

TALKING ABOUT DATA IN YOUR COMMUNITY

STRATEGIES FOR RESPECTFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

Sharing data can be tricky. You will be asked to explain technical elements of the data that require practice and familiarity. However, you may also encounter situations where sharing more information is not always the best route to constructive dialogue.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES KEY TO SUCCESS FOR CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DATA:

- **Curiosity.** Approach conversations with a desire to learn. This requires deep listening or listening with the goal of understanding rather than merely responding. Ask meaningful follow-up questions to explore the other person's perspective more deeply. Enter the conversation with trust that others mean well even when their words or actions are unclear.
 - **Humility.** Learning is essential for experimentation and innovation. It is okay to share that you do not know the answer yet. Be ready to learn from those around you. Invite others to learn with you.
 - **Connection.** Seek commonalities and shared values. Speak to why there is a need and a vision for a future. Find common ground and build upon it.
 - **Mindfulness.** Be mindful of your own thoughts, biases and emotions during the conversation. Monitor your verbal and nonverbal cues, and observe how others react. Notice what you say, how you say it and how it was received.
 - **Bravery.** These conversations can be tough, especially when encountering misinformation. Believe in yourself and know you will say the wrong thing sometimes. Be brave enough to correct misinformation, and be brave enough to admit mistakes.
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The list on the back of this page includes some potential strategies to navigate situations requiring both technical and adaptive responses you may receive about data. Consider using strategies alone or in combination. Please star or highlight three strategies that work best for you. If a strategy you have used successfully in the past is missing, please add it in a blank space.

STRATEGIES:

- ☐ **Define and provide examples.** Clearly define the term or concept they mention. Then provide tangible examples to help aid understanding.
- ☐ **Provide context.** Explain in plain language the process or methodology.
- ☐ **Direct to credible resources.** Offer to share more information with them about the topic or direct them to trusted sources to explore more.
- ☐ **Invite learning.** Sometimes you will not know the answer. Share that you do not know yet but are happy to reach out when you do.
- ☐ **Acknowledge and connect.** Speak to the concerns they've raised. Recognize and name the values they have identified and seek opportunities to connect back to your work.
- ☐ **Lead with curiosity.** Ask thoughtful open-ended, follow-up questions to better understand their perspective and thought process. Practice deep listening. Summarize or paraphrase what was said to confirm understanding.
- ☐ **Create space.** Give the other person space to share and be open. Avoid interrupting and allow silence.
- ☐ **Storytelling.** Invite them to consider an example from your own life or within the community.
- ☐ **Question strategically.** Prompt them to consider an alternate narrative or hypothetical within their example.
- ☐ **Temporarily redirect.** Transition to another topic. Follow up individually with the person to discuss their perspective.

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