Meeting Openings
Script to Supplement Agendas

This script details some of the “extra” statements AWARE-LA facilitators tend to make while getting a base building meeting started.

Welcome to all! We’re glad to see so many people here at AWARE’s Saturday Dialogue. We’ll begin by doing a quick go-round with your name, gender pronouns, and anything else you want to share with us to help you fully participate in the dialogue today. This could include needing us to SPEAK UP, in case you have trouble hearing. Or perhaps you don’t feel comfortable moving around as much, and so you might elect to stay seated if we do an exercise that invites movement. This is just a really brief go-round to start. We’ll actually be saying a bit more as soon as we finish.

We’d now like to review our Communication Guidelines. We call them Guidelines for a Brave Space. The reason for this title is because we’ve learned from a wonderful colleague named Kathy Obear that too often, the term safe space has been used by white people doing anti-bias work in a way that confused feeling safe with feeling comfortable. Kathy helped us understand that what we’re asking for is that we engage bravely in what might be difficult and uncomfortable conversations. Generally we invite two people to help read these guidelines aloud, one to read the odds and one to read the evens.

Now that we’ve read the guidelines, are there any questions or does anyone have anything additional that they’d like to add in order to feel able to fully participate in this dialogue today?

Now we’d like to do a second round where each of us says ONE thing, just ONE thing that we’ve been thinking about in terms of race this past month. Just so you know, we have a part of our agenda each meeting where we do something called Personal Solidarity, and that is where we spend time in small groups talking about the issues that are closest to our hearts. So, what you say here in this round MIGHT be something that you’ll want to talk more extensively about later. But, it’s not required. More than anything, this is a way for us, right now at the start, to get all of our voices in the room and get a sense of what we’re carrying. Please try to keep this in one sentence….one sentence that isn’t much of a run-on sentence! You’ll know if it’s a run-on sentences by how many times you hear yourself say conjunction words like and, so, but, and however! Try to be succinct so we can get to our program. Just one sentence about what we’re carrying.
We’ll now be moving forward with our agenda for the day. In general, and especially for those who are new, Saturday Dialogue currently has four different structures that we use on a rotating basis. One of them is called “ask-it basket” where we all work on questions we bring to the table. A second one is a workshop structure where we plan some concrete skills development. A third one is a “broad question” where we typically take on some sort of big issue to consider. This is where we might ask how our class background intersects with our experience of race, or how we understanding issues pertaining to a current hot topic, like immigration or police violence or anti-black racism, etc. And finally, we have a leadership share, where one of our AWARE members speaks about their anti-racist history and development.

Today we will be using the [INSERT TYPE] structure, and [INSERT FACILITATOR NAME] will be getting us started.