

We acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territories the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

CONVERSATION CAFÉ GUIDE

YOUR INPUT MATTERS!

You are invited to participate in a community conversation about your experience at UVic and with UVic systems. The goals and strategies generated for the Equity Action Plan (EAP) will only be as strong as our community's input. One of the ways to get involved in the EAP development process is to host or participate in a Conversation Café and provide a summary of your group's suggestions and recommendations. Find more ways to contribute your ideas at uvic.ca/eap

WHAT IS THE EQUITY ACTION PLAN?

The Equity Action Plan (EAP) will provide UVic with a set of goals to advance equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. The plan will also offer guidance for different groups within the UVic community as they develop targeted strategies. As the EAP is designed and then implemented, transparency and accountability will be at the centre of the process.

WHAT DOES HOSTING A CONVERSATION INVOLVE?

Anyone can host a conversation and it can be as structured or open as you want. This Conversation Café Guide is designed to support you to host a consultation discussion with an existing group or unit or a group of friends, co-workers or classmates. This do-it-yourself framework provides a way for everyone to join UVic's conversation on equity, diversity and inclusion and to have their voices and ideas heard.

HOW WILL YOUR INPUT INFORM THE EQUITY ACTION PLAN?

After hosting a Conversation Café, we invite you to share the topic(s) you discussed and a summary of your group's ideas with us. EQHR and the Reflection and Challenge Committee will reflect on your input as we co-create the Equity Action Plan.

WHAT SHOULD CONVERSATION CAFÉ PARTICIPANTS DISCUSS?

We are asking you to host a discussion on the ways in which the university can become a more equitable, inclusive and diverse space where everyone feels a sense of belonging. Specifically, at this stage of the EAP engagement plan we are seeking to understand the barriers experienced by our campus community. Through centring your own experiences or the experiences of the group, we also ask you to consider potential strategies to address these barriers and advancing equity.

Below are the suggested topics for discussion. Feel free to use these questions to guide your discussion or to allow the conversation to take shape around a different related topic of interest to your group. Suggestion: you may want to read the preamble and all three questions out, let each participant speak to all three and then have a group discussion on themes and ideas.

MAKING UVIC EXTRAORDINARY

The University of Victoria Strategic Framework sets the visionary goal to “cultivate and extraordinary academic environment” by embedding “practices of equity, diversity, accessibility, inclusion and dialogue throughout the university community so that all members feel welcomed, valued and supported to achieve their highest potential.”

There is a lot of work and direct action required to achieve this goal for all members of our university community across the learning, working, living environment that we share. The EAP process is about identifying and removing barriers to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Discussion:

- What would you change at UVic to create an “extraordinary academic environment”? (For example, what policies, practices, etc.)
- How/why would you make these changes?
- What barriers to equity and belonging do these changes address?
- What should UVic do to address these barriers?

POST-DISCUSSION, PLEASE SEND US YOUR COMMENTS AND IDEAS!

Tell us what you talked about and share your conversation and outcomes. We will reflect on your input, aggregate your ideas with other groups and engagement processes and share the information back with the university community.

Please send a summary of your discussion and your input to: equityaction@uvic.ca as soon as possible after your Conversation Café. This engagement phase ends on March 25th, 2022.

TIPS FOR HOSTING A CONVERSATION CAFÉ

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

The goal is to create a space where people feel comfortable to listen to others, but also to share their own ideas and insights that stem from their lived experiences and knowledge.

PLACE & TIME

These conversations can take place anywhere - in a quiet room, in a coffee house, over a shared meal, in an online space. There is no time limit, but you might want to put aside at least an hour. If you are meeting on Zoom or using some other electronic platform, you will want to consider ways to make that space comfortable for participants.

PARTICIPANTS

As you are inviting participants, think about the number of people involved and the amount of time needed for a thoughtful discussion. These dialogues work best in groups where everyone present feels comfortable voicing their thoughts and opinions. Invite people who are open to communicating and have a willingness to hear and consider diverse views and ideas.

PROMOTION

If you would like to open your conversation café to a broader audience, EQHR can help you promote your event on the Equity Action Plan webpage and track registration. When you've decided on a date, time and location contact equityaction@uvic.ca

FACILITATING & NOTE-TAKING

As a host, you may wish to take on the role of the facilitator and note-taker. If not, ask if someone can volunteer or maybe share the responsibility among more than one member of the group. Consult the Conversation Café Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

In order to respect privacy and maintain confidentiality, it is important that individuals not be identified in the notes provided to EQHR. That being said, we would like you to identify your group in some way. If you are part of an existing group or unit, let us know who you are. If you are an ad hoc group, consider if there is a description that fits your group (e.g., 'group of undergraduate Gender Studies students,' 'group of Black faculty members').

CHECKLIST FOR HOSTS

- Decide on a date and time. If you are meeting in person, consider picking a comfortable location or sharing a coffee or a meal. If you are meeting by Zoom, consider whether there are ways to replicate the feeling of being together in-person. For example, invite everyone to bring their favourite cup of tea or coffee or snacks or to introduce their pets to the group.
- Invite your guests. Tell the group what you are interested in talking about and explain why it is important to you.
- You might find it useful to share the Conversation Café Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue in advance and to review them as a group prior to beginning your conversation.
- Gather together. Let the group decide how structured or free and open they would like the conversation to be. For example, you could ask participants to take turns speaking by going around in a circle and in 'popcorn style.'
- Try to create a welcoming and accepting space. Some participants might wish to access support during or after your conversation so share the attached Support Resources sheet.
- Designate a note-taker to help the group remember what was discussed and the ideas and suggestions that were shared.
- Give everyone a chance to speak, if they wish.
- Remind participants that the personal information shared in the Conversation Café is not to be shared with others, without expressed permission.
- Summarize your group's discussion and confirm what input and recommendations will be included in your submission to EQHR. This can be done at the end of your Conversation Café or afterwards by email.

Thank you for joining the UVic community conversation about. Your input matters!

CONVERSATION CAFÉ: GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE

The situations we hope to address through UVic's Equity Action Plan are serious and impactful. Conversations about experience of violence, discrimination and the barriers we've face to equity and belonging can be emotional, painful, and difficult.

Below are some recommended guiding principles for Conversations Café discussions. The conversation host and participants should collectively review these guidelines before the conversation begins and make whatever modifications are required to respond to the needs and desires of conversation participants. As the conversation unfolds, each participant should feel free to pause the group process, to make further modifications.

APPROACH LISTENING WITH OPENNESS AND RESPECT

- Listening to others is an important way to acknowledge differing perspectives and viewpoints. Active listening means thoughtfully considering the ideas being raised by others. Try to listen for understanding. Do your best to suspend judgment while listening and be mindful of any judgments that do arise.

ACKNOWLEDGE AND RESPECT DIFFERENCE

- Each person's experiences are shaped by their identity, position within the university and their relationship to interconnecting systems and structures of power and inequity. For this reason, experiences of barriers within any group may differ greatly.

DISAGREE WITH THE IDEA, NOT THE PERSON

- Have a healthy respect for differences of opinion. Be open to receiving multiple perspectives.

'TAKE SPACE/MAKE SPACE'

- Reflect on how you generally participate in a group discussion. With that self-knowledge, consider what you can do to balance your own participation in the conversation while also creating space for others to contribute, if they wish.

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SPEAK FROM YOUR OWN POSITION AND EXPERIENCES

- Talking for someone else can invite unhelpful assumptions into discussions, instead try to speak from the 'I.'

OWN YOUR INTENTIONS AND YOUR IMPACT

- The impact of our actions/words are not always congruent with our intentions but that does not trump negative impact. Attending to impact sometimes involves apologizing and committing to re-examining our ideas or behaviours.

WITNESSING IS PARTICIPATION

- No one is required to do anything that does not feel right to them, including sharing their stories or suggestions. Witnessing is a form of participation and is a way of contributing to the conversation.

MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

- Conversation participants should not share anyone else's personal stories unless they have express permission from the other person. Because conversation participants may attend classes together, or be part of a team, or work together, it is especially important that participants not feel like what they choose to share here, or their struggles as they engage in a good faith process of learning, be used against them outside of this space.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Even with these guidelines, these conversations can be hard. Remember to do what you need to do to take care of themselves (e.g., take a break, drink water, seek out support, etc.).

Additional Resources:

- Leading Groups Online - <https://www.leadinggroupsonline.org/ebooks/Leading%20Groups%20Online.pdf>
- Hosting a Meeting Using Principles of Trauma Informed Care - <http://traumainformedoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Hosting-a-Meeting-Using-Principles-of-Trauma-Informed-Care.pdf>
- From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces - <https://tlss.uottawa.ca/site/perspective-autochtone/1d-From-Safe-Spaces-to-Brave-Spaces.pdf>

SUPPORT RESOURCES

As we work to develop direction for the University of Victoria in advancing its commitments and actions towards equity, inclusion, diversity and anti-racism, difficult conversations may arise. For many of us the inequity and injustice we seek to address is not theoretical or abstract but rather personal, and as such conversation cafe participants might find themselves in search of various forms of support after engaging in these discussions. Below are some forms of support as well as some suggestions for where to access them.

CRISIS LINES

- [Vancouver Island Crisis Line](#): 1-888-494-3888

The Vancouver Island Crisis Line is available 24/7 to provide a supportive listening ear for people in emotional distress and connection to emergency mental health services when needed. Chat and text options also available.

- [KUU-US Crisis Line](#): 1-800-588-8717

KUU-US provides 24/7 crisis support for Indigenous people throughout British Columbia. Youth, adult, Elder and Métis specific phone lines are available.

COUNSELLING

UVic staff, faculty and students have access to the below services free of charge as well as coverage for mental health related services in their extended health benefits.

- UVSS (undergraduate) health plan: The plan covers 80% of the cost of a mental health practitioner, up to a combined maximum of \$700 per policy year for all practitioners. The practitioner must be a registered psychologist, registered clinical counsellor, or have a Master's degree in Social Work. More details [here](#).
- GSS (graduate) health plan: Registered psychologist/Registered Clinical Counsellor (combined) has an annual maximum of \$500 per person per calendar year. Paramedical practitioners each have a \$10 per person per visit copayment which is the responsibility of the plan holder to pay. More details [here](#).
- Faculty and staff can find details on benefit coverage [here](#).

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[Employee and Family Assistance Program](#): UVic staff and faculty and dependents can find support through LifeWorks, a confidential program that includes professional counselling, information and referral services.

[UVic Student Wellness Centre](#): A team of practitioners offer a variety of services to support students' mental, physical and spiritual health. You can make a [same-day or pre-booked appointment](#) with a [counsellor](#), [nurse](#), [physician](#), or [spiritual care provider](#).

[SupportConnect](#): A free, confidential mental health support service for UVic students that allows you to get connected with qualified counsellors, consultants and life coaches anytime, anywhere. Students can access SupportConnect 24/7 by phone or online (video and in-person options are available).

PEER SUPPORT

[Anti-Violence Project](#): Open to all members of the campus community and surrounding area, the Anti-Violence Project's non-judgmental and confidential support services for anyone who has experienced any form of violence, anyone who has caused harm, and anyone who has supported someone who has experienced violence or caused harm.

[UVSS Peer Support Centre](#): Whether you are struggling with or have questions regarding mental health, are concerned for a friend, or need help accessing resources on or off campus, UVic students can seek a first-point-of-contact at the Peer Support Centre.

[UVic Pride's Queer Student Advising](#): One-on-one confidential advising relating to academic or financial concerns, housing, or personal matters including topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity is now being offered for UVic students. UVic Pride's office coordinator, Nate (he/him) can also let you know about upcoming events for the LGBTQ2IA+ campus community, and help connect with your broader community resources.

[BPOC Caucus](#): The BPOC Caucus is an ad-hoc committee that has been struck to provide a space for peer support and advocacy for BPOC Faculty and Librarian/Archivist members. It is currently an open caucus, meaning it is open to all BPOC members of the Faculty Association.

Additional community support resources can be found [here](#).