

# Accompanied Facilitator Guide:

## Live Follow-Up to Asynchronous *We Can Build Bridges*

This guide is intended to offer facilitators some ideas for bringing learners together AFTER they have asynchronously completed the online course [Part 1: We Can Build Bridges](#).

**Suggested Time:** 2 hours

**Format:** Synchronous (Live); In-person or virtual

### **Facilitator Prework/Preparation:**

- Complete the asynchronous *We Can Build Bridges* course on your own, to get familiar with the content and to prepare yourself to review its key concepts.
- Think through any group norms you would like to introduce to the group for the purposes of constructive conversation and engagement. For more guidance, check out [this article](#).
- Print out enough copies for every participant of the “Your Ethic of Bridgebuilding” worksheet found at the end of this guide. Familiarize yourself with the worksheet; there is also an example completed version at the end of this guide.
- As desired, look through the [slides](#) and [agenda](#) for the synchronous version of *We Can Build Bridges* for any visuals or reminders you may want to bring into the conversation.

### **Opening (20 mins)**

Welcome everyone to the space, introduce yourself as facilitator, and share the agenda for the day. As a whole group, or in smaller groups, ask participants to share the following:

- Name and any other relevant information (e.g. location, role, pronouns, etc.).
- What’s something that stood out to you from the online course *We Can Build Bridges*?

Establish or share any group norms you would like participants to agree to and practice during this session. Pause for questions or any additions participants may wish to make. Ask for a round of thumbs up or head nods to see if everyone feels willing to try and embody these norms.

**Facilitator Note:** If anyone indicates they are not willing, ask if they can share a bit about which parts, specifically, they are not ready to embody. In general, it’s important to remind participants that these are intentions, and even with a commitment and interest in embodying them, we will all stumble, or have moments where we cannot show up in the ways we hope to. That’s okay! The most successful bridgebuilding begins with participants feeling connected to their own desire and agency to [practice](#) these skills. Nobody should be under duress or feel as if

they are forced into conversation today if they are not ready. It's always alright to slow down and come back to the norms and our purpose for being in conversation today: learning about the goals and possibilities for bridgebuilding.

## Review (20 mins)

Thank everyone for sharing with each other. While some folks may have shared the following already, the key concepts to review are below. You can show slide #4 and slide #9 from the deck to walk through each big idea. Consider asking for volunteers to explain each component and be prepared to share your own or other examples of bridgebuilding as needed. (Check out <https://teamupproject.org/> for more examples of bridgebuilding).

After you review each concept, give participants time to discuss a few questions in smaller groups or pairs.

- 1) The Goals of Bridgebuilding (slide #4):** Bridgebuilders engage across difference in ways that respect others' identities, foster mutually inspiring relationships, and promote cooperation in service of the common good.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- How do you personally try to show respect to other people and their ideas? How have others shown respect for you or your ideas?
- Share about someone with whom you have a positive relationship who has a different identity or worldview than you. What about them or how they show up in the world inspires you?
- Share about a time you worked with people who were different from you to accomplish a goal or address a challenge. Consider work, family, friends, classes, or teams to which you belong.

- 2) From Diversity to Pluralism (slide #9):** Bridgebuilding requires more than a diverse group of people working together. A diverse group of individuals can work side-by-side without ever engaging their diversity. They might not learn about each other's different identities (and thus never have the opportunity to respect them), they might not build relationships that are mutually inspiring, and they might not learn about the values and beliefs that motivate each of them. When we positively engage our differences, we create a social good: pluralism.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- Where in your life have you experienced diversity?
- Where have you experienced pluralism?

As time allows, ask for a few participants to share takeaways or lingering questions from their conversations.

## Personal Motivations for Bridgebuilding (45 mins)

### *Your Ethic of Bridgebuilding (15 mins)*

**Share:** “Now that we have reviewed the basic goals of bridgebuilding, we will reflect on our own motivations to begin or deepen relationships across difference and explore any connections between our desires to build bridges and our religious, moral, or ethical worldviews.”

To begin, I’ll ask you to consider what from your religious, moral, or ethical worldview motivates you to be a bridgebuilder. Our worldviews can often inform and strengthen our motivation and commitment to build respect, mutually inspiring relationships, and cooperation across difference. Let’s do some work to define our own, personal “ethic of bridgebuilding,” that is, the deeper ways in which our particular worldviews call us to build bridges.”

First, ask participants to take a minute and jot down a few “traditions” with which they identify. **It’s important to note that in this context the term “tradition” is broad. We all belong to multiple traditions. These could be religious or nonreligious—like Christianity, Islam, Secular Humanism, etc.—or they could be other cultural patterns with which you identify: your family, where you come from, etc.**

Share an example of some of your own “traditions.” You might be someone who identifies with a Mexican American tradition, Catholicism, being from Chicago, and the traditions of your own family.

Next, after participants have jotted down a few of their traditions, hand them the **Your Ethic of Bridgebuilding** worksheet and ask them to fill in the traditions they just identified in the left-most column.

Then, looking at the columns to the right, participants should consider how texts, verses, values, important figures, historical moments, customs, writing, or art from those traditions motivates them to build bridges. There is no need to fill out every square. The grid is simply a reflection device. If it doesn’t work for some folks, they don’t need to use it. (There’s an example of a completed worksheet at the bottom of this document).

**Facilitator Note:** If it’s helpful, you can also share copies of the Texts on the Shared Value of Bridgebuilding [handout](#) to prompt reflection.

After 5–10 minutes filling in the worksheet, explain that we’ll now spend time in small groups to share and learn about one another. Share that this is another opportunity to build bridges by respectfully listening to experiences or worldviews that may be different from our own.

### *Sharing What Calls You to Bridgebuilding (15 mins)*

**Share:** “Before we begin sharing, let me ask you a couple questions:

- When you’re in a conversation and you’re curious, what do you tend to do? [Likely answer: Ask questions]

- When you're in a conversation and you want to convince someone of something, what do you tend to do? [Likely answers: Share data, build a case, tell them what you think, etc.]"

**Share:** This is natural. The actions we take in a conversation tend to follow the goals in our heads. If we're curious and want to learn more, we naturally ask more questions. If we want to prove we're right or change someone's mind, then we naturally share a lot of information, but don't listen as well or ask as many questions. In today's conversations our goals are to learn, remain curious, and connect. Keeping these goals in mind is a part of bridgebuilding we'll practice now.

**Now, place folks in groups of 4–5. In these groups, ask everyone to:**

- Share about one or two influences from your traditions that call you to bridgebuilding. Who or what has shaped that aspect of your life or identity?

### ***Discussion: Your Experience with Bridgebuilding (15 mins)***

After everyone has had an opportunity to share, split participants into pairs. With their partners, they will discuss the following for around **15 minutes**. Encourage participants to ask questions of one another to explore their worldviews further.

- Share about a time you embodied your ethic of bridgebuilding—when you had the opportunity to respect, relate, cooperate.
- Which components of bridgebuilding feel the most challenging to you? Why?
- Which of the influences that you identified do you think will be most helpful to you in moments where bridgebuilding might feel hard?
- If you had a hard time identifying what calls you to bridgebuilding, what could you do to get clearer about your motivations?

### **Looking Ahead (30 mins)**

Now, participants will spend time brainstorming current opportunities to begin or deepen relationships across difference.

Ask everyone to spend a few minutes silently **journaling** on the following:

- Brainstorm a list of 3 places you visit most on a weekly basis outside of your home. For each of those places, try to identify a few people or communities with whom you do not regularly interact or with whom you may only exchange pleasantries.
- List anywhere else in your life you see the potential for bridgebuilding, even in small ways. *Consider your family, your community, your friends, your teams, etc.*

**Place participants in new pairs** and ask them to discuss the following for **5–10 minutes**:

- Where in your life do you encounter differences in identities or views?
- Why might you want to begin or deepen your engagement of those differences?
- What questions or curiosities do you have about bridgebuilding?

Bring everyone back together and ask each person (or a few people, as time allows) to share aloud—in five words or less—one place they would like to more intentionally build respect, a mutually inspiring relationship, or cooperation. This can be a simple or short response such as: “delivery person for my building,” “my aunt Susan,” or “the mosque in my neighborhood.”

### **Closing (5 mins)**

Thank everyone for their contributions. Share that bridgebuilding is an orientation towards what’s possible when people come together to explicitly cross lines of difference. Bridgebuilding is both a choice in any given moment and a lifelong process of continued learning. Today’s session focused on a vision for bridgebuilding—an important first step. Once we have a vision we can more intentionally learn the knowledge and practice the skills bridgebuilding requires.

You can close with an inspiring quote on bridgebuilding or the importance of crossing lines of difference. A few examples are below.

- “We all see it very differently...but that's okay. The risk of not taking this advice is you stay stuck in your own silos, and your own echo chamber, and you are never challenged to rise above the occasion. When you are willing to change your position, but don't compromise your principles, you open up a world of possibilities that you didn't know exist. This is why we do this—that we all have a part to play.” -Antong Lucky
- “[Potlucks] embody and celebrate pluralism. They rely on the contributions of a diverse community. If people don't bring an offering, the potluck doesn't exist. If everyone brings the same thing, the potluck is boring. And what a nightmare it would be if you brought your best dish to a potluck and you were met at the door with a giant machine that melted it into the same bland goo as everybody else's best dish. The whole point of a potluck is the diversity of dishes.” -Eboo Patel
- “The question that comes up a lot is, ‘Do I have to bridge with those people?’ The answer is you have to just answer that yourself, but wherever you stop bridging is where you stop growing.” -john a. powell
- “We can’t solve problems or build bridges from a distance. Only when we’re in relationship can we hear things we wouldn’t otherwise hear [and] be exposed to ideas and context we wouldn’t otherwise consider” -Rabbi Sharon Brous

## Your Ethic of Bridgebuilding

List a few of your identities in the left-most column. Then, consider what influences from those different identities or backgrounds call you to cross lines of difference. Jot notes about those influences in the columns to the right. There is no need to fill in every square. (In fact, it's highly unlikely that you will!) The grid is simply an aid for your reflection as you consider the question, ***What motivates me to build bridges?***

See the following or reverse side for an example.

List Your Identities Here	Central texts/verses and/or Influential Writings	Values	Important figures/role models	Historical moments or figures	Traditions or customs	Writing or art

Here's an example:

<b>List Your Identities Here</b>	<b>Central texts/verses And Writings</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>Important figures/role models</b>	<b>Historical moments or figures</b>	<b>Traditions or customs</b>	<b>Writing or art</b>
Mexican-American community			Dolores Huerta (bravery, doing what's right)			
Catholicism	"Do unto others as you would have done unto you"					
Chicago					Looking out for your neighbors	
My family		Generosity				