



Cultivating
Connection

- **Model patience and flexibility:** In a digital dialogue, the facilitators responsibility to model patience and understanding extends beyond the participants content and process to the logistical complications and interruptions that are frequent in online communication. Some participants may require additional time, support, and encouragement as they navigate new technology, navigate connectivity issues, and manage interruptions in their personal sphere. In these moments, a facilitator can sustain group connection by modeling increased levels of patience and flexibility.
 - **Ex:** Normalizing participants' technical challenges and relating in with your own challenges.
 - **Ex:** Acknowledge and affirm participants' possible responsibilities for children and dependents.



Co-Facilitation

- **Clarify process and logistics responsibilities:** To more effectively manage the many technical aspects of online dialogue, consider arranging for a co-facilitator to focus primarily on logistics while the other facilitator focuses primarily on content and process. The logistics co-facilitator may take responsibility for: attendance and roster, reviewing and integrating text-based contributions, coordinating small group breakout sessions, and responding to participant access issues.
 - **Ex:** Share your needs and resources in advance with your co-facilitator, assign roles accordingly.
 - **Ex:** Make a plan for how to communicate and change the process and protocol as needs arise.



Integrating
content and
process

- **Invite reflection on the here and now:** Don't ignore the realities of this current moment, invite reflection and integration. This may look like making space for discussion of the current context in during an introduction and check-in exercise. facilitators may also pose specific questions to draw connection to the current moment – affirm for participants that shared experiences outside dialogue shape our experiences in dialogue. Make space for the shared experience and resist any impulses to compartmentalize dialogue content from the current context.
 - **Ex:** Foreground an acknowledgement of the pandemic and social distancing practices, invite sharing.
 - **Ex:** Sustain opportunities for all participants to connect and use their voice, consider [breakout rooms](#).



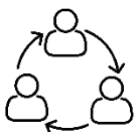
Productive use
of self

- **Negotiate distractions for self and others:** Dialogue facilitators enable greater and more authentic participation when they decenter themselves and background their own contributions. In a digital context, this may include mitigating any distractions on part of the facilitator. Facilitators may also hold themselves to higher expectations for negotiating interruptions on their end and preserving focus on the process and participants.
 - **Ex:** Choose a web-camera location or digital background that is neutral and static
 - **Ex:** Inform participants of potentially emergent needs, like childcare, and how you plan to manage



Naming and
framing emotions

- **Encourage verbalization of emotions:** The normalization and integration of emotions is a cornerstone of dialogue. A number of factors complicate participants ability to communicate and recognize emotions in others. To amplify the emotional dimensions of dialogue, facilitators may take extra steps to model and encourage participants to verbalize their emotions. Facilitators may anticipate and welcome participants to communicate their feelings through emojis or text-based communications.
 - **Ex:** Establish group norms at the beginning of the dialogue that underscore emotion sharing
 - **Ex:** Invite the use of emoji's and educate yourself and the group on the [vast emoji lexicon](#).



Co-creation and
sharing power

- **Leverage and negotiate technology:** Digital dialogues present numerous unique opportunities for participants to share in the direction of the dialogue's content and process. The technological functions that present unique opportunities also pose series risk. Without careful consideration and preparation, digital dialogues may be accessed by unauthorized participants or enable harassment and other marginalizing behaviors.
 - **Ex:** Learn more about "Zoom-bombing" and review [OSU's guidance for zoom security](#)
 - **Ex:** Learn more about [Zoom's unique interfaces and tools](#) for participant sharing and collaboration.



Creating space for
difference and
dialogue

- **Anticipate and mitigate structural barriers:** Digital opportunities for dialogue in many ways improve access and allow for more diverse participation - digital dialogues also present barriers that impede the participation of those with limited resources. When designing a digital dialogue communicate with participants the resources required for full participation: audio and visual hardware, software, and high-speed internet access. Additionally, communicate where participants may find free or low-cost resources.
 - **Ex:** Research and share hardware and software check-out programs through a public library.
 - **Ex:** Connect participants with online tutorials or provide a pre-dialogue technical orientation.



Connecting the
personal with the
structural

- **Utilize the current context to reveal power and privilege:** The context which brings your participants together in dialogue is a shared experience that is ripe for critical analysis. Consider how you may draw direct and indirect connections between your dialogue content and the shared experience of group. Drawing connections, comparing, and contrasting the current context with the dialogue content may reveal analogous race, gender, class, and ability disparities at individual, institutional, structural, and cultural levels.
 - **Ex:** Discuss gender disparities in the global COVID-19 response as an example of labor inequality.
 - **Ex:** Draw connections between local racial tensions, and racial tensions illustrated in popular media.



Bridging dialogue
to action

- **Re-evaluate beliefs about action and engagement:** A distinction of dialogue is the formation of intergroup relationships towards collective action. Participants may need support as they examine their implicit beliefs about action, community organizing and what's possible in the digital domain. Facilitators may name this dissonance and invite participants, consider the limitations and possibilities of the medium, and push the group to consider how they may meaningful enact change in the digital domain from their respective spheres of influence.
 - **Ex:** Nudge participants to consider online resources to maintain communication and ideation
 - **Ex:** Challenge participants to translate [the active citizenship continuum](#) for distance organizing



Setting agenda,
expectations, and
tone

- **Foreground the opportunities of digital dialogue:** Digital dialogue is different, not deficit, compared to in-person dialogue. Digital dialogue presents unique opportunities for access, participation, and collaboration. The acclimation to digital dialogue may be difficult for some participants, and the advantages may not be clear. The facilitators may consider sharing their optimism and enthusiasm for an online process and continue to affirm the potential of the medium.
 - **Ex:** During welcome and group norms, highlight facilitation choices that make use of the technology.
 - **Ex:** Invite participants to reflect and share their hopes and fears related to digital dialogue



Setting Space

- **Familiarize yourself with the technology:** Your first digital dialogue should not be your first experience with Zoom or other software. Technical issues can be distracting, and a facilitator's incompetence can undermine participants' confidence in the process. Before your dialogue, run exercises with your co-facilitator or a peer to ensure you understand the basic functions of your software and problem solve any unforeseen conflicts.
 - **Ex:** Learn more about Zoom and other digital resources, refer to [guidance from OSU's Media Services](#).
 - **Ex:** Consider whether your dialogue should be [recorded](#) and acquire consent before doing so.



Anticipating and
responding to
participant needs

- **Less time, more breaks:** Sitting in front of a screen for 2 hours feels different than 2 hours spent in a shared physical space. The focused and stagnant positioning required for digital dialogue may require more energy and more quickly exhaust participants. To account for this limitation, consider shortening the length of an otherwise longer dialogue experience. For longer periods of time, consider building in breaks and encouraging participants to stand, stretch, and take care of their physical needs.
 - **Ex:** For a two-hour dialogue, discerning whether to provide break or host separate 1-hour dialogues.
 - **Ex:** Be realistic about the volume and complexity of activities, where possible – choose simplicity.