

# Introducing Gracious Space

“A spirit and a setting where we  
invite the stranger and embrace  
learning in public.”

*- The Center for Ethical Leadership*



# Learning Objectives

At the end of this module you will...

- Know the four elements of Gracious Space.
- Understand how Gracious Space works in the Community Conversation Toolkit.
- Appreciate why Gracious Space matters and is essential to Community Conversations.

# The History of “Gracious Space”

**Gracious Space is not a new concept – many cultures practice something like Gracious Space**

**Our version of Gracious Space was developed by the Center for Ethical Leadership**

***“gracious space A practical guide to working better together” by Patricia Hughes with Bill Grace***

**Based in the vision of an environment where “the stranger” would feel welcome, where people could get past their preconceived notions of each other...  
a gracious space.**



# Gracious Space is...

*A spirit and a setting where we invite the “stranger” and learn in public.*



## Learning from the author, Patricia Hughes

**Gracious**  
S·P·A·C·E

Presented by  
Co-Founder and Author Patricia Hughes

**Trillium**  
Leadership Consulting

# Gracious Space is...

Gracious Space creates a foundation for building a space of belonging for a diverse group of people to engage in deep listening and shared learning in time of complexity and change.

Spirit

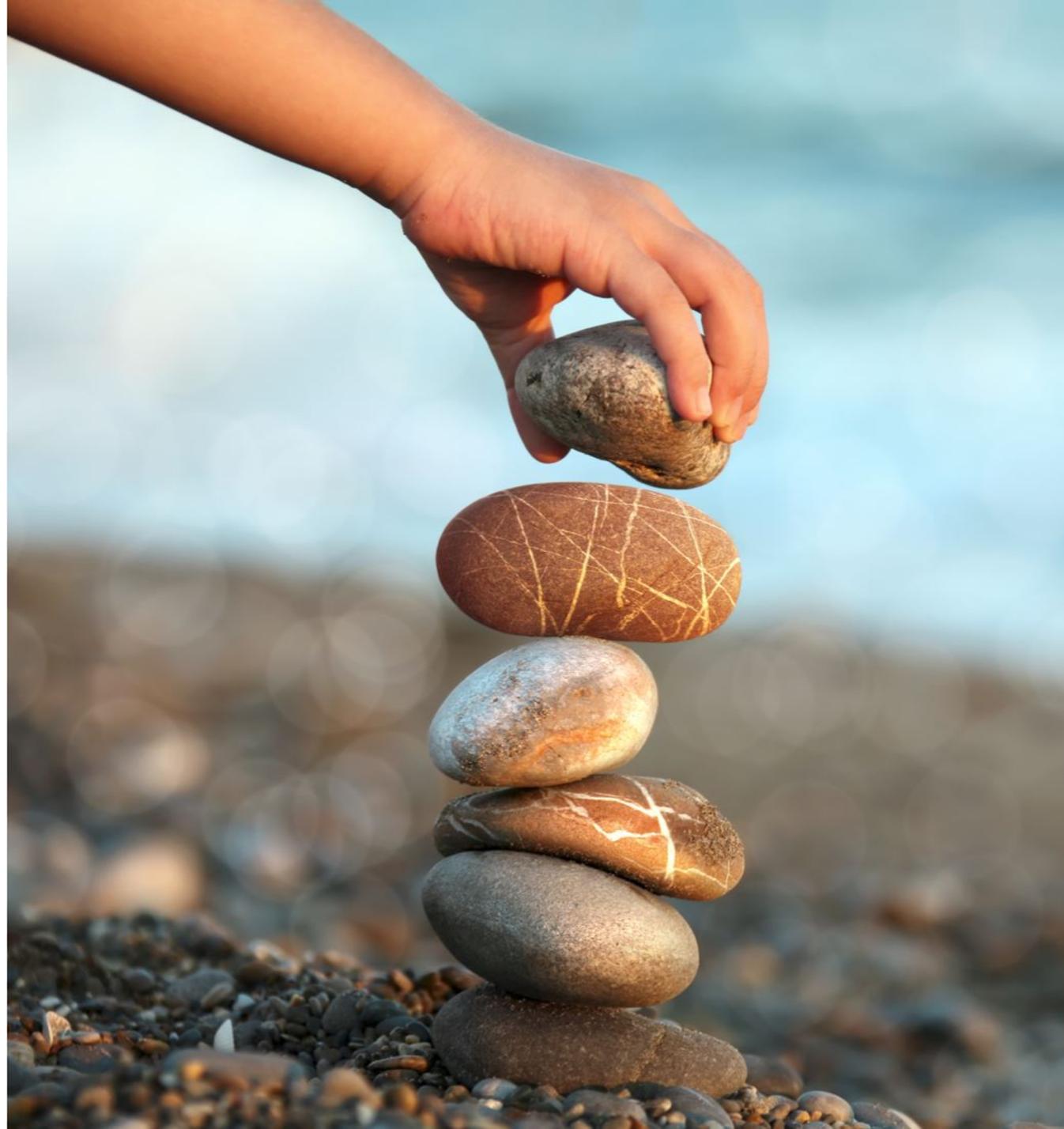
Setting

Invite the "Stranger"

Learning in Public

Utilizing Gracious Space  
within a Community  
Conversation centers  
relationship building and  
ensures we value:

- Building a Space of Belonging
- Having a Space to Listen
- Seeking Diverse Perspectives





# Spirit: Our Way of Being

- **Self** - We can personify Gracious Space
- **Group** – Invite people to join the conversation
- **The Work** – Being mindful of the greater good

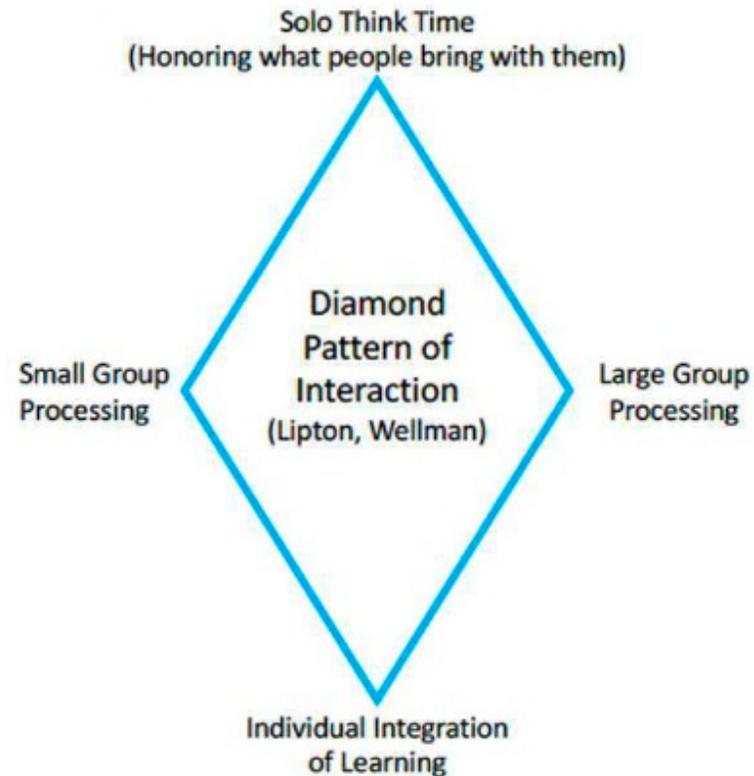
## **Be Intentional**

*“Our intention creates our reality” – Wayne Dyer*

# Group Agreements & Diamond Pattern of Interaction

## Community Conversation Group Agreements

1. Be inclusive and be sure that everyone is able to share.
2. Speak from your own perspective and use “ I “ statements.
3. Remember that everyone speaks from their own lived reality. Be willing to be uncomfortable, it is in these moments that we learn and grow.
4. Listen to build understanding, learning from others.
5. Respect confidentiality, personal information that is shared should remain in the meeting room.
6. Enjoy the time together.



# Setting: The physical space supports the work

What does the space convey about the work?

- The history of the meeting place

Accessibility

- Creating a space where everyone feels welcome

How accessibility is woven into the toolkit

- Accessibility checklist



# Creating an Accessible Setting

- ✓ The physical space is accessible
- ✓ How do people feel in the space
- ✓ Creating a sense of belonging

## Accessibility Checklist



Creating physical spaces that are welcoming and result in a sense of belonging is an important aspect of the Community Conversation. Each choice that we make matters when it comes to creating an inclusive space.

### PLANNING AN IN-PERSON GATHERING

When planning a gathering of people who will be in a physical space together, there are many considerations to ensure that people will feel welcome and safe. As you consider different aspects of your event, use the following checklist to guide your preparations.

#### 1. Ensuring the Space is Accessible for All People:

- The meeting space itself is accessible for mobility device users.
- Everyone should have a choice of where they would like to be in the space. Make sure that all parts of the room and all tables are able to be accessed by anyone using a mobility device. That means that there should be spaces between tables and isles of chairs.
- Make sure that power cords and cables are not in a space that people will need to navigate to avoid tripping hazards and clearing floor space for people using mobility devices.
- The lighting can be adjusted, either dimmed or reduced.
- Leave space in the room where people could choose to pace or stand.
- Be certain that parking spaces and restrooms are ADA accessible.
- Ensure that service animals are welcomed in the space.

#### 2. Planning for an Inclusive Event:

- Before setting a date for the event, check the calendar and be mindful of significant cultural holidays, there are many online calendar resources to guide planning.
- Ensure that any breaks are long enough for all people to meet their needs. Typically, 15 minutes is adequate but consider if longer breaks are needed.
- Assure that microphones are available and are used by all speakers. This is critical to be certain that everyone has the opportunity to hear what is being said in the space.
- Advise attendees what accommodations are being provided ahead of time and let people know that they can request others as needed. Allow people to request preferential seating if appropriate for your venue.
- Partner with your school district to provide interpreters for language access supports and plan for the following:
- Share information about the event with the interpreter ahead of time including subject matter and number of participants.
- Ask interpreters how they would like to communicate with the presenter.
- Be sure the seating is arranged appropriately for the participant and interpreter.
- If you are serving food be certain that dietary restrictions are taken into consideration.



# Invite the "Stranger": Seek and be open to different perspectives

- **Broad Stakeholder Group**
- **Building a Space of Belonging**
- **Holding Conflict**

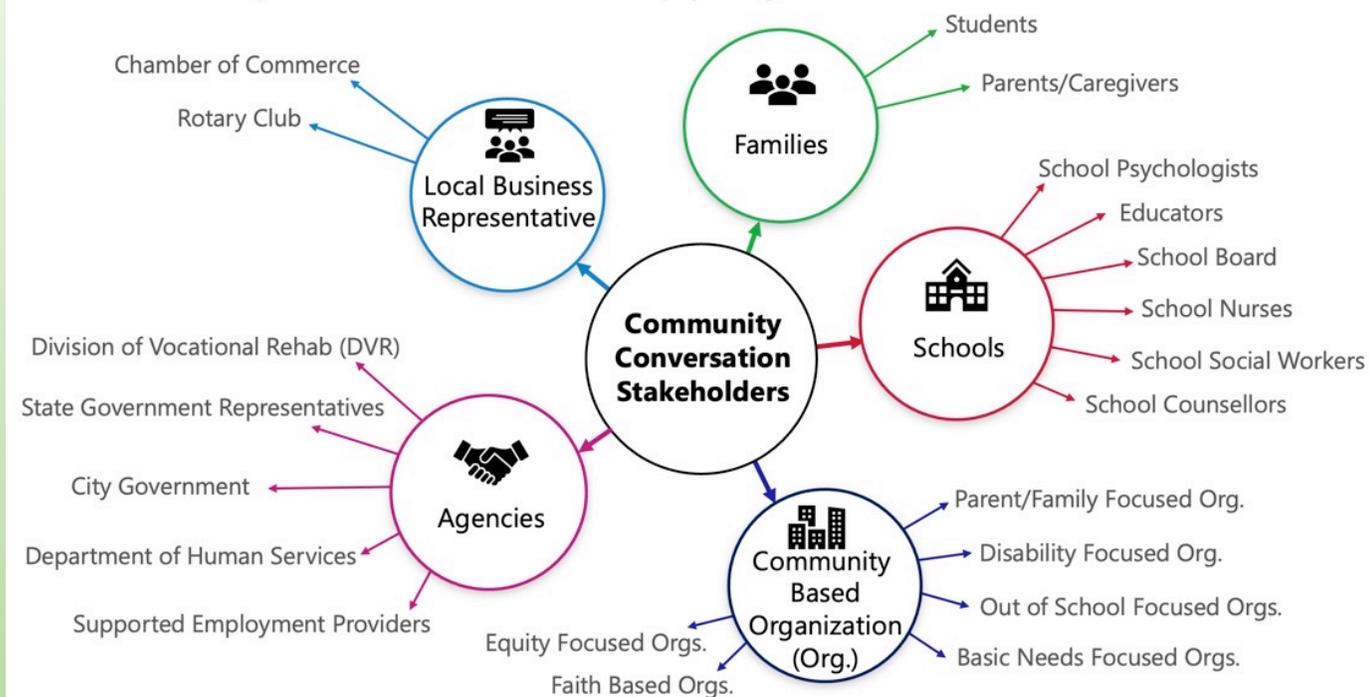
*"We have much to gain by moving closer to that which we do not understand"*

*– The Center for Ethical Leadership*

# Inviting the Stranger

- ✓ Think broadly about who is involved in the system
- ✓ Be deliberate about who is invited
- ✓ Opportunity to build relationships

## Community Conversation Mapping Tool



# Learn in Public: Be open to learning and possibilities

## Being Open to Possibility

- Create a learning community
- Be vulnerable

## Be Curious

- Pay attention to thoughts and assumptions
- Admit and learn from mistakes





Focus on strengths

Appreciative  
Inquiry



Allow for multiple perspectives to be expressed



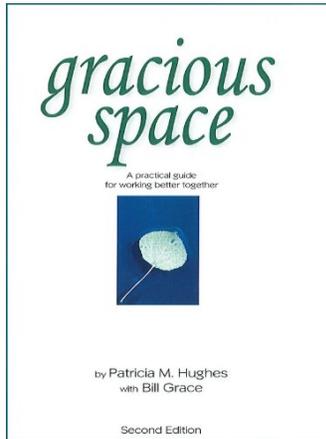
Avoid simple yes or no answers

Open and  
Clean  
Questions

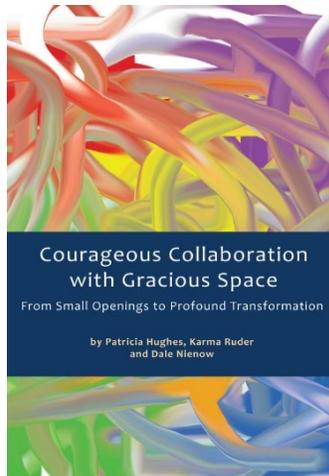


Allow people to take an opportunity to think and reflect on their answer

# Learn more about Gracious Space...



- ❖ Try this at home and in other groups
- ❖ Gracious Space [TEDx Talk](#)
- ❖ Gracious Space Train the Trainer course
- ❖ [www.trilliumleadership.com](http://www.trilliumleadership.com)



To learn more about the  
Community Conversation  
Toolkit watch:

Introducing the Community  
Conversation Toolkit Webinar

[https://www.fecinclusion.org/  
community-conversation-  
toolkit.html](https://www.fecinclusion.org/community-conversation-toolkit.html)



# [www.FECInclusion.org](http://www.FECInclusion.org)



Upcoming Events



Resources and Publications



Train the Trainer series

# Reflection

- One thing that resonated
- One thing I will do



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gracias  
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DANK U  
takki  
MERCI  
mercii  
danke schön  
KÖSZI  
PALDIES  
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