

## TRANSCRIPTION

**Robin J.:** Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here. Thank you for coming to today's *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*. My name is Robin Jackson, Products Lead, and I am also a Doctoral Research Assistant at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. I'm serving as your Host and Technical Director today. Today's *Virtual Roundtable* is entitled *Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations*. We are in the midst of a context and period of time, unlike any other in our lifetimes. We are living with a global pandemic that challenges every aspect of our lives. The population is profoundly polarized, inequality has deepened, and our country is unstable in many ways. How do we engage in constructive conversations that take on tough equity issues among people who are different from one another and identities and perspectives?

**Robin J.:** This *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable* will be facilitated by Equity Fellow, Dr. Sharon Radd and will—she will describe pitfalls and promising practices for connecting across differences. Next, tools for having difficult and inclusive conversations will be shared, and there will be an opportunity to practice with these tools. Finally, we will debrief and discuss how you can use these tools and processes to create inclusion and cohesion as you seek to increase equity in your school and community. Today, like I said, I am the co-host— I'm the— I'm the Host today and Technical Director, and I'm joined by my colleague Erin Sanborn who will be your Assistant Technical Director, who is also a Doctoral Research Assistant at the MAP Center. Take it away, Erin.

**Erin S.:** Hello, my name is Erin Sanborn and I'm a Doctoral Research Assistant here at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. I will be serving

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

as your Assistant Technical Director today. *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtables* are intended to be interactive. Participants are asked to interact in—interact in real time via our teleconferencing format. Also, to reduce noise, we ask that all participants mute their microphone when not speaking. Lastly, the video camera function had been turned on, thus if you have a webcam and you'd like to join, please feel free to do so by clicking the camera icon at the lower right corner of your screen. Please feel free to send me a chat message directly anytime throughout the session if you're having any kind of connectivity difficulties. Again, please don't forget to mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

**Erin S.:**

As we begin today's *Virtual Roundtable*, a note about access: please, we have all become more than familiar with working at home, so please make yourself comfortable during this time. Move about as you need to, take breaks as you need to, and we wanted to let you know that alt text is used on all slide images for the presentation.

**Robin J.:**

Thank you, Erin. One of our goals at the MAP Center is to engage participants in well-defined, content-rich technical assistance, such that knowledge and expertise are shared in a way that results in transformative systemic change, as well as personal reflection and growth. To this end, we aim to make this unique learning available on our website via recording and transcription. Additionally, sharing photos of today's conversation on our social media platforms. We encourage participants to consider this disclaimer as they share and engage today.

**Robin J.:**

During today's *Roundtable*, we align to the Four Commitments when discussing the topic. First, please stay engaged with the

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

conversation. Second, experience the discomfort you may feel. Third, speak your truth. And lastly, expect and accept non-closure. I am very pleased to introduce today's facilitator, Dr. Sharon Radd, you may call her Sharon.

### Robin J.:

Sharon is an Associate Professor and Program Director for the M.A. Organizational Leadership Program at Saint Catherine University. She is also a Principal Consultant with Sankalpa Consulting, partnering with education, public and non-profit organizations and leaders to foster effective and inclusive leadership. Prior to her current work, Sharon was a public-school administrator, professional development facilitator, and school social worker for 23 years. Her research centers on a unique practice of leadership that aims to advance social justice, particularly in the public and non-profit sectors. She explores this practice from the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical study of adult learning, organizational change, and discursive functioning of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies. Without further ado, welcome, Sharon. Sharon, you're muted.

### Sharon R.:

Thank you, Robin and everyone else. Thank you for the nice introduction. And I just want to say before I get started, how proud I am and grateful to be affiliated with the MAP Center and all the great work that they do, and grateful that you're all here today and connected to the MAP Center and able to learn together through the variety of offerings that they—that they share with you. Before we get started, I want to just take a moment to have all of us just take a deep breath. And so, if you would actually plant your feet flat on the floor, if you're able, try to be sort of equal footed if you can, and feel yourself in your seat and your body in an upright position to

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

the degree that you're able as well. Feeling your chest open to the degree that you're able. And just take a few deep, slow breaths. If you're feeling tired and you want to engage, I encourage you to count the inhale and have an equal inhale and exhale. So, inhale to the count of four and exhale to the count of four. If you're feeling kinda wired up and needing to calm down, I invite you to extend your exhale.

**Sharon R.:** So perhaps inhaling to the count of four, and exhaling to the count of six. And let's all just take three or four deep breaths in—in the way that we need them to come into the place and space that we're in today. And with that, I'll bring your attention back to the call. I know it's an unusual thing to all sit together here on a—on a call and—and—and take time just to breathe silently together. I also clearly remember my days in K-12 and particularly when I was in administration and some days feeling like my day, I was just a turnstile of one event to the next and didn't get a chance to pause. So, I hope that you found that pause to be helpful and life-giving for you today.

**Robin J.:** Sharon?

**Sharon R.:** Yes?

**Robin J.:** Would you mind going full screen with the presentation, please?

**Sharon R.:** I'm not sure what, why it's not. Let me just stop and start again with the screen sharing. Does that solve the problem?

**Robin J.:** No, I see your browser, not the presentation.

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

- Sharon R.:** Okay, just one more moment. I'm sorry, everyone. We did practice this before. Here we go. I think that solves it.
- Robin J.:** Yeah. That's better.
- Sharon R.:** Okay. Great. Okay. Thank you, Robin. So, if you would in the chat, before we get started, I'm really interested to hear why you chose this section, the session, and what you hope to gain for it. So, if you can take a few minutes to—or not even minutes, just a few seconds to think of your response to that. And if we could have you share that with me and with the other participants on the call, that would be great.
- Sharon R.:** And Robin, I'm having some difficulty with this as well, even though we practiced this as well. And I'm not actually able to see, I see someone has responded in the chat, but it's not popping up for me.
- Robin J.:** Yeah. I'll read a few.
- Sharon R.:** Thank you.
- Robin J.:** So, Ann says, "I'm always looking to gain more knowledge regarding equity and redressing conversations equity." Hillary says, "The topic is important, and I hope to gain some insight into my own role within my own district." Kate says, "I would like to learn important information to share with my parent educators. I value this information and would like to incorporate it into our mission." Flora says, "Always looking to hear more about what others are doing, that we can incorporate those ideas into the Equity

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota



**IUPUI**  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Council. Personal knowledge and skills, gaining strategies, supporting personal and professional goals.” Amy says, “Our district is leading equity work in a community that’s very divided. I’m hoping to gain insights and strategies that may help to move my work forward in a productive way.” So, it seems, folks are really interested in gaining something from this session that—that they can take back to their own spaces.

**Sharon R.:**

Right. And I'm hoping that you feel that we deliver on that promise. So, thank you everyone for sharing that. We're going to just, today, we're going to go quickly into some concepts, and then we're going to actually do practice. If that creates some anxiety for you, please know I'm going to give you a structure and opportunity to do it, but we're going to—we're going to put you in breakout rooms for some practice. And then we'll go ahead to a debrief and—and questions and answers.

**Sharon R.:**

So, remember that this is not a "sit and get." We're here to participate and share with one another. So in order to do that, I'm going to ask you to disconnect from your electronics to the degree that you can. I know that we're all—many of us are at home and trying to work, and we've got a lot of pressures on us today. But to the degree that you can, give yourself the gift to disconnect from your electronics but do keep your phone handy for photos.

**Sharon R.:**

Get engaged and tune-in with your whole self. And then really spend the time to contemplate and reflect as you share that you were interested in getting in touch with, really some techniques that you can use to build—build relationships and—and strengthen conversations across differences. It really starts with personalizing the material, so doing that. And then taking

the opportunity to build authentic connections. When we go on into the breakout rooms, you will have the opportunity to really talk with someone in an authentic manner, and we encourage you to do that.

**Sharon R.:**

So, what could possibly go wrong when we're talking about differences? And I've had the opportunity to study this topic both from an identity and cultural perspective, so across race differences and across cultural differences, and also, from sort of a more traditional perspective of thinking about just in general inter-personal conflict. And I've been able to bring some of that material together, and I want to share it with you today because there's actually a lot of pitfalls that we can encounter as we're—as we're talking across differences.

**Sharon R.:**

So, I've identified here eight categories, and I'm just going to go through these quickly. Each one could have a good amount of literature written about it. But I'm going to give you just some—some quick nuggets for you to be thinking about, about how things could go wrong for you if you were to be engaged in a conversation across differences that how—how it could quickly go wrong for you.

**Sharon R.:**

So, the first one is really about moral conviction. And I think this is particularly relevant for us as we're thinking about equity, social justice, racial justice. And what we know, and this is a researcher by the name of Skitka who is studying how our brain reacts in...particularly in relationship to moral certainty. And she's found that, Linda Skitka has found that when we have strong moral convictions, we are more likely to vote, we're more willing to volunteer, we're more politically engaged, we're more likely to get involved, right? And—but, we also can become rigid,

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

intolerant and closed to compromise. And we also can become closed and resistant to facts that do not support our opinion. So, we start to operate in this sort of tunnel in our head when we feel that we are sort of on the right side of an issue. And we're—we're unwilling really to kind of consider any information that would conflict with our position on that.

### Sharon R.:

The second way that things can start to go wrong is when we fail to distinguish between different types of information. So, I've got a list here of some ways that we confuse information, and I'm going to start by talking about the difference between thoughts and feelings. I think in the United States, the dominant narrative is that feelings are something that are irrational, that we should not pay attention to, that they're not professional, they don't belong in the workplace, that we need to control our feelings. And so, we don't really often have a lot of tools for even identifying our feelings, or how they might be driving our thoughts or our behaviors, and then we have a tendency to—to confuse our thoughts with our feelings. And so really distinguishing those apart, right? We can have a reaction to something, "I feel uncomfortable about that," etc. And to get clear about what our cognition is about that, what do we think? And see both the connections and the differences between those two things.

### Sharon R.:

Another way that we confuse types of information is that we confuse facts with opinions. And this happens so often, and we so often hear and perhaps we do it ourselves, we state opinions as if they're facts. You hear things like, well, "Anyone can see that," right? Or "of course it is—it is such and such." And I'll—I'll just give this really kind of basic example of a distinction.



**Sharon R.:**

If you walk into a classroom, for example, and it has—it has, you know, it— it has chairs such that they fill up the whole classroom, right? That there's really not much room to move around that classroom. Your opinion and your conclusion about that maybe that it's crowded. The fact is that there are X number of chairs in the room, and depending upon your perspective and your experiences and the sorts of things that you've had access to and not had access to in the past, you make and make a judgment about whether or not that room is crowded or if there's, you know, you may be focusing instead on whether or not there's enough furniture in the room. And so, this—this tendency that we have to confuse facts with opinions can really get in our way when we're talking across differences. And it helps us if we can clarify between the two.

**Sharon R.:**

The next is something that we've seen quite a lot of lately, the confusion of fact or I'm sorry, with the truth with fiction. And, you know, there has been this saying, particularly it's even become more prominent in last year and a half that if you repeat it enough, maybe people will start to believe that it's true. But we have gotten into a space, particularly right now and in our time and in our—in the dominant in the—in the mass media where there's, there has been a lot of confusion over what's truth and what's fiction. And a lack of will often to sort of sort through the two, and often presenting fiction as if it's fact. But at the same time, when we want to connect effectively across differences, we really have to be discerning the difference between truth and fiction.

**Sharon R.:**

And the last type, the distinction between types of information that I want to make is the distinction between our personal experience and our trend data. And my coauthors and I wrote about this in the book *Five Practices for*

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

*Equity Focused School Leadership*, but how often, when we have a personal experience that may, if that can—contradicts trend data, we tend—we have a tendency to negate the trend data. So, by trend data, I mean, you know, sort of the—the mass statistics. For example, the idea that we know on nearly, if not all, measures of social well-being, that white people fare better than people of Color, and that is the manifestation of racism. So, if we know that trend data, if we know that overwhelmingly white people tend to have higher rates of home ownership, or they tend to have higher income and higher levels of wealth, that—that trend data is, is hard fact, right, and—and data. But we may have people who have personal experiences that contradict that data. So perhaps in a pair of cross-racial people, the person of Color might have a personal income or personal wealth that is greater than the white person. And that also is true in that circumstance.

### Sharon R.:

We often confuse these two things. We often can confuse personal experience with trend data. And what's important to realize, in this situation, is that both can be true, and neither negates the other. So that if a personal experience contradicts the trend data, both are still true, right? But the personal experience doesn't negate the trend data and the trend data doesn't negate that individual's personal experience. The important thing to realize about all of these distinctions between types of information is that each form of information has a value in our life, even truth and fiction. They all have values in our life, but we need to see each for what they are, and not represent one as if it's the other.

### Sharon R.:

The next sort of pitfall or thing that could go wrong, I want to just speak to briefly, is unclear purpose. Often, we lose sight of why we entered a

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

conversation, if we ever really thought about it at all. And in that way, we can really quite easily get hooked in having a disagreement. And then in trying to prove our rightness, and we lose sight of what we were attempting to do. And I'm going to come back to that idea about proving our rightness in just a moment. Actually, I'm just going to skip to that. It's in the middle of—of the next line, but this need to be right. Researchers, in particular neuroscientists, have found that our brain reacts to feeling like someone is trying to prove us wrong. So, in other words, if we perceive that somebody is trying to prove—prove us wrong, or if they're trying to prove themselves right in a way that implies that we are wrong, that our brain reacts to that in the same way as if we were feeling physical pain.

**Sharon R.:**

So, we have a high level of reactivity to an attachment to being right. And we can actually feel the—a need to protect ourselves from pain if we feel that somebody is trying to prove us wrong, or to prove themselves right and prove ourselves wrong—prove us wrong in the process. So that is part of why the unclear purpose, we easily get hooked into this, proving our need to be right, or proving our rightness, right?

**Sharon R.:**

I'm now going to talk about, go back to this other box to talk about race. This idea that race is in everything, and it's highly contested and it's laced with power differentials. We know from Critical Race Theory that white people tend not to see race, not to acknowledge race and not—not to want to acknowledge the significance of race. And yet, we are a highly racialized society in the United States. And we come to a situation from our racialized perspective. And if we have not, particularly for white people, we've not taken the time to really think through how our lens influences the way we see things, then we'll have a tendency to negate

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota



IUPUI  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

other viewpoints. And I'm particularly speaking to white folks like me who are on the call right now to really examine our own struggle to talk about race, and as well as our—the privilege that we experience. Because our existence and our privilege has been rooted in denying that racism exists, and that we benefit from it. So, when whites do talk about race and racism accurately, other whites may censor them for not being “good whites.”

**Sharon R.:**

That's—that's another way that this can be a pitfall. But in particular, when you're having a cross-racial conversation, when—when—when whites are particularly seen from their own perspective, right? And not able to see the perspective of a person of Color not agreeing with it that may— and in fact, often denying that, which the research shows us this is often what happens, that can really become a pitfall. So really thinking about the role and presence of whiteness and race in any conversation, and thinking about the perspective from which we come. If we're coming from a privileged identity, and conversations with someone who has a marginalized identity in that same— in that same identity category, then we really, particularly for coming from a privileged identity, we really need to be thinking about listening and seeking to understand because it's—it's quite likely based upon our—our experiences of privilege and our—our neuropsychology that we're more likely to want to prove, again, our rightness in that situation, which would really negate an opportunity to learn about—more and increase our racial consciousness.

**Sharon R.:**

All right, now I'm going to go to that box on the end of the second row, which is about confusing cognitive conflict with affect or interpersonal conflict. And this comes out of Michael Roberto's work and his study of leaders in a book that he wrote titled *Why Great Leaders Don't Take Yes*

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

*for an Answer.* It's a fabulous book. He makes the distinction—he makes—he speaks to the value of conflict, how important conflict is for high-functioning organizations, and in particular, for really high-quality decisions. But he makes the distinction between cognitive conflict, which has different viewpoints and ways of seeing things and perspectives, and affective or interpersonal conflict.

**Sharon R.:**

So, if we think about interpersonal conflict, as the stakes are being high, the stakes are high, there's high emotion and it feels like it's personal, it's potentially— potentially like an indictment of ourselves or something that we may have done, that's when we fallen into interpersonal conflict. We often, when we're having cognitive conflict, we see things differently. We have a tendency as human beings to fall into this belief that we're actually experiencing interpersonal conflict. Organizations in the United States in general, have not really developed what I would call conflict competence: the ability to surface multiple perspectives, and then engage with those multiple perspectives in order to understand a problem, and to design a solution to that problem, collaboratively. And that stems from sort of the tendency in the United States to have more hierarchically-run organizations, and so we've had this difficulty with not developing conflict—conflict competence in our organizations, and therefore, quickly concluding that any cognitive conflict is interpersonal conflict. But we want to continue to try to distinguish between the two, and recognize the value of seeing things from different perspectives.

**Sharon R.:**

The last two items here are really pretty quick. The first is that we make autobiographical assumptions all the time. This idea that we don't see the world as it is, we see the world as we are. And so we have this tendency,

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

very quickly, to make an assumption that something is going to go the way that we think it should go because that's how we're informed from our experience, and we don't listen carefully to really sort of what actually happened.

**Sharon R.:**

And the last item here, something that the marketing profession has learned very well, is that facts are not the most important thing in how we make sense of situations. This is a sad realization for many people when we realize this, and particularly when we're doing equity work, we think, “why can't we just present the facts, and that will help everybody to know what's really going on here better.” But what we know instead is that both our autobiographical assumptions, stories, and emotions are all really quite compelling and they—they highly influence how we see things. And so, and they stick with us better and longer than facts, and then in that way they have a tendency to inform how we see things, our perspectives, and our opinions. So rather than taking in facts, we are compelled to see a situation and perspectives from— from a more emotional or anecdotal standpoint. This especially becomes true when we start to talk about race.

**Sharon R.:**

So with all of that, I know that was a big information download. I'm glad this is being recorded so you can come back and re-listen to those things again if you have an interest to. It's time for us to practice. And so, as we start to practice, I'm going to put you into pairs and I actually need to check with Robin or Erin to see if I should do that or if you should— if you can do that. But it's going to be a random sort. You're going to go into pairs. Don't drop off the call. This is actually going to be really comfortable and engaging conversation for you, but I want to give you some tips that— that will be helpful for you as you do this.

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

### Sharon R.:

So...if when you're in the role of listener here, first of all, remember your goal, remember we talked about when we lacked clarity of purpose, your goal here is to connect and to learn. So listen carefully to the other person curiously and actively. Think about taking a risk to ask a probing question, to go deeper. Focus on understanding the other person's perspective and what they're trying to tell you. Go deeper than usual. Often—I'm up in Minneapolis and you've probably heard recently with the attention on this idea of “Minnesota nice,” which is actually about keeping things polite and on the surface, but— and friendly but not really going deep, but really think about going deeper and finding out what really matters. And then don't be afraid to follow up on comments or mentions of something that might seem like it's hard. If somebody brings it up, they've put it on the table, and they may be interested in commenting about it further.

### Sharon R.:

When you're in the role of speaker, remember your goal is to share your story and your perspective without trying to convince the other person. Then, step into trust. Think about opening up a little bit more than you might otherwise do so. Taking risks and expressing what really matters to you. Try to understand yourself better, and in doing so, you can also help the other person understand you. And then last, don't be afraid to go deeper than normal. If it's close to your story, your heart, or your head, consider sharing information.

### Sharon R.:

So, you might be wondering, “what are we going to be talking about?” I'm going get to that in just a moment, but I want to share...actually I'm going to go back one second. I'm just going to give you an opportunity to take a photo of this slide if you wanted to do that with your phone, 'cause this has

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

a lot of information on it. And I can see Robert and Tracy, and watching their timing, both of them. Tracy, Robert was right on it, and Tracy had to pick up her camera, and I can see they've got their photos. So, I'm going to go on to the next slide now and encourage you to take a photo of this slide as well. So, these are inquiry questions. When you're in the listener role, or when you're thinking about having a conversation with someone across differences, you can use these inquiry questions as prompts.

**Sharon R.:**

At first, they may feel uncomfortable to you, but I really encourage you in this particular dialogue to if— when you're in the role of listening, and you're going to be asking a probe, to actually to try to ask your question with one of these questions, alright? So, try to probe with the other person by using one of these questions. It feels really awkward at first, and I'm not going to deny that. But you'll—if—if you do discipline yourself to use one of these, and challenge yourself to use probe...these prompts to ask a question, you'll see the difference in the quality of the conversation that you have, and the information that you can learn from the other person by kind of sticking to an inquiry question of this sort. So hopefully you all got a chance to take a photo of this slide as well. And then here's what we're going to do and the pairs. The first round, what you're going to do, there's four rounds here and again, take a picture of this because you'll need this slide more than any of them when you get into your pairs.

**Sharon R.:**

The first round is you're going to get into your pairs and each person will introduce themselves. And I want to encourage you to introduce yourself not so much about the role that you play professionally, but your name, where you're located, and think about what aspects of your identity you can share with one another. So for me, I often share my name, I am



## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

here in Minneapolis, and identify female, and I use she her pronouns, and it's really important for me when I'm introducing myself that I identify myself as a white female. And I think that's an important aspect of my identity and how I see things. So think about as you're introducing yourself, what aspects of your identity you might share with the other person.

**Sharon R.:**

And then you're going to decide who's going to speak first, who's going to be the first listener, and how you're going to keep time. And I encourage that somebody just agree to, on your phone, set the timer for these time limits. Then you're going to go into your sharing. And the first speaker is going to share what's hardest for you in conversing across differences, focusing on yourself and what you think and feel.

**Sharon R.:**

And the listener is just going to ask questions. So that whole first— first round is going to be focused on the speaker number one. And again, when you're in the listener role, I want to really want to encourage you to use those inquiry questions, prompts, and to avoid commenting, or asking, or doing what we call “autobiographical listening.” Which is when you say, “Oh, that's just like the time when I..” or “oh I've had that experience when I...” right? But actually, seek to learn more about the other person rather than sharing your own perspective at this point.

**Sharon R.:**

Then you're going to switch roles and then we're going to go into round four and you're just going to exchange your reactions to this process, then returning to the larger group. So, what I'm going to ask is that we're going to, we're going to try to shorten this so that it is 15 minutes in length. So, your introductions are actually going to be more like two minutes, each

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

round is going to be like four minutes, and your debrief and round four is going to be three minutes. Alright? And then we'll bring you back into the large group and we'll debrief the experience.

**Sharon R.:** So people should be populating back in here, and you all can respond to these questions as you're coming back.

**Robin J.:** And feel free, everyone, to either type your responses or reflections in the chat, or you can unmute your microphone and share them verbally.

**Chris B.:** Hi everyone. My name is Chris. I would just like to say— and I'm going to say Dr. Flora, because I know she said her last name, but I don't wanna— I don't wanna say it wrong. But yeah, it was just the—when I left from speaking with her, as you probably saw, all I could say it was “wow,” because, you know, being a Black male trying to— trying to have conversations about race, um I mean, I've—I've lived it all my life. So the way that I navigate having conversations, and I'm assuming this, probably is a little different than maybe some of my some of my white counterparts. Specifically in what I— what I learned from talking with Dr. Flora is, even— even understanding and being conscious that there's a difference between my white male counterparts, versus my white female counterparts.

**Chris B.:** Because what I've just learned from her is that, you know, she's—she's running up against a lot of opposition in trying to do a lot of equity work. And it was—it was interesting because before she even said it, when she told me who she was having conversations with, and what she was trying to do, I immediately thought, “wow, she's going to run into some, some serious opposition.” And I was thinking because she was female. And she—

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

she validated that with some things that she said. So, I kinda look at the way that I have to approach many conversations very much the same as the way she might have to go at conversations as well. So it was a validating conversation, and I truly appreciated it.

**Sharon R.:** Thank you.

**Robin J.:** We have some other commentary in the chat. Let's see where to start. Kate says, "It's so nice to talk with someone else who has endured similar experiences." Tracy says she "really appreciated the opportunity here to commiserate." Robert says, "It was a smooth transition to getting to know someone in a short amount of time." Dr. Flora, "You were great Chris." So, the feeling was mutual. Anne says, "Having inquiry-based questions help me listen to— learn—to learn, versus listening to agree or disagree." So yeah, great, great exercise in a short amount of time that we had, Sharon.

**Sharon R.:** So, I want to just check into...with anybody to see if—if anybody had the experience of where you were struggling with...and maybe both of you have the same perspective on something, but talking about how—how difficult and quickly challenging it can be to be in conversation with someone who has a difficult...or a different perspective. Did anybody—I can see a lot of you, and thank you for having your cameras on, did anybody have that as part of your conversation? That often—often comes up. Thank you, Robert. In this—in this situation. And—and one of the things I want you to think about, and I'm going to go to the next slide here.

**Sharon R.:** One of the things I want you to think about is those ideas of how we can, you know, our own moral conviction, our own need to influence and

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota



IUPUI  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

perhaps change other people's minds, and—and how we can get entrenched in trying to change somebody else's mind, rather than trying to get to know them. And I'm not suggesting that— that there is an endless learning that needs to be done when we're working for equity. But I am—but I do want to hold up there that, I think, you know, we all know that learning is fundamentally relational. And that we learn in relationships. And that we're often resistant to, for example, you know, we've, I'll give, I'm just going to give a really neutral example so you can see the power of it, and then I'm going to give you an equity example. But you—so we have a new dog. We've never had a dog before. And the, it's interesting, right? The people in public that'll tell us how we should be interacting with our dog— and—and that sometimes like I don't agree with them, right? And I'm like, “you don't even know me. You don't know my situation. Why are you— why are you thinking you can tell me what we should be doing?”

### Sharon R.:

So, let's translate that then to something that's significant and, and really go both global and, and complex as equity work. And when we're trying to help others learn, if we don't take the time to get to know them and why we...why they see things the way they do, and to hear their story, and to honor the validity of their story, whatever that may be. And even if it contradicts trend data, we—we will struggle to—to have an impact with them. And so really, as equity-focused leaders, whatever our position is, whether you're in a formal positional—position of leadership or you're engaged in equity work as a— as a leader who really cares about it from any perspective, we really need to think about building relationships and getting to know people. And it's in that exchange of information.

**Sharon R.:**

So, Stephen Covey said, "Seek first to understand and then to be understood." And being clear about our perspectives. Sometimes we do feel like the most important thing is we need to set a boundary or, or make sure that—that that we're clear about where we stand. And then that's the clarity of our purpose. And we do that. And it may or may not be about changing somebody else's mind. But if we—but so the point is to clarify for ourselves, and that's the first here, clarify for ourselves our purpose and our priority. And if it's about helping other people learn, then we really need to think about...and potentially seeing things differently, then we really need to think about building relationships with them.

**Sharon R.:**

The next one is to use tone with intention. So really thinking about how our tone—what our tone conveys, and to the degree that we can, always communicating with the tone of support, and empathy, and understanding. We are all always going to need to learn more about equity. That's my belief. And—and so, you know, we may know more about something, but that doesn't make us better than somebody else. And so, we really want to use a tone that upholds the humanity of other people.

**Sharon R.:**

Then the last one is to notice and pause when you get hooked. And this is a tough one, right? Because when we get hooked, suddenly our brain kinda shuts down. But notice and pause when you get hooked so that you can—so that you can just re-engage, take a deep breath and re-engage. And we are getting near the end of our time. And I was supposed to turn it back over to Robin and Erin two minutes ago. So that was what I wanted to share with you today and I will—I will turn it over to them.

**Robin J.:**

It was that panic moment. I was like, "where's my unmute button?" Thank you, Dr. Radd. I wanted to quickly, before we do our customary close outs, I

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

wanted to first of all, where is—I lost everyone on the— where'd you go? Are you still there?

**Sharon R.:** We're all here.

**Robin J.:** You are here. I couldn't find—listen when you try to share your screen and you lose all the functionality of Zoom. Can you all see my screen? Yeah. great. So, do you want to quickly talk about your book that just came out, Dr. Radd?

**Sharon R.:** Oh, yeah. So, this is a book we're really excited about it. It's called the *Five Practices for Equity Focused School Leadership*. It's published by ASCD, published February 2021, so just two months ago. And we're really excited about it. It's a process book. It's a book for teams to do together. It explores identity. It makes the link between individual identities and inequities in schools. And really then, talks about how you lead and makes to systems change...and systems-wide change in a repetitive cycle, that can, you know, that you can perpetuate over time to continue to improve your—your district's performance on equity measures. Thanks Robin.

**Robin J.:** Thank you.

**Sharon R.:** It is on backorder for the first print already sold out. We're excited about that.

**Robin J.:** So, if you all want to whip out your camera one more time to catch this information. If you want to contact Sharon, or, you know, to thank her, or if you want to want to talk to her about her consulting, this is her contact

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

information. And we'll also provide that sometime after the presentation as well.

**Erin S.:**

Yeah, so, we want to thank you again— I just put some...several links in the chat for your reference. So, we want to thank each of you again for participating in today's *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable: Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations*. We want to also provide a special thanks to Dr. Radd for taking the time to be with us today to share her expertise and insight. Thank you, Dr. Radd. In addition, we would like to highlight two resources located on our website, both led by Dr. Radd. The first is a brief entitled *Avoiding the Traps: Identity and Disrupting Six Paradoxical Habits of Equity Leadership*. In this brief—in this brief, Dr. Radd introduces six paradoxical habits of—of equity leadership, describing and providing examples of practices that are common in equity leadership, yet ultimately re-entrench systemic inequities. Included are key questions to disrupt these habit in practice and in organizations.

**Erin S.:**

The second is a podcast entitled *Developing Critical Consciousness through Professional Learning*. This podcast talks about the importance of critical consciousness for transformative professional learning. Lastly, we want to encourage you to visit our website for tools and resources in our Equity Resources Library, such as quarterly *Equity Dispatches* and *Digest* publications, our *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*, and our *Equity Tools*. You can access all materials on our website, as well and stay abreast of upcoming events via our Calendar of Events. And then I'm going to again, drop in a second, a couple other links into the chat. Thank you for bearing with me.

## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota

- Erin S.:** Okay, so we want to also highlight and ask you to check out our dedicated webpage with special guest and episode information at the *Antiracism Vodcast Series*. This specific episode that we're featuring, featured guests— guest speakers, Perry Wilkinson and education, M.ED Education Equity and I'm sorry, let me back up. This episode will discuss the importance of anti-racist practices in schools, particularly for school communities to advocate safe and inclusive learning environments for students, students of Color, and students who possess the racial ethnic identities of Black/African American, and Asian American.
- Erin S.:** Again, I also put in the chat, please, for any resources, please, check out our website. Also, follow us on Facebook at Great Lakes Equity Center and on Twitter at @GreatLakesEAC
- Robin J.:** Thank you, Erin. And lastly, we want to feature two resources that were published by the U.S. Department of Education for COVID-19. Volume One is called *Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools*. And Volume Two is called a *Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs*. We encourage you to check them out in order to keep your students safe. And again, these guidelines are updated as new information comes out from the CDC.
- Robin J.:** Finally, as Erin already said, please follow us on all of our social media. At Great Lakes Equity Center on Facebook and on Twitter @GreatLakesEAC. And if you feel so inclined, answer the question, "how are you going to apply what you learned today?" using the #MAPEquity. And last but not least, Erin has shared our PSQ link I'm sure just now, and she also shared it a few other times. We actually use your feedback from these





## Connecting Across Differences: Tools and Approaches for Important Conversations

*EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – Equity Fellow – Minnesota



IUPUI  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

presentations to be sure that we are being responsive to what you all want and need. So please take a moment to fill out that PSQ link for us. And once again, thank you, Dr. Sharon Radd. And everyone who joined us today.

**Sharon R.:** Thank you for joining everyone. It was great to see you all. Best wishes.

**Erin S.:** Thank you.

[End of Audio]

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 