

Framing and Agreements

What structure will the evening follow?

Following a 15-minute introductory reflection by Matt Weber on the theme of resilience, participants will move into small groups of 6-8 people for conversation guided by a trained facilitator.

What is the goal of *Deeper Dialogues*?

The *Deeper Dialogues* initiative has three primary goals:

- **To convene a variety of stakeholders**--student, faculty, staff and administrators--from across the university community to improve understanding and connection around common challenges and goals;
- **To leverage the unique resources of the university context** (e.g. intellectual curiosity, original research, physical proximity) to facilitate honest exchange and promote greater collaboration between and among various members of the university community; AND
- **To give community members an experience of reflective structured dialogue** in which conversations of meaning and purpose foster a university culture of greater compassion and care, with the added hope that participants will leave equipped with dialogic communication tools transferable to other UVA spaces, groups and discussions.

Communication Agreements

These guidelines, developed by Essential Partners, are what we will follow to keep our small group conversation running smoothly. We will go over these again during the dialogue.

1. We will **speak for ourselves** and from our own experience; we will not take on the burden of trying to speak for an entire identity group, nor will we ask others to defend or explain an entire identity group.
2. We will **avoid making grand pronouncements** and, instead, will **connect what we know and believe** to our experiences, influences in our lives, particular sources of information, etc.
3. We will **express our different viewpoints** in a thoughtful manner and without a critical or insulting spirit, keeping in mind the goals of learning and reflection and resisting the urge to persuade the other.
4. We will **listen** with resilience, “hanging in” when we hear something that is hard to hear.
5. We will **share** airtime and not interrupt except to indicate that we cannot hear a speaker.
6. We will **“pass”** or “pass for now” if we are not ready or willing to respond to a question— no explanation required.
7. We will **honor confidentiality** by not sharing anything that you’ve heard here in a way that would allow the speaker to be identified.
8. We will **avoid making negative attributions** about beliefs, values, and motives of other participants, instead asking a question of genuine curiosity to check our assumptions.

Deeper Dialogues are hosted by Theological Horizons in partnership with Essential Partners.

<https://www.theologicalhorizons.org/dialogues>