

# Community

# Table

## Host Guidebook

[du.edu/ACommunityTable](http://du.edu/ACommunityTable)

#DUGrandChallenges

#DUDialogues



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# WHAT IS A (VIRTUAL) COMMUNITY TABLE?



## Some information to start...

The University of Denver launched its DU Grand Challenges Initiative (DUGC) in 2017 to bring faculty, staff, students, and community members together to collaboratively identify and solve complex public problems and build thriving communities. DUGC created A Community Table as a way to promote civic and civil dialogue and engage the community in shaping the agenda for DU Grand Challenges' work. A Community Table is the cornerstone for everything we do. It's a space for ALL of our community members to share their voices (staff, faculty, students, alumni, broader community) so that we can co-create programs that address real needs and make real impact.

DUGC believes that, as COVID-19 sweeps the globe, community connection is paramount to combatting the stress and uncertainty we face and the effects of social isolation. To that end, we have moved A Community Table, traditionally an in-person event, online.

In the face of fear and uncertainty, there is power in imagining the future we want to build together. We hope that A Community Table offers you space to share experiences, build community, and chart paths forward not just for DUGC, but for our broader society as we navigate a new age.

Conversations can be held at any time between March 30 and June 11, 2020. All of our materials are free and available to download at any time. Thanks for being a part of A Community Table!

*We are ever grateful to the Chicago Community Trust and their On The Table event after which A Community Table is modeled.*

# LET'S BEGIN!

## Table Host Resources

Throughout this guide, you will find links to a number of resources that are designed to help you plan and facilitate your conversation. You can find a full list of these resources with links on page 11. All resources will be available throughout the event and are free to download.

## The Guest List

We encourage hosts to invite friends, family, colleagues, and/or neighbors to their conversation. Sharing a conversation with community members and new acquaintances is great too! To diversify participation, you might ask guests to “bring” a friend or share your invitation on a community list serve to which you subscribe, your local neighborhood association, etc. Be creative!

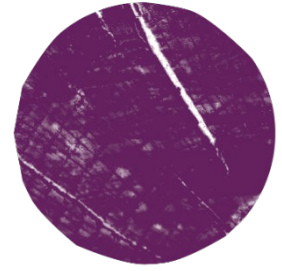
## Planning Your Conversation

Most A Community Table conversations last 1-2 hours. We find that groups of 5-10 people allow for easier facilitation and rich discussion. You can bring your guests together using whatever web meeting platform you prefer—it might even be the phone. The priority is to create an atmosphere conducive to meaningful conversation.

## Preparing Your Guests

You can find templates for participant invitations and reminders in the Virtual Host Resources section on [our website](#). Make sure to let your participants know the time, date, and platform for your conversation. We recommend that you also share information about how to use the meeting platform. You can also find resources for possible conversation topics on the website. If you plan to discuss one of these topics, you might share the infographic in advance to help orient your participants to the conversation.

# SETTING THE TABLE...



## Choosing a Web Platform

You may use any meeting platform that you like. If you're unsure of what platform to use, we offer the following suggestions:

- [Zoom](#): If you're a DU faculty member, student, or staff member, you have a professional Zoom account. Zoom allows for multiple participants, document sharing, unlimited time, and more.
- [Google Hangouts](#): This free platform allows you to connect with up to 9 other people for an unlimited amount of time. You and your participants will need Gmail accounts in order to use this platform.
- [WebEx](#): This free platform allows you to connect to an unlimited number of people for as much time as you want. You will need to create an account, but your guests can join without one.

Please visit our [website](#) for resources and tutorials on how to use these platforms.

Again, we know these aren't the only platforms out there. Please use the platform that you know and love. It might even be the phone!

## Choosing an Issue

- You are welcome to talk about whatever issue matters most to you. Torn between multiple topics? You can host a conversation on each!
- Need help deciding? We have Denver/Colorado specific infographics on several general issue areas available in the Virtual Host Resources section on the [A Community Table website](#). Take a look and see what resonates with you. You can choose between, Education Access, Employment, Food Security, Housing, Gentrification, Healthcare Access, Immigration, Resource Conservation and more. You can also share these resources with your participants to help orient the conversation.



# LET'S TALK!



## Starting Things Off

**First**, welcome everyone and introduce yourself and the event.

- Share your name, background, and why you decided to be an A Community Table host.
- Share a bit about DU Grand Challenges. Information is available at [grandchallenges.du.edu](http://grandchallenges.du.edu) and on page 12 of this guidebook.
- Remind everyone of today's goal: Explore the issue you've selected, and generate ideas to increase local civic life (involvement) around it. If you want to share the [conversation prompts](#) with your guests, do that now.

**Second**, invite your participants to introduce themselves and briefly share what brought them to A Community Table. If you decided on a virtual icebreaker, do that here!

**Third**, set out some conversation guidelines to support *everyone's* participation. We suggest:

- One speaker at a time
- Share to increase understanding and invite others in
- Listen to understand. Listen harder when you disagree
- Speak from own *personal experience* ("I" statements) and avoid generalizations
- Be attentive to what space you're taking up
- What's said in the group stays; what's learned, leaves (confidentiality)
- Decide on a way to signal (hand gesture, raise hand feature on Zoom, etc.) for jargon or words you might not know



# FACILITATION TIPS



## General Guidelines

- Support everyone's focus on goals, roles, and rules (guidelines above)
- Encourage everyone to participate, making space for all to do so.
- Invite guests to follow-up and expand on ideas. (open-ended questions)
- It's okay to model sharing if folks seem stuck on a question, or if you need to redirect the conversation. But don't share to just fill the silence.
- A little silence is OK!
- You've got this!! You're hosting a conversation that matters--take time to enjoy the process as well.

## Conversation Don'ts & Reminders

- Don't micromanage the conversation; let it flow freely, helping with the 3 Os:
  - On Topic, On Time, Opportunity for All to Participate
- Don't promote or allow argument or unproductive debate.
- Don't judge or dismiss any person's comments or ideas; redirect if off-goal/rules.
- Don't be afraid to *not* know something, or to ask if you have questions.
- Name the fact that you aren't meant to be the content expert but are here to guide the process.
  - Even if you are a content expert, the role of a host is to guide the process. Don't omit your voice from the conversation altogether, but do not center it either

Email [CCESL.ACommunityTable@du.edu](mailto:CCESL.ACommunityTable@du.edu) or call us at 303-871-3706 (in advance of your session) with questions or for support.



# 2020 Conversation Prompts

You've introduced the format for your conversation and the issue on which you will focus. Guests have introduced themselves. You've set ground rules. It's time to dig in!

## 1. Share a story of how this issue has shown up (or not) in your life.

- This prompt is meant to help you and your guests share your personal connections to the issue. For this prompt, ask everyone to share a 1-2 minute story.
  - Pro tip: Figure out the order in which your guests will share in advance. You can assign a random order, or maybe prompt folks to write their names in a chat, or share by birth month—whatever works for you and the group.
- Personal stances/beliefs might come out (and that's okay), but the goal should be to connect this question to a story and give tangible examples.
  - Do not stay in a theoretical space about the issue. After everyone shares (ideally no more than a minute or two, this is not a monologue), move on to the next question.

## 2. What are some challenges that prevent you and others from being more actively engaged in local, civic life around this issue?

- This question should narrow the conversation to local impact (shared by participants, not as overwhelming as inter/national)
- "You and others" references that participants have a role in addressing your Table's issue.
- Consider using these follow-up questions to help elicit responses:
  - Share a specific experience/story about when you wanted to be more involved, but you weren't/couldn't.
    - This prompt helps participants identify barriers to involvement.
  - Or when you were very engaged?
    - This prompts helps participants think about the absence of barriers.
  - If you haven't been impacted, why might that be?
    - Use this prompt when people can't think of a response. It's another way of pushing them to consider their relationship to the issue.



### 3. What connections, opportunities and resources do we have to draw or build on to collectively address this issue?

- So as not to get stuck in deficit thinking or dwell on the challenges, this question is meant to name the strengths and assets. Use participants' responses as a way to move the conversation toward identifying actions that can be taken to address the issue.
- Consider using these follow-up questions to elicit responses.
  - In addition to the assets that organization and communities have overall, what do individual participants bring?
    - This prompt helps participants identify their own power in relation to this issue.
  - What have you observed that has worked before, even if other settings?
  - Who are in our networks currently? Or what local organization or projects have you heard about or been impacted by?
- Consider using these follow-up questions to elicit responses.
  - In addition to what others, orgs and communities overall have, what do individual participants bring?
  - What have you observed that has worked before, even if other settings?
  - Who are in our networks currently? Or what local organization or projects have you heard about or been impacted by?

### 4. Thinking about both the challenges and opportunities/strengths we've discussed, what specific actions could the community take together to address this issue?

- This prompt is meant to get participants thinking about how to take actions that are rooted in strengths and assets.
- Don't get caught up in being "realistic" or bogged down in details; instead focus on potential. Encourage specificity, but build off one another's idea--do not 'discard nor cut off' ideas right now. Name this for the group. For example, "Right now, let's dream what this could be like instead of limiting one another. This is about dreaming, not brainstorming."
- Consider asking this follow-up question to elicit responses:

- If we had a representative from one of the organizations we identified in question #3 (strengths, connections) on the phone, what would you ask them to do with you? What would you talk about/create together?

5. What are some steps you personally can commit to in addressing the issue? How can DU be a partner in or otherwise contribute to this work?

- It's easy for groups to quickly suggest what other people and institutions can do, jumping past their own responsibility and agency to make change. Start with your guests and the part you all/each can play in some of the actions you've suggested. Then consider what other resources would help.
- If this group works together already or will continue to meet moving forward, you might ask to what actions the whole group can commit.
- Remember that the onus of solving the issue is not on you. How can we (DU, community partners, etc.) work together?

## Closing the Conversation and Next Steps

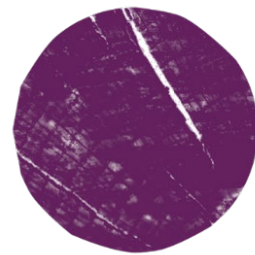
Offer a quick summary of the actions that the group identified, and check to make sure what you've heard is accurate. If you have identified next steps as a group, share a recap of those.

Please also share the link to the participant survey, <https://bit.ly/ParticipantSurvey2020>, with your guests, and let them know that it will take less than five minutes to complete. You can share the link in the chat function of your web platform and follow up by sending the link in an email. Make sure to thank your guests for their participation and encourage them to host their own conversation.

After the conversation closes, please complete the host survey. You can find it at <https://bit.ly/HostSurvey2020>.

And you're done! Congratulations on facilitating A Community Table!

# SHARE YOUR IDEAS!



## Social Media

Tell us (and the world!) about your A Community Table conversation! There are a lots of ways to share your ideas, insights, and experiences.

**Hashtags!** Use the hashtags #ACommunityTable and #DUGrandChallenges when you post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, whatever platform you use!

**Send us a message!** Tweet us at @CCESL or send us a Facebook message at facebook.com/DUCCESL or facebook.com/IEedDU

**Tag us in your photos!** We would love to see the faces of A Community Table 2020 so tag @du\_ccesl and @du\_dialogues in your posts.

**Give us a follow!** Find out what others are talking about in their A Community Table conversations.

Here's how you can find us:

Facebook	Facebook.com/DUCCESL → The Center for Community Engagement to advance Scholarship and Learning Facebook.com/IEedDU → Inclusion & Equity Education at DU
Twitter	@CCESL
Instagram	@du_ccesl @du_dialogues
Websites	du.edu/ACommunityTable du.edu/studentlife/ie-education

# A COMMUNITY TABLE HOST RESOURCES



We have tons of free resources available on the [A Community Table website](#) to help you plan and facilitate your conversation. Click on any link below to access a particular resource!

## Training Webinars

- [Intro to A Community Table](#)
- [Table Host Facilitation Overview](#)
- Facilitating the Content (coming soon)
- [Logistics and Resources](#)

## Participant Recruitment

- [Participant Invitation Template](#)
- [Participant Reminder Template](#)

## Web Platform Resources

- [Zoom](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)
- [WebEx](#)

## Selected Issue Resources (for a complete list, please visit our website)

- [Education](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Families & Children](#)
- [Food Security](#)
- [Gentrification/Displacement](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Immigration & Refugee Resettlement](#)
- [Resource Conservation](#)

## Conversation Tools

- [Conversation Prompts with Facilitation Tips](#)
- [Conversation Prompts for Guests](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Host Survey](#)
- [Participant Survey](#)

# ABOUT US



ASPIRE  
ACT  
ACHIEVE



The DU Grand Challenges initiative is a family of programs that will bring together university and community changemakers to address the most difficult far-reaching issues facing our society today.

DU Grand Challenges addresses three inter-related issues in our communities: improving daily living, increasing economic opportunity and advancing deliberation and action for the public good. For each, we co-create Aspirations, Actions, and Achievement with community partners. For more information, visit [grandchallenges.du.edu](http://grandchallenges.du.edu).



DU DialogUes is a program of DU Inclusion & Equity Education. One of IEE's focal areas is building skills and providing opportunities for positive interaction across difference—i.e., dialogue. With campus and community partners, DU DialogUes is piloting a range of events, programs and other resources in support of Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence and the University of Denver's public good mission. For more information, please visit [www.du.edu/studentlife/ie-education](http://www.du.edu/studentlife/ie-education).



# STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on social media for updates on A Community Table and other DU Grand Challenges Programs.



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@CCESL



facebook.com/uofdenver  
facebook.com/DUCCESL



Instagram.com/uofdenver  
Instagram.com/du\_ccesl

# FOR MORE INFO

Visit [du.edu/ACommunityTable](https://du.edu/ACommunityTable), email us at [CCESL.ACommunityTable@du.edu](mailto:CCESL.ACommunityTable@du.edu) or call us at 303.871.3706



While this year A Community Table conversations will occur online, and given restrictions on in-person convening due to COVID-19, it is important for hosts who will be hosting from their private residence to know:

Unfortunately, because we have no control over your home or property, the University cannot indemnify you for any unforeseen injuries that might occur during A Community Table. By agreeing to host A Community Table in your home, you agree to accept and assume full responsibility and liability for any injury, theft, or loss to host or your property, your guests, agents and/or employees at any time and from any cause related to the event, or in transit to or from said event. This means that you expressly agree to release the University of Denver (Colorado Seminary) and/or any of its agents and/or employees from any and all liability for any injury, theft or loss, and you agree to provide and pay for your own insurance.