

Host a “Fireside Chat” in Marin

Meet. Listen. Connect.



What?

A fireside chat is a chance for 6 to 10 people with diverse life experiences to talk and get to know each other. It does not have to include a fire at all, but is intended to be warm and friendly experience. A sample structure for the conversation is outlined below, but there are no expectations for any specific outcome. This is a chance to meet new people and to reflect on what matters to you and what matters to others.

Who

It works well if there are two hosts from different backgrounds who know and respect each other. They agree on a date and place and each invite 3 or 4 other people. The hosts bring together people who have had different kinds of life experiences, including but not limited to type of work, housing, education, family, faith, etc.

Where

Most discussions will take place where one of the hosts lives, but a comfortable meeting space at a school or church could work too, as long as it is easily accessible to all attendees. Plan for 90 minutes to two hours. It helps to have some snacks.

When

You can host a fireside chat anytime. Think about making it a new Thanksgiving season or holiday tradition. We plan to check in with everyone right before Martin Luther King Day to see what has come out of these new connections.

How

The conversation has a simple framework. The co-hosts welcome everyone, and explain the goal of the conversation and these guidelines:

- Everyone participates, as equally as possible.
- Share your own stories.
- Listen to learn, without judging or offering advice.
- Assume good intentions.
- Respect differences in values, experiences, talents and perspectives.

Why

During the conversation, people take turns answering a progressive series of questions. Each convener may have a specific question they are aiming toward or issue to address. These questions have worked well in previous fireside chats

1. What is your name? Why did you choose to live in Marin? Who do you live with?
2. How did your upbringing influence how you think about well-being? About equity?
3. What do you like about living in Marin? What do you find challenging?
4. What does equity mean to you now? How does it relate to our well-being as a community?
5. Closing thoughts. Take a photo and send it info@marinequitysummit.com.

This outline is from Susan Stuart Clark of Common Knowledge who co-hosted the first fireside chat with Cio Hernandez and Alexandra Danino. Our discussion created a safe to talk with people from very different backgrounds. Our stories were a way to explore systems and structures that have created inequities, and also to see what supports change. We would like for others to have this same experience. Please share your feedback with us at info@marinequitysummit.com.