**Principles of DIALOGUE**

- **Practice Empathy**
  - Attempt to imagine yourself in someone else’s shoes – to feel their feelings and to think their thoughts
  - Understand that empathy is the intention to know what another person is experiencing, and not necessarily to respond to that experience in any concrete way
  - Acknowledge that as human beings, we always have limited capacity to understand the entirety of another’s experience

- **Celebrate diversity**
  - Encounter difference with openness and acceptance in order to facilitate a welcoming position to the other
  - Reflect on how our assumptions might be tied to our identities and why there is discomfort when we are challenged with a new perspective
  - Get to know individuals as people rather than carriers of a position

- **Promote curiosity & learning**
  - Encounter difference with curiosity rather than defensiveness by asking thoughtful and open questions
  - Focus on understanding a different perspective. Our intention is to learn from one another, not to determine who has the “best” view
  - Assume that many people have pieces to the puzzle and that together we can craft long-term solutions

- **Expose assumptions & suspend judgement**
  - Become aware of our own assumptions and recognize how they shape our thinking, our conclusions and our way of seeing the world
  - Practice patience and suspend judgement when engaging in conversation with others
  - Pause our desire to prematurely jump to a solution and take time to explore the possibilities together

- **Put power in its place**
  - Engage in dialogue as peers rather than as representatives of an organization or profession
  - Give space so all voices may be heard and no one voice dominates the conversation
  - Understand that power is ubiquitous – we cannot simply pick it up and put it down like a tool
  - Reflect on the ways unequal power relations influence our everyday social interactions

*These principles help create a safe space to collectively explore the polarizations that divide our communities. They help us learn different ways to give space to each other – something most of us are not very good at. Although there are no “rules” for dialogue (since it is not a game), these principles will make our interactions more helpful.*