

Checklist for Applying the Sustained Dialogue® (SD) Process

Before starting, make sure this process is a good fit by using the checklist below:

1. **Is there something more logical to do** (than organize dialogue)? Have the people most impacted by the issue asked for a different type of action or activity?
2. Groups can be formed to improve a) any large community conflict or b) challenging relationships between groups. Do you have **trusted partners from each of the groups involved** in the conflict who are eager to dialogue?
3. Is participating in a dialogue process that leads to action **beneficial for all groups involved**? **[Note: Groups that are applying SD must work to: 1) improve relationships AND 2) take action.]**
4. Have potential dialogue participants **opted to be a part of** a dialogue process? Dialogue can never be mandatory. Participants need to opt into dialogue in three key ways:
 - a. Opting into dialogue as a method of communication (rather than debate or discussion)
 - b. Opting into sharing personal experiences
 - c. Opting into a multi-meeting experience for the duration of the dialogue process
5. Are people open to listening to others' perspectives? They should not join to try to change others.
6. Organizers agree to recruit **participants who are not hostile** toward others, who do not dehumanize others, and who respect others' experiences and others' privacy
7. This process is never used for topics that require professional support (i.e., counselors) without that support being present. Have you made sure that the dialogue topics would not be better explored through therapy? Bonding around traumatic experiences is not appropriate.
8. Do you (potential organizers) have the time and energy to address group relationships? Have you (potential mods) committed to a relational approach to facilitation?
 - a. The focus is NOT on interesting topics or teaching people that they are wrong.
 - b. The focus is on how participants share, interact, respond, and understand each other.
 - c. Adherence to the process allows for improved group relationships that lead to informed, concrete community change.
 - d. Note: if you feel like "I just need this person to stop doing Y" then an educational workshop is a better fit than a dialogue.
9. Dialogue group meetings are not one-time events, but are sustained in three main ways:
 - a. **Time & Duration:** Dialogue groups meet consistently (at least 7 times) at an appointed recurring time. Each meeting lasts at least one hour.
 - b. **Participants & Moderators:** Each dialogue group maintains the same 8-15 participants for the entire process. They also maintain the same 2 trained peer moderators.
 - c. **Continuity of Conversation:** Each meeting ends with moderators leading a group reflection process, which is called debriefing. During debriefing, participants share feedback on the dialogue they just had, in order to shape the next meeting's agenda.