



AIM: The aim of the exercise is for participants to share experiences of dialogue and together agree on a definition of dialogue.



Participants: 5 – 15, 15 – 30



Duration: 40 - 60 minutes



Required Material: Post-it notes, blackboard or whiteboard, printed dialogue definitions



Category: Opening exercise / Homogeneous, inter-faith, inter-cultural

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- A. Remember to value each participant's example of a good conversation or dialogue from their lives. These may be precious memories and should be valued as such.
- B. When participants are finding key words to define dialogue from their examples, remember to help them by suggesting words they may have trouble finding or articulating.

STEPS	
Preparation (5 minutes)	Hand out post-its and pens and have the board ready to use. Make the relevant number of handouts with dialogue definitions The printouts of dialogue definitions are handed out later.
Activity (20 - 30 minutes)	<p>The facilitator initiates the exercise by asking: "What's a good conversation? What is a dialogue? "</p> <p>Everyone gets two minutes to think of a good conversation / dialogue they have had.</p> <p>It has to be a story of one specific meeting with a person of a different faith, a person in their family, a friend, a teacher, etc. (If the concept of dialogue is alien to the person, you can explain briefly that it is almost the same as a conversation, a good chat).</p> <p>Depending on the number of participants, everyone shares</p>

her/his story briefly (two to three minutes) in plenary, or in groups of 4-5 participants.

Begin with whoever wants to share first.

Everyone should end their story by writing down a key word from their story on a post-it note. The facilitator should stick the post-it on the wall or board as each one is completed. Once everyone has told their story, the facilitator reads the words on the post-its.

The facilitator asks in plenary:

"Can all the words be summarized into one sentence?"

The facilitator summarizes on the board

Divide the participants into smaller groups where they can try to come up with other definitions together in smaller groups.

- View the definitions of dialogue below. Compare them with your definition(s) of a good conversation. What is similar and what is different?

Examples of other definitions:

From The Church Dialogue Center in Oslo:

Dialogue is a face to face meeting between equal humans without hidden agendas. I go into a dialogue not to change the other but to take part in a mutual change that can happen through a meeting with the other.

The philosopher Helge Respond in The Great Conversation.
The art of creating dialogue:

A dialogue is a conversation between two or more persons of mutual compassion, openness and cooperation. It is a conversation in which you extend yourselves towards a common goal.

From the dictionary:

Dialogue is a conversation between two or more people

	<p>William Isaacs in <i>Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together</i>:</p> <p><i>Dialogue is a conversation where people think together in relation to each other. Thinking together means that you no longer see your own opinion or belief as entrenched or unchangeable. Being in a community with others opens up opportunities that might otherwise not be visible, and you can loosen the grip of what you have seen as safe and certain.</i></p> <p>Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist and author:</p> <p><i>In true dialogue, both parties are willing to let themselves change.</i></p>
<p>Reflection (20 – 30 minutes)</p>	<p>What did each group discuss/do?</p> <p>The facilitator can highlight points of interest or discuss the choices that the groups made.</p> <p>The facilitator should engage participants in a dialogue by asking them in plenary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there something one definition has that the others do not? • Is there anything the other definitions have which is missing from yours? • Is there anything you want to change in the definition?
<p>Conclusion (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Summarize what was learned and encourage making the definitions the foundation for the rest of the workshop.</p>

Handout – Definition of dialogue

Examples of other definitions:

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Dialogue is a face to face meeting between equal humans without hidden agendas. I go into a dialogue not to change the other but to take part in a mutual change that can happen through a meeting with the other.

The philosopher Helge Rørdam in *The Great Conversation*. The art of creating dialogue:

A dialogue is a conversation between two or more persons of mutual compassion, openness and cooperation. It is a conversation in which you extend yourselves towards a common goal.

From the dictionary:

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William Isaacs in *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*:

Dialogue is a conversation where people think together in relation to each other. Thinking together means that you no longer see your own opinion or belief as entrenched or unchangeable. Being in a community with others opens up opportunities that might otherwise not be visible, and you can loosen the grip of what you have seen as safe and certain.

Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist and author:

In true dialogue, both parties are willing to let themselves change.