



## Building an Inclusive Conference Together

*We ask all attendees and speakers to honor this set of agreements as we strive to create spaces where everyone is welcomed, encouraged to listen openly and speak honestly, and treated with respect.*

**Show Your Support:** Each of us is balancing a number of personal and professional commitments at this time. Many are continuing to serve as caregivers for loved ones, managing extra duties at work, experiencing loss and trauma, and much more. An inclusive environment calls for recognition that while we're all trying our best to be fully present and engaged, life happens. Now more than ever, this is a time to show our patience and understanding, to support one another, and when we can, find the humor in our humanity.

**Create a Welcoming Environment:** Building a conference environment truly welcoming to all includes proactively designing the conference to meet attendees' varying needs. For example, closed captioning will be offered for all main stage events, reflection space will be available for attendees to relax and reset away from the primary conference gathering area, and we have reserved an on-site private nursing suite. As part of supporting everyone's health and well-being, attendees will be asked to wear a color-coded lanyard to indicate their personal comfort with in-person interaction. It takes all of us to create a welcoming and inclusive space. We welcome your suggestions on how we can support a more inclusive conference for all.

**Own Your Impact:** While we may have good intentions in each conversation, our words and actions can have the impact of further marginalizing those around us. As we seek to build community through the conference experience, we can engage with a readiness and willingness to listen, seeking first to understand and holding ourselves accountable for our words and actions. We can also respectfully identify when another's words or actions have caused harm while focusing on the message, not the messenger.

**Take Space, Make Space:** As you engage in conversation with attendees during interactive elements throughout the conference programming, you're invited to "take space" by actively sharing stories, ideas and questions. We ask you to also "make space" by leaving time for others to participate, listening openly and recognizing that content may be new for some attendees, and some learners need time to process and reflect.

**Lessons Leave, Stories Stay:** It is important to honor the confidentiality of conversation as we gather together. “Lessons leave, stories stay” is a way of saying that you’re invited to share the key takeaways of a dialogue with colleagues and peers who did not attend the conference or a particular session, but you are asked to hold in confidence what peers and colleagues may share about their personal experiences.

**Recognize the Role of Perspective:** In difficult conversations and in sharing our feelings, it can be easy to slip into speculation and assumption. To help ensure we speak for ourselves and our own experiences in lifting up a perspective on an issue, it can be helpful to use “I” statements such as, “I feel that...” or “I have experienced...” In that same spirit, while we may invite an individual to share their own perspective, we recognize it is unfair to ask them to represent the perspectives of many and speak on behalf of their organization or on behalf of a group to which they may belong or identify.

**The Courage of Being Comfortable with Discomfort:** There may be some difficult conversations during our time together, such as long-standing racial inequities, the power dynamics that exist within philanthropy and beyond. We know it is by digging deep and through civil discourse that we can come to a greater understanding.