

## Valuable Conversation Topics

This brief list highlights key concepts and practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These topics can serve as valuable conversation starters to enhance understanding and promote meaningful discussions around DEI initiatives. **DLW Consulting will help you have productive and impactful conversations around the following topics:**

### 1. Pronouns and Inclusive Language

Using and respecting pronouns is essential as they are a significant part of identity. Sharing pronouns helps avoid assumptions based on appearance and normalizes the practice, making it easier for everyone to participate.

### 2. Defining Key Concepts

- Diversity: Differences among individuals.
- Equity: Ensuring access, opportunity, and support for success by providing needed resources.
- Inclusion: Genuine involvement and acceptance, giving individuals a valued voice.
- Belonging: Engaging individuals' full potential and integrating their views, beliefs, and values.

### 3. Social Identities

Explore the "Big 8" social identities: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion/spirituality, nationality, and socioeconomic status. Understanding these identities helps navigate conversations around stereotypes, microaggressions, and implicit bias.

### 4. Identity and Self-Awareness

Identity shapes our understanding of ourselves in relation to others. An identity crisis can lead to uncertainty and insecurity. Addressing this requires self-reflection, evaluation, and seeking professional help when necessary.

### 5. Cultural Appreciation vs. Appropriation

Cultural appreciation involves earnestly learning about and honoring different cultures, while cultural appropriation refers to the inappropriate adoption of customs from a marginalized culture by a dominant culture.

### 6. Impact vs. Intent

Understanding that good intentions do not negate negative impacts is crucial. We should acknowledge how our actions are perceived by others and strive to correct any harmful behavior.

### 7. Leadership in DEI

Authentic leadership emphasizes being true to oneself and creating a safe environment for others. The Social Change Model for Leadership Development encourages individuals to foster positive social change through conscious self-awareness, collaboration, and community engagement.

8. **Communication Skills**

Effective communication requires active listening and looping for understanding. This involves understanding the speaker's perspective, communicating back what you heard, and checking for accuracy.

9. **Cultural Humility**

Cultural humility involves lifelong learning, self-reflection, and recognizing power dynamics. It contrasts with cultural competence by emphasizing an ongoing commitment to understanding others.

10. **Allyship**

Allyship is the practice of advocating for marginalized groups. It involves understanding one's privilege, being curious, and committing to continuous learning and action to support others.

11. **Building Relationships**

Healthy intercultural relationships are foundational to society, enhancing self-awareness and communication. Key practices include recognizing biases, being curious, and engaging with individuals from different cultures.

12. **Social Capital**

Social capital connects us to others, facilitating relationships across diverse groups. Bridged social capital involves collaboration between different identity groups, while bonded social capital is inward-focused and involves tight-knit groups.

13. **Asset Mapping**

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) focuses on identifying existing resources within a community or campus to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Recognizing and mobilizing these assets is essential for fostering a supportive environment.

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