



A DCI Deliberation Guide

Gender and Sexuality:

What policies best respect our different beliefs and identities?

Format for Deliberation

Before the Deliberation

- I. Read this document's Background, Shared Language, Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements section
 - A. If you encounter words or concepts that you are unfamiliar with or have questions about, refer to the Shared Language section starting on page 6 that provides some discussion and definitions of key terms related to gender and sexuality
- II. (Optional) Review the sources listed in the footnotes of this document

During the Deliberation

In today's D Team meeting we are going to follow a slightly different format than in previous sessions. We will move through five types of discourse (conversation, discussion, dialogue, debate, and deliberation), each of which will hopefully contribute to a productive and meaningful D Team experience and help us learn more about different ways to engage others on important and contentious topics.

- I. Conversation - 15 min.
 - A. Shared Language, Expected Outcomes, Conversation Agreements
- II. Discussion - 15 min.
- III. Dialogue - 15 min.
- IV. Debate - 15 min.
- V. Deliberation - 15 min.
- VI. Reflections - 15 min.

Background

Topics related to gender and sexuality are diverse and expansive, ranging from gender equality and gay marriage to healthcare policies and reproductive rights. When selecting a topic for deliberation, it is important that it be "ripe" for conversation; i.e. it is important to participants, it is timely and relevant, and participants are able to engage with sensitivity and resilience. After much discussion and

consideration, the DCI determined that within the broad topic of gender and sexuality, issues related to transgender people are ripe for deliberation due to their visibility, prevalence in recent legislation, and disagreement within both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ communities about what policies best respect our different beliefs and identities.

Questions that animate **the national debate about transgender rights** - such as what bathrooms and public spaces people should have access to, whether people should identify themselves by certain pronouns, how the use of hormone and other medical therapies on children should be regulated, and who should be allowed to participate in men's and women's athletics - illustrate broader questions Americans have about the deeply personal ways in which we relate to world around us. Though situated in the context of transgender people, these topics force us to reckon with complex, often abstract questions about what we think it means to be a man or a woman, the relationship between the physical, mental, social, and emotional dimensions of our identity, and our human agency versus innate nature.

A 2017 study from Pew found that **Americans are "fundamentally divided** over whether it's possible for someone to be a gender different from the sex they were assigned at birth."¹ The same study found that there was no clear consensus among Americans about whether society goes too far or not far enough in accepting transgender people. Additionally, scientists, psychologists, activists, and researchers on all sides disagree whether and to what extent gender and sexuality have more to do with scientific or social questions, or some combination of the two.²³⁴ That there is such foundational disagreement or uncertainty on this topic makes the already tenuous policy conversations about related issues all the more challenging and difficult.

The issue of **transgender people's participation in athletics** offers a timely lens through which to evaluate some of the broader questions concerning gender and sexuality. At least 25 states have introduced legislation prohibiting transgender women and girls from participating in women's sports since the beginning of 2021.⁵ Many of these bills contain language about Title IX, a federal civil rights law passed in the Education Amendments of 1972 that in part prohibits sex-based discrimination and preferential treatment in "any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."⁶

North Carolina lawmakers introduced a bill on March 22, 2021 that would prohibit transgender students from middle school to college from competing on sports teams that do not correspond to their "reproductive biology and genetics at birth."⁷ It would thus not allow them to join a team based on their gender identity if that identity did not correspond with their biological sex, a practice that is currently

¹ ["Republicans, Democrats have starkly different views on transgender issues,"](#) Pew Research Center

² ["The New Science of Sex and Gender,"](#) *Scientific American*

³ ["Science Won't Settle Trans Rights,"](#) *Boston Review*

⁴ ["Navigating the Controversial Science on Gender Identity,"](#) *RealClear Science*

⁵ ["How Some States are Moving to Restrict Transgender Women in Sports,"](#) *The New York Times*

⁶ [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,](#) U.S. Department of Justice

⁷ [House Bill 358,](#) General Assembly of North Carolina, Session 2021

allowed by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association through a gender identity request process.⁸

At the federal level, the ***Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2021***, a bill that would associate Title IX compliance in athletics with sex recognition based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth, has been introduced in both the Senate⁹ and the House.¹⁰ Some view the introduction of these legislative measures as a response to a January Biden administration executive order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.¹¹

These legislative and executive actions specifically reference ***transgender women and girls' participation in women's sports***, as opposed to transgender men and boys' participation in men's sports, because of conflicting beliefs about whether transgender women and girls have a competitive advantage over their non-transgender peers due to biological, genetic, or hormonal differences. To some, the argument that cisgender women are put at a disadvantage by transgender women is based in what they view as a sexist idea that women are the weaker sex, that if transgender women are still seen as men they pose a threat to cisgender women, and that if transgender men are still as women then they must be weaker and thus debate over their participation in men's sports is not relevant. There is still inadequate scientific research on transgender athletes to come to a definitive conclusion, and ***studies that have been conducted in recent years have yielded mixed results.***

For example, a study published in December 2020 in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*¹² found that despite having one year of hormone replacement treatment transgender women were able to outperform their cisgender female counterparts in pushups and situps, and, though experiencing a time decline, after two years they were still 12% faster on a 1.5 mile run than their cisgender peers.¹³ But in the first study of the effect of testosterone blockers on transgender women and athletic performance in 2015,¹⁴ a medical physicist found that transgender women ran slower after beginning hormones and performed no better against cisgender female runners relative to their previous performances against cisgender men.¹⁵

Proponents of allowing transgender women to compete in women's sports argue that critics exaggerate any competitive advantages transgender women might have over their cisgender female peers, that physiological differences (if they do exist) are not always relevant in every sports performance, and that exclusion of an already marginalized group is damaging to the mental health of transgender athletes and

⁸ ["N.C. Lawmakers File Bill to Ban Transgender Athletes in Sports," NBC News](#)

⁹ [Senate Bill 251](#), 117th Congress (2021-2022)

¹⁰ [House Resolution 426](#), 117th Congress (2021-2022)

¹¹ ["Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation,"](#) White House

¹² ["Effect of gender affirming hormones on athletic performance in transwomen and transmen: implications for sporting organisations and legislators,"](#) *British Journal of Sports Medicine*

¹³ ["Trans Women Retain Athletic Edge After a Year of Hormone Therapy, Study Finds,"](#) NBC News

¹⁴ ["Race Times for Transgender Athletes,"](#) *Journal of Sporting Cultures and Identities*

¹⁵ ["Trans Women Retain Athletic Edge After a Year of Hormone Therapy, Study Finds,"](#) NBC News

detrimental to civil rights in the United States.¹⁶ **Proponents of prohibiting transgender women from competing in women's sports** argue the unfairness of the physiological advantages such as muscle mass, bigger hearts and lungs, and higher bone density that may not be mitigated by hormone therapy in transgender women. They also believe that transgender athletes might deprive cisgender female peers of scholarships and opportunities to compete at the highest levels, and that the transgender rights movement should not come at the expense of cisgender women and girls.¹⁷

Another important dynamic to consider is the **number of Americans directly impacted** by the issue of transgender participation in athletics. It can be difficult to accurately track the number of transgender people and athletes in the United States. A 2020 Gallup survey estimated that 0.6% of U.S. adults identify as transgender, the majority of whom belong to Generation Z (born 1997-2002) and Millennials (born 1981-1996).¹⁸ A researcher in the United Kingdom estimates that there are about 50 transgender athletes per 200,000 women in college sports at any given time,¹⁹ while the Williams Institute at UCLA estimates that 150,000 teens (i.e. 1 out of 137 13 to 17 year old) identify as transgender.²⁰

To some extent, the **lack of research about and visibility of transgender individuals** further complicates the issue of transgender participation in athletics. While proponents and opponents of different policies governing athletic participation typically focus on individuals who are “out” as transgender (meaning they self-identify as transgender in their personal, public, and/or professional lives),²¹ there is less attention paid to the experiences of transgender individuals who are not out and face different challenges with athletic participation. As one transgender former college athlete puts it, “I was really worried about coming out as transgender to anyone else because I knew there weren’t any policies. I was so afraid that my school would ban me from my sport and that was the only thing I had at the time.”²² The decisions to come out as transgender, undergo hormone therapy, and/or seek gender reassignment surgery may happen on different timelines for different people, highlighting the diversity and complexity of experiences of transgender athletes based on their relative visibility.

For example, Caitlyn Jenner came out as a transgender woman in 2015, nearly forty years after winning an Olympic gold medal in the decathlon.²³ Her experience as a transgender athlete was likely vastly different from the experiences of other **high-profile examples of transgender athletes** who came out before or during their athletic careers, including CeCé Telfer, the first publicly-out transgender woman to win an NCAA track and field title;²⁴ Andraya Yearwood and Terry Miller, transgender females who placed 1st and 2nd, respectively, in the women’s 55 meter dash at the Connecticut indoor track championships;²⁵ and Gabrielle Ludwig, a 6 foot 6 inch transgender female basketball player for Mission

¹⁶ [“Transgender Athletes: Should Transgender Women Be Allowed to Compete in Women’s Sports?”](#) *Issues and Controversies*

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ [“LGBT Identification Rises to 5.6% in Latest U.S. Estimate,”](#) *Gallup*

¹⁹ [“How Some States are Moving to Restrict Transgender Women in Sports,”](#) *The New York Times*

²⁰ [“One in Every 137 Teenagers Would Identify as Transgender, Report Says,”](#) *New York Times*

²¹ [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition](#)

²² [“The Transgender Athlete,”](#) *Inside Higher Ed*

²³ [Caitlyn Jenner](#). Wikipedia.

²⁴ [NCAA champion CeCé Telfer says ‘I have no benefit’ by being trans.](#)” *Outsport*.

²⁵ [“Transgender athletes speak out as parents petition to change policy that allows them to compete as girls,”](#) ABC News.

College in Santa Clara, CA.²⁶ Caster Semenya, an intersex cisgender woman who has XY chromosomes and naturally-elevated testosterone levels due to a genetic mutation and who won a 2016 Olympic gold medal in middle-distance running, is not a transgender athlete but offers another high-profile example of how complicated dynamics and policies related to gender and athletic competitions can be.²⁷



CeCé Telfer, Image from [Outsports](#)



Gabrielle Ludwig, Image from [USA TODAY](#)



Andraya Yearwood and Terry Miller, Image from [ABC News](#)



Caitlyn Jenner, Image from [Wikipedia](#)

Regulations currently differ across states, countries, and organizations. The NCAA stipulates that a transgender male athlete (assigned female at birth and identifies as a male) “can compete on a men’s or women’s team unless he receives a medical exception to take testosterone; if he takes testosterone, he can compete only on a men’s team.”²⁸ Transgender female athletes (assigned male at birth and identifies as a female) can compete on a women’s team after undergoing 12 months of testosterone suppression treatment. Nineteen US states do not require hormone treatment for transgender high school athletes, while the International Association of Athletics Federations requires that testosterone levels for female

²⁶ [“Transgender woman Gabrielle Ludwig returns to college court,” USA TODAY.](#)

²⁷ [Caster Semenya](#), Wikipedia

²⁸ [“A Time of Transition.”](#) NCAA.

athletes must be lower than 5 nanomoles of testosterone per liter of blood. Mayo Clinic Laboratories reports that the average levels of testosterone for adult biological females typically fall between 0.3 and 2.1 nanomoles per liter while those for adult biological males typically fall between 8.3 and 32.9 nanomoles per liter.²⁹

Conversation - Interchanging Thoughts to Engage

We will review the “Shared Language” and “Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements” sections together in order to orient today’s D Team toward the interchange of thoughts and information about some of the broader topics and issues that are relevant to today’s topic but will not be the main focus of our D Team meeting.

Shared Language (5 min.)

Given the deeply personal and existential nature of conversations centered on gender and sexuality, it is important that we pay attention to the language we use when we talk about these topics. However, it is also important to acknowledge that disagreement over definitions and shared language is common both within and outside of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) media reference guide is considered by many to be a helpful resource to explore the evolving and sometimes confusing terminology and language for talking about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and issues. Others prefer to use the terminology listed in the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). Both sources will be referenced in the section below.

The definitions below can help us describe and analyze the complexities of gender, sexuality, and identity, and highlight the assumptions embedded in the language we have traditionally used to describe them.

Language to Consider Adopting/Preferred Terms:

- Sex - Term which refers to biological differences between females and males, including chromosomes, sex organs, and endogenous hormone profiles (i.e. natural hormone production, as opposed to estrogen or testosterone supplementation).³⁰
- Gender - Term which refers to socially constructed and enacted roles and behaviors which occur in a historical and cultural context and vary across societies and over time.³¹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ [“Sex and Gender.”](#) National Institutes of Health, Office of Research on Women’s Health

³¹ Ibid

- Sexual Orientation - Term which refers to an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations.³²
- Gender Identity - An individual's own, internal, personal sense of being a man, woman, or someone outside binary gender.³³
- Gender Expression/Role - Outward physical or behavioral manifestations of personality that are typically associated with a particular gender and may or may not reflect a person's gender identity.³⁴
- LGBTQ- Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. Sometimes, when the Q is seen at the end of LGBT it can also mean 'questioning.'³⁵ LGBTQ+ or LGBTQIA include intersex and asexual people.
 - Gay - An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex. Sometimes lesbian is the preferred term for women.
 - Lesbian - A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay or as gay women.
 - Bisexual/Bi - A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or those of another gender.
 - Transgender - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.³⁶
 - Queer - An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual (e.g. queer person, queer woman). Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel don't apply to them. Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBT people to describe themselves; however, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBT community.³⁷
 - Intersex - An umbrella term used to describe people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female (also sometimes referred to as Differences of Sex Development [DSD]).
 - Asexual - An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction.³⁸

³² [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition](#)

³³ ["How Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are Different,"](#) GLAAD

³⁴ ["Gender Identity,"](#) MedScape

³⁵ [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition](#)

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

- Cisgender - A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is to simply say “non-transgender people.”³⁹
- Gender Dysphoria - A concept designated in the *DSM-5* as clinically significant distress or impairment related to a strong desire to be of another gender, which may include desire to change primary and/or secondary sex characteristics. Not all transgender or gender diverse people experience dysphoria.⁴⁰
 - It should be noted that the *DSM-5* is a psychiatric diagnostic tool produced by the American Psychiatric Association, which means that a diagnosis of gender dysphoria is classified as a mental disorder. Many in the transgender community take issue with this classification as a prerequisite to receive certain healthcare services. More on the rights of transgender people to receive healthcare can be found on [this website](#).

Dynamics to Consider:

- “Homosexual” is considered by some to be an outdated clinical term deemed derogatory and offensive (*The Associated Press, New York Times, and Washington Post* restrict usage of the term).⁴¹ Instead, consider using gay, lesbian, or, when appropriate, bisexual or queer.
- To some in the LGBTQ+ community, the phrase “sexual preference” suggests that which sex one is attracted to is a choice. Some believe this further implies that this preference can be “cured” or changed, and many in the LGBTQ community find this phrase and its connotations offensive.⁴² For this reason, it may be helpful to consider using “sexual orientation.”
- It is important to be aware of and use the correct pronouns that people use to identify themselves, whether transgender or otherwise, just as you would like people to use the correct pronouns that you use to identify yourself.
- “Hermaphrodite” is considered by some to be an outdated and derogatory term. Instead, consider using intersex.⁴³
- “Transvestite” is considered to be an outdated and derogatory term and should be avoided unless someone specifically identifies that way. Similarly, the word “tranny” is considered derogatory language and should not be used.⁴⁴
- Transgender women are not necessarily cross-dressers or drag queens. The term cross-dresser is typically used to refer to men, who usually identify as heterosexual, who occasionally wear clothes, makeup, and accessories culturally associated with women. Drag queens are men, typically gay men, who dress like women for the purpose of entertainment. Many transgender

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ [Gender Dysphoria](#), American Psychiatric Association

⁴¹ [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition](#)

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

people have no interest in or even dislike drag, while others enjoy and perform it regularly.⁴⁵ Be aware of the differences between transgender women, cross-dressers, and drag queens.⁴⁶

- There is some debate about the inclusivity of the LGBTQ acronym and whether LGBTQ+ or LGBTQIA (“Q” either refers to queer or questioning; “I” usually refers to intersex; “A” refers to asexual) is a more inclusive terminology to incorporate intersex and asexual people. There is no one perspective on this terminology.⁴⁷
 - Many view this acronym as describing individuals’ sexual orientations, and scholarship in queer studies is moving in this direction. So while some argue that the “A” can also stand for “ally,” others believe the “A” should be exclusively used to represent “asexual.”
- Members of the transgender community often find phrases such as “biologically female/male,” “genetically male/female,” and “born a man/woman” problematic and reductive of the complex subject of sex and gender identity. They generally prefer phrases such as “assigned male/female at birth,” or “designated male/female at birth.”⁴⁸
- The word gender-nonconforming is sometimes used to describe people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. However, not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender, nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming.⁴⁹
- “Transsexual” has a different meaning from “transgender,” and generally refers to those who have “permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries.” GLAAD reports that “many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender.”⁵⁰

Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements (10 min.)

Expected Outcomes

Given the complexity and personal nature of this topic, the purpose of this D Team is not to come to a formal agreement or declaration about any policies related to the rights of transgender people. Instead, the focus of this D Team is on creating a space to safely and productively engage new and different ideas on a topic that was identified by DCI Fellows and fall D Team participants as important for deliberation. Topics related to gender and sexuality are becoming increasingly visible and polarizing in our national debate, and a goal of this D Team is to provide participants an opportunity to learn more about some of the dynamics being discussed at a national level and practice sharing their thoughts and listening with strength as others share their perspectives in an environment informed by conversation agreements and shared dispositions.

⁴⁵ [The difference between transgender and doing drag.](#) *The Conversation.*

⁴⁶ [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition](#)

⁴⁷ For more on these and other terms, see “[The ABCs of LGBTQIA+.](#)” *New York Times.*

⁴⁸ [GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th Edition](#)

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

Conversation Agreements

In entering into this discussion, to the best of our ability we each agree to:

1. Be authentic and respectful
2. Be an attentive and active listener
3. Be a purposeful and concise speaker
4. Approach fellow deliberators' stories, experiences, and arguments with curiosity, not hostility
5. Assume the best - and not the worst - about the intentions and values of others, and avoid snap judgements
6. Demonstrate intellectual humility, recognizing that no one has all the answers, by asking questions and making space for others to do the same
7. Critique the idea we disagree with, not the person expressing it, and remember to practice empathy
8. Note areas of both agreement and disagreement
9. Respect the confidentiality of the discussion
 - a. When referencing specific individuals, whether part of the LGBTQ+ community or not, no names or identifying remarks will be shared with the group
10. Avoid speaking in absolutes (i.e. "All people think this," or "No educated people hold that view")

As you discuss the questions in each section below, consider how the following values - or other values - might shape our worldviews and how we think about issues related to gender and sexuality.



Discussion - Mapping Differences to Learn (15 min.)

In this section, we will have a discussion in which we map the range of opinions and perspectives on gender and sexuality. We will share our own positions and ideas about how we think about gender roles as well as explore the broader conversations society is having about issues related to gender and sexuality. Choose any one of the questions below to address.

1. What roles have you learned about gender from parents, school, peers, media, faith? Which do you hold to be true and follow, and which do you find problematic or break?
2. What perspectives on gender and sexuality have not been expressed yet in our discussion and yet are present in other conversations on these topics?
3. What do you think about the issue of transgender athletes discussed in the background section? What interests or concerns you, if anything, about this topic?

Dialogue - Engaging Perspectives to Understand (15 min.)

In this section, we will have a dialogue oriented towards revealing and understanding the underlying experiences, interests, assumptions, and values related to both our own ideas about gender and sexuality as well as those who may not be present in the room. Choose any one of the questions below to address.

1. Can you think of a time when you felt included because of your gender or sexuality? A time when you felt excluded?
2. What values and/or experiences inform your position on issues related to gender and sexuality? How can people who disagree with you on this topic better understand your beliefs and experiences?
3. What values and/or experiences do you think inform those who hold different opinions than you on these issues? How can you better understand the beliefs and experiences of people who disagree with you?
4. What values might we tap into when talking about these issues with someone who doesn't hold our same opinions?
5. How do you feel about the fact that people may hold a different view from you on these issues?

Debate - Evaluating Positions to Prioritize (15 min.)

In this section, we will engage in a type of discourse that the DCI identifies as “debate,” but it is not the acrimonious kind we often witness in today’s media. Instead, this form of debate is oriented towards highlighting differences, exposing weaknesses in arguments and evidence, and identifying which positions are the strongest and best-supported as they relate to transgender athletes’ participation in sports. Choose any one of the questions below to address.

1. Can you think of an example when different values might be in conflict with each other in the context of issues related to gender and sexuality? Which values should take priority in these contexts?
2. Why do you think people express fewer concerns about transgender men competing in men’s athletic events than transgender women competing in women’s event? Should both receive equal attention in debate? Why or why not?
3. Which perspectives and positions that we’ve discussed today do you most agree with? Why? What are the strongest arguments for these positions?
4. Which perspectives and positions that we’ve discussed today do you least agree with? Why? What are the strongest arguments against these positions?

Deliberation - Generating Ideas to Transcend (15 min.)

In this section, we will focus on engaging in deliberation, which is oriented towards building both shared and new understandings of transgender athletes' participation in sports. These new conceptions will ideally transcend some of our previously-held positions and possibly enable us to generate some innovative collective solutions and policy actions.

1. How might we resolve or transcend the conflicts between positions, perspectives, and/or values that we've discussed?
2. What do you think is the best way to address transgender athletes' desire to participate in either men's or women's sports while responding to the concerns about the ability of non-transgender athletes to compete with them? What informs your thought process?
3. Is it possible to develop and implement policies that reflect and respect the diverse beliefs of members of both the transgender community and the non-transgender community?

Reflections (15 min.)

1. In one sentence, share what was most meaningful or valuable to you during this deliberation.
2. Was there anything that was said or not said that you think should be addressed with the group?
3. Can you identify any shared hopes or concerns the group discovered today?
4. What questions remain?
5. Did you hear something new today?
6. Is there a next step you would like to take based on the deliberation you just had?
7. As you reflect on your experience with D Teams this semester, what have you learned? How have you changed, if at all?

About This Guide

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The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for Davidson students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community to productively engage with one another on difficult and contentious issues facing our community and society. The DCI regularly hosts facilitated deliberations on a wide range of topics as well as organizes training workshops for deliberation facilitators. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org.

DCI Deliberation Guides

The DCI has launched this series of Deliberation Guides as a foundation for such conversations. They provide both important background information on the topics in question and a specific framework for engaging with these topics. The Guides are designed to be informative without being overwhelming and structured without being inflexible. They cover a range of topics and come in a variety of formats but share several common elements, including opportunities to commit to a shared set of Conversation Agreements, learn about diverse perspectives, and reflect together on the conversation and its yield. The DCI encourages conversations based on these guides to be moderated by a trained facilitator. After each conversation, the DCI also suggests that its associated Pathway Guide be distributed to the conversation's participants.

DCI Pathways Guides

For every Deliberation Guide, the DCI has also developed an associated Pathways Guide, which outline opportunities for action that participants can consider that are related to the covered topic. These Pathways Guides reinforce the DCI's commitment to an action orientation, a key deliberative disposition. While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to individual or collective action on the key issues facing society. Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, generating new approaches to an issue. or deciding to support a particular policy.

If you make use of this guide in a deliberation, please provide attribution to the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative and email dc@deliberativecitizenship.org to tell us about your event. To access more of our growing library of Deliberation Guides, Pathway Guides and other resources, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org/readings-and-resources.