

Bringing Dialogue Skills & Cultural Humility to Alabama Teens

Ben Honan & Salem Khalaf

UAB Heersink School of Medicine, David Mathews Center for Civic Life

Logic Model

Outcomes

With a goal to reach 50 students participating in dialogue sessions, we aimed for 70% to report one of the following:

- A 20% increase in participant-rated comfort level interacting with persons of background (race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, politics, etc) that differs from their own and/or
- A 20% increase in participant-rated feeling of empowerment to enter into and ability to navigate uncertain/uncomfortable interactions with others and/or
- Utilizing new skills from the curriculum (cultural sensitivity and dialogue techniques such as ACTS) since the last session.

Outputs

- Connected with 22 Alabama teachers through DMC summer workshop, and
- Participated in 7 PEACE Birmingham events, 2 ACE Heritage Panels, 6 Youth Leadership Birmingham (YLB) events, and
- Instructed 4 online workshops (YLB and GirlSpring) on dialogue skills and mediated conversations on topics like abortion, gun control, and immigration, and
- Piloted deliberative forums across 4 classes at 2 Tuscaloosa high schools, all with
- Between 10-30 students per session depending on the organization and session sequence

Activities

- Cultural humility and civil discourse introductory sessions
- National Issues Forum² guided deliberative dialogues
- Medical health equity lectures and civil discourse practice topic sessions

Inputs

- Ben & Salem received training with David Mathews Center and CASEL on moderating deliberation sessions
- Educational resources including UA Crossroads Center, former UABHSOM Office for Diversity & Inclusion, and DMC Deliberative Forum Issue Guides
- Ben & Salem regularly met to conduct their own civil discourse and cultural humility activities.

Introduction

Adolescents' cultural humility (CQ) and civil discourse (CD) training has been neglected and left "60% of college freshmen" unprepared for social discussion and analysis in an increasingly heterogeneous and interconnected world.¹ This issue has led to rifts in the American social fabric as individuals are incapable of learning from one another or collaborating but can be addressed through participation in a sustained dialogue program. Such programs have shown to have "a positive effect on participants' attitudes: increasing the level of trust between people of different ethnic origins" and "created positive relationships with others." Building the adolescent student population's skills through interactive sessions in CD and CQ will allow students to do the following, both in and outside of the medical setting: advocate for themselves and others, work to understand others' lived experiences, and provide professional competencies such as critical reasoning, effective communication tactics, and open-mindedness. We see this opportunity to nurture CQ and CD in high school students who in the future will be patients and medical professionals, if not both, and will need to learn how to effectively operate in an ever-growing diverse world.



(1) The first fall meeting with PEACE Birmingham teens, a project of ACE Alabama. The group toured Kelly Ingram Park and the 16th Street Baptist Church. Subsequent PEACE meetings included (2) attending Fiesta Bham (a Hispanic Heritage Festival), an art exhibit by Joe Minter (the renowned sculptor of *African Village in America*), a holiday party to share customs, touring various places of worship and spirituality in Birmingham, and a session led by Salem and Ben on social justice and ethics in medicine.

Critical Assessment

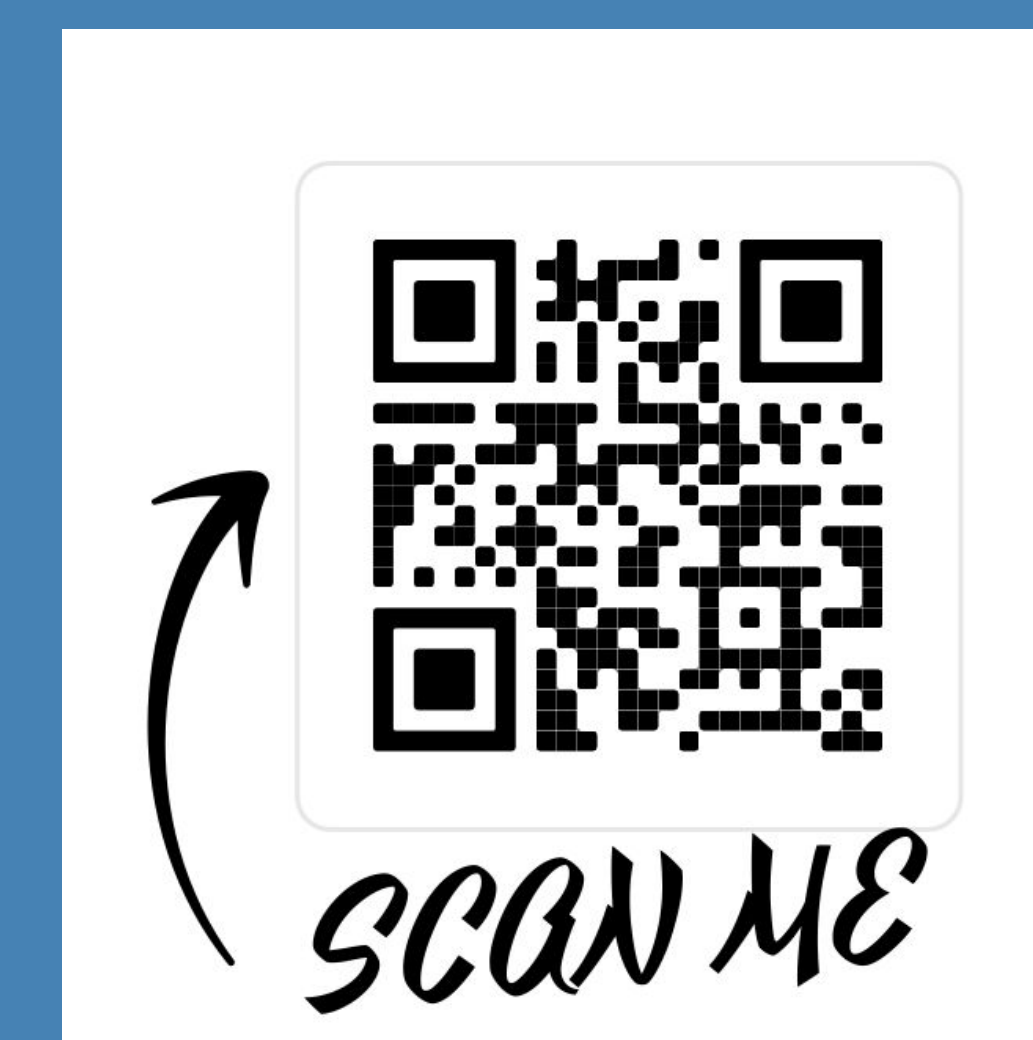
- Main barriers:
 - Accessing students, both in and outside of educational centers
 - Meeting the increasingly unique needs of each organizations' student populations
 - Mitigating students'/administrators'/schools' potential fears of discussing such nuanced and emotive topics
- Impacts to personal and professional trajectories: sustainable project development/management skills, enhanced understanding of CQ and CD, research and analytical competencies

Impact

Sessions ranged from introductions to CQ and CD, advocacy and allyship, to participation in dialogues surrounding abortion, gun control, immigration, etc. as well as forums designed to promote collaboration and group consensus.

Pre- and post- surveys during each session were conducted and revealed the following results:

Sustainability of the project: Salem will continue the project in conjunction with ACE Alabama, Youth Leadership Birmingham, and the UAB HSOM Global Studies club.



(3) Ben and Salem facilitating a dialogue session at Holt High School about the Civil Rights movement, in which participants placed themselves in 1963 and discussed which of several options would be best for their shared community.

Acknowledgements

Ben and Salem wish to thank Kierra Burks and Melissa Patrick of ACE Alabama; Katherine Berdy of Youth Leadership Birmingham; Lauren Lockhart, Rachel Mosness, and Cristin Brawner of the David Mathews Center, all for helping make this reality as well as to Dr. Caroline Harada, our mentor.

References

1. Svensson, L., & Brounéus, K. (2013). Dialogue and interethnic trust: A randomized field trial of 'sustained dialogue' in Ethiopia. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(5), 563-575. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313492982>
2. <https://www.nfi.org/en/issue-guides/issue-guides>