Thanks for being a conversation cafe facilitator! You will be making an important contribution to our network gathering.

You have been asked to facilitate a particular conversation because you have expertise in that area. However, we are NOT asking you to lecture the group on the topic. Rather, we want you to use your expertise to introduce the topic of conversation, and then, after the cafes are over, to use your expertise to provide a context for the conversations you heard and participated in. You can answer questions as they come up, but don’t go on and on or limit possibilities because you have heard it all are before, tried it before and watched it fail (we see, you our beloved jaded journalists).

How the morning will work:

9:35 Dyan Ruiz will explain what a conversation cafe is: look it up:

[What is Conversation Cafe?](http://www.conversationcafe.org/wp-content/docsPDF/docHostCompleteManual.pdf) ([Here’s another good CC reference](http://www.liberatingstructures.com/17-conversation-cafe/))

[Dyan’s notes](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ll5RNxqbBg58goUJU811Njw9LHLBVGOARE9S5zdXKfg/edit?usp=sharing)

9:45 You will be asked to say, in just a few sentences (less than 2 minutes) what your conversation will be about. Here is where your expertise comes in. We need you to describe the root cause your conversation is addressing. You may want to tell a short story or give an example.

Focus question: How do you envision the Media Consortium transforming these root causes in the area of the theme you are focused on?

10:00 Go to your “circle”

1. Ask people in the circle to read these agreements out loud (you will have a sheet of paper with the agreements listed):

**Open-mindedness:** listen to and respect all points of view. Conversation isn’t just talking. It’s talking and listening. In fact, you’ll be listening more than you are talking! By focusing on listening, you may also benefit from the variety of ideas in this circle.

**Acceptance:** suspend judgment as best you can. We all judge one another, but do your best not to. Doing so will enable you to hear new things from others. It also helps everyone feel safer if they think others are trying to not judge them! There will be a process later in the day for prioritizing the ideas we generate.

**Curiosity:** seek to understand rather than persuade. We’re not here to convince others that we are right and they are wrong. If someone expresses a point of view that seems different from yours, see if you can ask some questions to gain clarity or understanding.

**Discovery:** question assumptions, look for new insights. Conversation Café dialogues aren’t polite conversation—they are designed to expose us to new ideas or possibly even see old ideas in a new way. Insight—seeing more deeply into a topic—can come if we watch for it.

**Brevity:** go for honesty and depth but don’t go on and on. Honesty and depth are important to a good conversation, but so is giving everyone a chance to speak. People are polite. They may not stop you if you go on and on. But you can stop yourself. Try to stay under a couple of minutes.

**Move up, Move back:** If you are someone who talks a lot, make an extra effort to listen first. If you tend to talk less, we encourage you to push yourself to contribute. Please keep in mind your social location and privilege in relation to how much of the group time you take.

2) Ask everyone to raise their hands, say yes, or nod their agreement

3) Hand out post-its. Say this to constituents:

If you get an idea during this conversation or a way to put an idea into action, write it down. We will ask you to put those post-its up on the wall. You can do that either during the conversation cafe or during a break.

4) Go around the circle once, inviting each person to say their name and speak to what brought them to the conversation and briefly mention what is on their heart and mind regarding the theme (people can pass if they like). Remarks should be succinct (perhaps 1 minute each, 2 at most) to allow time for everyone to speak. Remind people that it’s not necessary for their comments to relate to the previous ones. You can go first and model the depth and brevity of the desired response. Remind people, no cross talk at this point if they begin to respond or ask questions (unless it’s just to repeat something they couldn’t hear).

5) After the first round, let people talk as they will. You may need to remind people not to argue and not to speak too long (no more than 2 minutes at a time). Throughout the conversation, encourage people who haven’t spoken much to contribute. Encouraging healthy conversation dynamics is a key part of your role. Your job during the cafe is to be more of a reporter or interviewer--an observer and listener--than an expert.

6) Take notes because we will want a report back from you. Notes should be at a level of detail that you will need to summarize both conversation rounds in 5 minutes. So include main themes, but doesn’t need to have every conversational point since participants will be writing their ideas on post its (see #3 above).

7) If someone in your circle has an idea for another cafe they would like to facilitate for the second round, encourage them to get up and talk to Dyan or Tim.

10:40 Let people know the cafe is coming to an end, and ask to go around the circle for one more round of reflections. Remind everyone to write ideas and actions on post-its and put them up on the wall.

**10:45 First round ends.**

Dyan will announce the next round of conversation cafes.

**11:00 Next round begins.** If no one comes to your cafe, that is fine! Move to another cafe! Otherwise, start from #3 with a reminder about the agreements.

11:40 Let people know the cafe is coming to an end, and ask to go around the circle for one more round of reflections. Remind everyone to write ideas and actions on post-its and put them up on the wall.

**11:45 Report-Backs Begin**

Gather your thoughts and plan to speak for 5 minutes. What did you hear during the conversations that, as an expert, struck you as particularly new, invigorating, exciting, interesting? Were there ideas for moving from root causes to solutions? Next steps? Provide some context for what you heard.