

## Husker Dialogues – Student Life Guide

Ultimately the goal of “Husker Dialogues – Student Life” is to engage students in meaningful conversations around student life topics such as gender issues, sexual assault and relationship violence, and alcohol abuse. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus community is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment and providing the tools necessary for its members to contribute to that vision.

Each discussion is intended to be self/group facilitated. In real life settings we rarely have certified or trained facilitators to guide challenging discussions.

“Husker Dialogues – Student Life” provides an avenue for growing and developing skills for generating productive dialogue about gender, sexual assault and relationship violence, and the abuse of alcohol. Many people find dialogues prompted by Husker Dialogues challenging. The questions and prompts on each card are intended to stimulate dialogue that provides an opportunity that makes discussing these issues less difficult.

### Ground Rules<sup>1</sup>

These are a few ground rules for healthy and difficult discussions, also known as “courageous conversations.” Your group is encouraged to develop other ground rules that you feel are necessary to have civil and challenging discussion. For example, you may want to discuss the role, if any, confidentiality plays in creating a safe space for difficult dialogues.

**RESPECT:** Throughout the discussion all participants should be respectful of the opinions and comments of others. Differing viewpoints and experiences should be discussed in a civil and respectful manner. Before beginning discussion, participants are encouraged to describe what respect and civility means to your group. It may also be useful to present the “Tips for Meaningful Conversation” as a framework for the discussion.

### *Tips for Meaningful Conversations*

- 1) Listen to understand.
- 2) Ask clarifying questions.
- 3) Speak respectfully to express your own views.
- 4) Use “I” statements.
- 5) Conversations are not debates. The purpose is understanding and meaningful exchange.
- 6) Recognize that there are multiple perspectives.
- 7) Give everyone the opportunity to speak.

**CHALLENGE IDEAS:** When participating in Husker Dialogues expect to hear ideas and opinions that are different from yours. Alternative viewpoints should be explored instead of being dismissed or “agreeing to disagree.” You are encouraged to challenge ideas and beliefs, while avoiding personal attacks

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<sup>1</sup> Ground rules guided by Arao, B. & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. M. Landreman, (Ed.), *The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections from Social Justice Educators* (pp. 135-150). Stylus Publishing, LLC.

(consider defining what this means for your group.) Challenging ideas can be uncomfortable, but necessary.

**CHALLENGE YOURSELF:** Players may pass on answering a question or two. It is the participant's decision whether to skip a card; however, if a card is skipped, we ask you to think about situations here people are not allowed to skip, or opt out of their situation.

**DISCUSS HARM:** If any participant is offended during discussion, whether intentional or unintentional, participants are encouraged to be considerate of the impact of the discussion. If someone is offended, it is important for participants to try to identify why harm was caused and attempt to repair harm.

### **Beginning Dialogue**

Husker Dialogues can begin many ways. If you are dialoguing with familiar people you may choose to begin and continue dialogue via one of the options (Option A, B, or C) below. If you are unfamiliar with people in your group, you may want to get to know participants better before beginning.

Options A, B, C are a few examples of how discussion can begin. You can utilize these options or create your own way to begin and continue dialogue.

#### **Option A**

Each player is dealt five cards; the player with the lowest heart is Player 1. (If nobody has a heart card, the player with the lowest card of any suit determined by your group can begin play.)

Player 1 answers the question. The group listens to the answer, asks clarifying questions, and discusses.

After discussion, the card is discarded and Player 1 selects a card from Player 2's hand, then play continues with the participants speaking in a clockwise direction.

After all dealt cards are played, or 40 minutes of play have elapsed, each player shares the following:

- One thing he or she heard that he or she had not known/thought of previously
- One response he or she gave (or thought as someone else answered) that he or she might reconsider
- The most challenging question to answer

#### **Option B**

Player 1 picks a card and responds. (Your group determines who Player 1 is.)

Each player responds to the same card.

The group observes similarities and differences among answers.

Play continues with each player picking a card and starting the discussion.

#### **Option C**

Use the rules of an existing card game, e.g. UNO, Go Fish, etc.