

Starting an ‘Inclusion-Infusion’ discussion and setting ground rules

Monthly INCLUSION INFUSION Leader information:

The purpose of ‘Inclusion Infusion’ is to introduce in small segments, various elements of DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) to your members at every opportunity. Often just raising the topic of diversity brings negative feelings.

By slowly exposing our members to thoughts and ideas relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is our hope that we will then be able to delve deeper into more meaningful activities and membership outreach all while keeping DEI at the forefront of everything we do.

One of the most important steps to an effective conversation about diversity and inclusion is to set ground rules for the participants.

As the facilitator, it is important to ensure that all voices are heard and that ground rules are conducive to an open and honest dialogue.

Share common ground rules for discussion include:

1. Listen actively — respect others when they are talking.
2. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (“I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”).
3. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks — focus on ideas.
4. Participate to the fullest of your ability — community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
5. Instead of invalidating somebody else’s story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.
6. The goal is not to agree — it is to gain a deeper understanding.
7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses: They can be as disrespectful as words.
8. You only have 5 minutes. Don’t get side-tracked on a topic.

Facilitator Reminders: Circulate around the room to each group. Remind them to not get side-tracked because the clock is ticking.

Remind them when reporting back to the large group – not to share details – just ideas!