

Background and Summary

The National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) and Living Room Conversations (LRC) have deep experience working with communities to build connection, engage trusted voices, and develop positive changes. They co-created a School Community Toolbox (currently in a pilot phase) designed for community anchored organizations led by trusted voices with skills in conflict resolution, restorative facilitation, and community dialogues.

If you see the need for better connectivity and constructive conversation in your school community, we have tips and resources to help you make a difference *right now!*

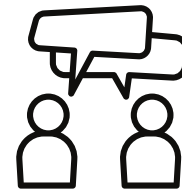
Identify the need and capacity in your community



Gather with partners
and identify
stakeholders



Assess your readiness
and current capacity



Try out a community
conversation to start building
trust and understanding

Looking for a community mediation center?

NAFCM has a network of over 300 centers who are trained in mediation and conflict resolution. [Click here](#) to see if there's one near you!

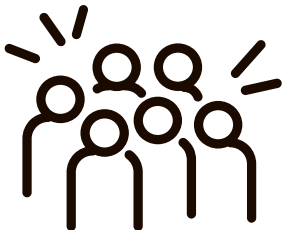
Looking for free, easy to use dialogue tools?

LRC has a library of over 160 different conversation guides you can use!

Please note:

YOU are the experts in your own community. This process is not one-size-fits-all. Timelines and resources used will vary as you co-design the process together.

We recommend creating partnerships in your community between schools, local advocacy groups, and an organization trained in mediation where possible.



Identifying stakeholders

Community work involves a lot of people, organizations, and relationships. Discussing who you need to involve and how is a critical.

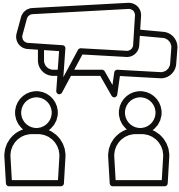
- ① Determine the scope of your analysis (ex. Help the school community talk about how to teach history)
- ② Involve people who can provide different perspectives
- ③ Be specific – not groups of people, but rather individuals within those groups
- ④ Meet with stakeholders to learn more about their motivations and influence
- ⑤ Create a strategy to engage stakeholders, whether to collaborate, just keep them informed, or turn opponents into allies or neutral parties

Assess your capacity

Once you've gotten everyone at the table, take some time to consider your readiness to convene your community and start taking action.



- Do you know your own goal for engagement?
- Do you know your capacity for engagement? Does your group have -- or can it get -- the time, skills, relationships, information needed?
- Do you have potential allies and ways to reach out to them? Are you able and willing to engage with those who are opposed to your ideas?
- Do you have thoughts of initial steps or can you find an advisor?



Community Conversations

Living Room Conversations has 150+ conversation guides ready to plug and play. They are a great starting point for skill building and engagement centered around our Conversation Agreements.

Conversation Agreements

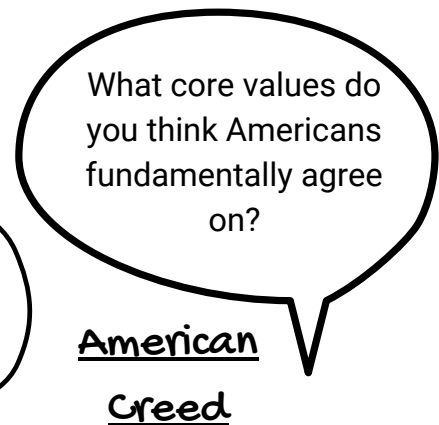
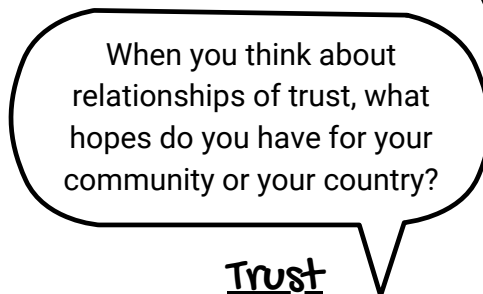
- Be curious and listen to understand.
- Show respect and suspend judgment.
- Note any common ground as well as any differences.
- Be authentic and welcome that from others.
- Be purposeful and to the point.
- Own and guide the conversation.

Conversation tips



1. Trust the design of the conversation guide and agreements
2. This is a practice, ask people to choose an agreement they want to work on in the conversation
3. Stay grounded in sharing personal experiences over opinion

Conversations to start with:



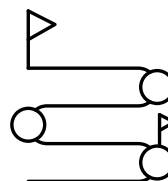
What does it look like?



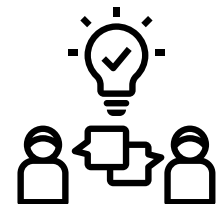
Gather groups of 4-6 people to talk about a chosen topic



Follow the conversation guide and agreements



Answer questions based on experience with the topic, not opinion



Walk away with more understanding and connection



Get started! What conversations do you wish you were having in your school community?