



## **The Network for Peace through Dialogue Why Dialogue? (and when, and how, and where?)**

### **Sustained Dialogue:**

**“It’s not just talk . . . it’s a social movement” | The International Institute for Sustained Dialogue**

[The International Institute for Sustained Dialogue](#) has its roots in 1999, when a group of students began using a unique process called Sustained Dialogue to proactively improve race relations on college campuses. A network of Sustained Dialogue practitioners has since formed, connecting students at over a dozen colleges, universities, and high schools. The Sustained Dialogue Campus Network (SDCN) represents a budding social movement of passionate students, deeply engaged in changing the dynamics of their communities. This workshop taught the theory behind Sustained Dialogue, and how to create a safe space to address divisive issues, like race relations, that are often taboo in social settings. In this space, participants learn from one another and are changed by the experiences they share so that they truly can begin to understand the problems that face their communities and what power they have, as a group of individuals, to address them.

The session was led by Tessa Garcia and Christina Kelleher, the Program Directors for the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, responsible for training student moderators and developing Sustained Dialogue programs at colleges and high schools across the country.

Below are one participant's notes on this workshop:

- 25 participants
- The presenters, Tessa and Christina started with groups of 5.
- Did an exercise of "I am"
- I am Chinese, I am a man, I am white, I am Black, I am Indian, I am Native American, I am Hispanic, etc.
- Under each race, a description was given such as lazy, educated, uneducated, motivated, kind, housewife, submissive, & the words went on to describe "I am"
- Mission is to train, mentor on campus.
- A film was shown where a group was talking rather in dialogue.
- In the film the talk was about how we see each other culturally, race or even passing some one in

the street

- Tessa said they worked on collaborating with other organizations that want to learn to practice & track sustained dialogue.
- What works to sustain dialogue? It creates a safe space on college campuses to address divisive issues.
- In order to address the problem, you have to first address the underlying relationships.
- The program Tessa & Christina spoke of briefly composed of 8-12 groups. The facilitation and administration.
- Some of the schools they work with include Virginia University, Princeton, Notre Dame, Dickenson, and several others.

Tessa's five stages of Student Dialogue:

The who-committed to the purpose

The what-experience exchange

The why-defining the problem

The how-brainstorming the solutions

The now-individual & collective action

Student Dialogue impact on campus & beyond

De-stereotype day at UVA

Judge Bruce Wright at Princeton

Teach for America

Tools of Sustained Dialogue Elements of a Relationship"

Identity, interest, power, perceptions & misconceptions, patterns of interaction

Listening really listening to the other individual

Word choice, tone, pace

Volume, content, fears, feelings

Confusion, desires, insecurities

Christina talked of her experience in college bases and elements of a relationship

Questions were asked of her about race issues & how she reacts being from an all white school, neighborhood, etc.

Wrap up

- Discussion questions and answer----most informative