

<https://livingroomconversations.org/host-toolkit-choose-a-topic/>

This page and resources within it outline the roles of a Living Room Conversation host and provide an overview of expectations, steps, and tips for hosting an event. Resources are linked throughout.

Planning a Living Room Conversation Guide

<https://209859-635214-1-raikfcquaxqncofqfm.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Planning-a-Community-Living-Room-Conversation.pdf>

A 7-page downloadable guide for planning a community conversation in the style of Living Room Conversations. Two models of conversations are explored: a small group (4-6 people) conversation setting and a conference-style setting (much larger group). The linked tools on this Resources section of the "Having Conversations @ the Library" binder and printed out in the Resource Kit can support the steps and actions listed through this planning guide.

Conversation Topic Guides

<https://livingroomconversations.org/topics/>

Living Room Conversation provides dozens of guides on topics of interest ranging from the controversial to the not-so-controversial. Topics include Abortion, More Curious & Less Furious, Power in Relationships, Race and Faith Communities, Social Equity, Universal Basic Income, Voting in America, and more. The topic guides can be distributed to participants during their small group conversations and include time limits, ideas for prompts and redirection, and other useful tips for talking and listening. No one needs to be an expert on any topic to have a conversation about it. The guides are not instructional materials on topics, they are supportive guides for having conversations with others.

Unpacking the Conversation Agreements

<https://209859-635214-1-raikfcquaxqncofqfm.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Unpacking-the-Conversation-Agreements.pdf>

Each Living Room Conversation begins with the statement of conversation agreements that ensure a safe space for conversation among community members. The values of curiosity, respect, authenticity, and purpose are defined and described therein. This document can help facilitators and participants to understand the goals of a community conversation and the reasoning behind the conversation agreements they've asked to make at the start of the Living Room Conversation.

Canva Flyer Template (Canva)

https://www.canva.com/design/DAFPb3ZTIKA/WZL_aE3W6lktAdU4Vo8nA/view?utm_content=DAFPb3ZTIKA&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink&mode=preview

This Canva flyer can be copied and modified for your use when promoting your Living Room Conversation event.

Communications Plan

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Cg9WjlyR99Mjy4kMxpDd_vekStpyu5-q25Y5aL7Q11Y/edit?usp=sharing

This Google Sheet can be copied and modified for your use when planning your Living Room Conversation event.

Press Release Template (Google Doc)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x8wzp5TU20gylGQDF-Sw1HsyKLuzltq-/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109233238661995448289&rtpof=true&sd=true>

This Google Doc can be copied and modified for your use when promoting your Living Room Conversation event in various press and publications.

Community Conversations Checklist (Google Sheet)

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yv9vznHvoCN6w5Zf6TB1N_4rNQyFsmryWWWhAprEoUUM/edit?usp=sharing

This Google Sheet can be copied and modified for your use when planning your Living Room Conversation event.

Feedback Forms (PDF)

<https://209859-635214-1-raikfcquaxqncofqfm.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Feedback-PDF.pdf>

This Feedback Form can be downloaded and printed out to distribute after the conclusion of your Living Room Conversation event.

Shifting Culture Through Conversation (YouTube)

<https://livingroomconversations.org/video/joan-blades-on-the-power-of-a-few-to-shift-culture-through-conversation/>

In this video (YouTube), Joan Blades references '[The 3.5% Rule](#)' at the end of our conversation. Political scientist Erika Chenoweth at Harvard found that just this sliver of the population, if effectively mobilized through non-violent means, was enough to impact massive social change.

Great Gatherings – Family & Friends

<https://livingroomconversations.org/great-gatherings/>

From the Living Room Conversations page: "Holidays can be complicated, even without a pandemic, and conversations with family can be uniquely challenging. Emotional stakes tend to be higher, conversations are colored by history, and it can feel easier to rehash old

arguments. But with a few tools and tips, holiday conversations with our family members, can be rich, meaningful, and even enjoyable.” Included on this page is the “Friends and Family Guide” and conversation guides for talking about difficult topics with family and friends including: Talking about Race, Connecting Across Generations, Building Better Conversations, Sharing Hopes and Aspirations, and Exploring Current Events.

Other Community Conversation Resources

“Let’s Talk about It” Resource Kits from the Colorado State Library

<https://cslkits.cvl/sites.org/lets-talk-about-it/>

The *Let’s talk about it! : CSL Big Red Resource Kits* initiative was created to help public library staff within the state of Colorado better understand and serve traditionally under-served populations and to give staff the tools needed to host and facilitate critical community conversations, mending fences within the community. We hope that using the *Let’s talk about it! : CSL Big Red Resource Kits* will help establish the library as a place for civil dialog in our communities. This kit (“Having Conversations @ the Library”) is an all-inclusive conversations toolkit; but other kits in the Let’s Talk about It CSL Kits catalog are helpful in speaking to specific topics (i.e., LGBTQIA+ identities and needs, homelessness, etc.).

National Institute for Civil Discourse

<https://nicd.arizona.edu/>

Founded at the University of Arizona in 2011, the NICD’s Key Principles are: “Engaging in conversations across the divide opens doors to finding common ground and moves our country toward a more perfect union. Our programs convey several key principles and best practices that are critical to connecting across divides, including: **Empathy** instead of vitriol; **Listening for Understanding** instead of hearing to overpower; and **Humility** instead of all-knowing.” NICD offers webinars for people who work in community service and for the public. Their Engaging Differences video series can be used to support library programming <https://engagingdifferences.org/category/engaging-differences-video-series/>

Essential Partners – Resources

<https://whatisessential.org/resources>

Essential Partners collaborates with civic groups, schools, faith communities, colleges, and organizations across the globe to build resilience, belonging, and trust across differences of values, beliefs, and identities. Through training in their “trademark approach,” long-term support, crafting new programs, facilitating dialogue, and continuous research. The spiral bound guide in this resource kit is one of many resources they share, including many available online at this link.

Random Acts of Kindness

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

The Random Acts of Kindness organization provides resources for people of all ages in a variety of settings and contexts focused on their mission of “mak[ing] kindness the norm.”

American Library Association Libraries Transforming Communities (E-Learning + Resources)

<https://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/online-learning>

A robust resource including a free e-course on community conversations and libraries’ roles and opportunities in providing a forum and space for doing so. A variety of library types and service areas are represented through the different learning materials, webinars, links, and resources. Tools including “Facilitation Skills Guide” (included in this kit) for “strengthen[ing] libraries’ role as core community leaders and change-agents.” Through supporting how libraries connect with their communities and community member, the Libraries Transforming Communities initiative hopes to “achieve a domino effect of positive results, including stronger relationships with local civic agencies, non-profits, funders and corporations, and greater community investment in civility, collaboration, education, health and well-being.”

Center for Public Deliberation

<https://cpd.colostate.edu/about-us/>

From Colorado State University, the Center Public Deliberation writes: “Our aim is to improve the way our community is able to talk through complex issues so that we can arrive at better decisions. Deliberation requires open spaces for citizens to come together, good and fair information to help structure the conversation and skilled facilitators to guide

the process. The CPD is dedicated to providing these three key ingredients to Northern Colorado.”

Let’s Talk! Learning For Justice Conversation Guide (PDF)

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/lets-talk>

Learning for Justice – formerly Teaching Tolerance – focuses on K12 classroom and education materials developed through a social justice praxis and with the goal of embracing diversity of all kinds, exposing and nurturing intersectionality, and amplifying the contributions of figures (contemporary and historical) who are often overlooked in curriculum and communities. The Let’s Talk! Conversation guide enables educators to facilitate discussions on sometimes difficult topics that students are interested in discussing. Though the guide is designed to be used in a classroom or education setting, they can be helpful for librarians and program facilitators who need guidance in how to facilitate discussions with empathy and are interested in curious self-reflection. Download the PDF from the page (link on the left “Let’s Talk!”) or view the webinars on discussing Black Lives Matter, Gender in the Classroom, and Race and Racial Topics for support.