Tips for Facilitating a Community Gathering

Pre-questions/work to consider

• Is this gathering in response to an event or incident? If yes:
  o Which identity(s) are most impacted, how are members of these identities included in the planning and implementation of the gathering
    ▪ Take time to ensure voices of the community most impacted are a part of the creation of the program
• Who will be the facilitator?
  o For small groups (department, student org, etc.) good to have someone with a connection to the group
  o For large community gatherings- partner with offices already supporting the issues.
  o Co-facilitators can be helpful to have multiple people a part of asking and responding to the audience
  o Consider the identities of the facilitators and how their identity might support or challenge the conversation. (another reason co-facilitators is helpful, 2 people with differing identities)
  o Does the facilitator have experience leading groups on challenging and emotional topics?
• What platform will you be using?
  ▪ Zoom, webex, something else?
  ▪ Be sure to have someone other than the facilitator monitoring the zoom/Webex platform
    • Letting people in, checking the chat box, monitoring participants for anything concerning, watching for “raised hands”
• Is the topic being discussed emotional in nature?
  o Might be good to ask a rep from Counseling Center to attend or share information about the Counseling Center
• Is there any campus leadership who you could invite to speak?
  o Department chair
  o Dean
  o VP
  o Etc.
• Ask someone to serve as a note taker at the gathering to collect feedback for action steps moving forward
• Co-facilitators meet ahead of event to plan/organize the conversation
  o Be prepared with a few questions at the gathering but be fluid to allow for organic conversation

During the Community Gathering Considerations

• Enter the space early, 15-30 minutes before gathering starts to check technology and finish last minute details with everyone involved (facilitators, zoom monitor, note taker)
• Create community guidelines for the conversation, such as:
  o Be mindful of your participation- sharing a lot? Not sharing?
  o Confidentiality - take the learning but not personal stories
  o Compassion for everyone’s learning and responsibility for your words
  o Use “I” statements, avoid assumptions of whole groups
  o Be mindful of your identities and how they may impact the space
• Give audience a brief overview about how to participate
  o Use the chat box
  o Use raise hand feature (zoom)
• Recommend not recording the gathering to protect individuals' stories and encourage authenticity
• Let participants know there is a note taker taking notes of the recommended action steps
• Facilitator(s) allow for open conversation but be ready to step in and redirect/address if
  o A single person is sharing a lot or speaks for a long time
  o Harmful language or bias is communicated- address the language and impact.

Post-Community Gathering
• Share a recap of what was discussed to key stakeholders
• Develop an action plan/next step strategy and share with campus partners and key stakeholders
• Share updates with those who attended the gathering about what steps are being taken to address action items.