

# Discussion Guide

## Welcome

Welcome, names and check in, offer overview of this gathering to explore the theme (including time expectations):

The Practice of Radical Inclusion: What do we need to do to dismantle hidden (and not-so-hidden) barriers to inclusion?

## Chalice Lighting

We light our chalice with the words of Verna Myers:

"Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance."

## Covenant

Review the covenant as agreed upon at the last meeting. As participants become more familiar with the covenant, you can change up how you refer to it. For example, you might ask people to name the phrase that feels most meaningful or important to them today. (Don't forget to mention that it's fine to repeat phrases).

- Speak as personally and deeply as we wish--or not. It is always okay to pass.
- Speak kindly about ourselves and others.
- Speak from our own experiences.
- Hold confidentiality. Share your experience of the conversation, not other people's stories.
- Listen respectfully. Avoid giving advice or asking probing questions about others' lives.
- Be aware of power differentials. Consider our own and others' identities and how these identities shape the impact of our contributions.
- (Include any agreements added by your group)

**continued . .**

**Our identity always shapes belonging - Annahid Dashtgard**

## **Check In**

Offer one of these questions or one of your own or combine the check in with the covenant exercise suggested above.

- How goes it with your spirit?
- What's on your mind and heart today?

## **Conversation**

This month we are exploring our experiences of radical inclusion and the practices that help us dismantle the hidden (and not so hidden) barriers to inclusion and belonging.

People are welcome to offer their responses to the service, the reflection questions, their experience with one of the practices, or any of the theme packet contents. You may choose to begin with a go-round or simply let the conversation flow, making sure everyone has a chance to share. If there is a lull, let the silence sit for a time, then offer up a question to continue the conversation.

## **Optional Starting Questions**

- Can you remember a time when you received such a warm welcome that you felt like you belonged? What aspects of the experience contributed to your sense of belonging?  
Or
- Share an example of an experience where you experienced barriers to inclusion.

## **Sharing Silence**

Before closing the session with the check out and chalice extinguishing, offer a minute of silence to give people a moment to process all that has been said and to share a time of quiet together. Alternatively, or in addition, you could include a time of silence before starting the conversation.

## **Leaving**

From this conversation about radical inclusion, what resonated most for you, or what are you taking with you?

## **Closing Words**

Extinguish the chalice

May we support one another in nurturing our sense of belonging. Blessings on us all.