



# Conversation Toolkit

The Big Table is a day of community building designed to bolster connection in these challenging times through conversation, assistance, and action. Our conversations may look different this year – some on Zoom, some six feet apart – but the connections we build can still **create social change**.

At The Women's Fund, we apply a gender and racial lens to all of our work. We do this because it's essential to consider the different intersections of identity and experience that affect women and girls when advancing equitable solutions to the issues they face.

We created this conversation toolkit to help you approach your Big Table conversation the same way. Whether you're hosting a Big Table or attending one, talking about women and girls or another issue entirely, considering how gender and race is woven through all parts of our community is critical to creating social change.

## In Conversation

*Consider these questions when participating in a conversation about any issue.*

- What are your own identities, privilege(s), and positions of power in relation to the issue you are addressing?

*Are you a member of the group? Are you directly impacted by the issue? Do you work with people who are directly impacted?*

- Who are the people most impacted by the issue you are addressing?

*Are there subgroups and identities within this larger group that go or have gone unnoticed? Are there specific identities that overlap or intersect to make people experience the issue you are discussing differently? (e.g., Black female; single mother; rural Latinas; trans-women of color; rural poor; etc.)*

- Who are the people or groups with power and privilege?
- What issues have been historically left out of discussions on this issue?
- What are your assumptions about the other participants' understanding?
- How do you challenge – or perpetuate – gender norms and stereotypes in your thoughts, responses, or actions?

## Important Definitions

*Ground your conversation with common language.*

### Gender Norms

The traditional ideas that society has about what it means to “act like” a man or a woman. An example: women are primary caregivers.

### Gender Stereotypes

Ideas, myths, assumptions, and values that are bolstered by structural or systemic sexism that promote gender inequity and hierarchy, and where conventional masculinity is privileged. An example: women are emotional.

### Implicit Bias

The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

### Systemic or Structural Racism

Systemic or structural racism refers to economic, political and social policies, cultural norms and values, and institutional practices that mutually reinforce one another to promote racial inequity and hierarchy, where whiteness is privileged.

### Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the interconnection of how gender, race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and ethnicity impact an individual or group to create overlapping systems of oppression or discrimination.



## Hosting a Conversation

*Are you looking for topics to discuss? Need some resources to lay the groundwork? Check out our suggestions:*

### COVID-19 & Women

The global pandemic severely impacts women, especially women of color, and their economic stability. Pervasive gender bias, historical systems, inadequate policies, and tremendous wealth disparity have intersected to threaten the progress of gender equity. Yet, there is an opportunity to accelerate gender equity as we rebuild by creating long-lasting equitable solutions informed by the voices of all women.

***Prompt: How can we use this time of reckoning and rebuilding as a chance to imagine a more equitable community?***

Reading:

- [Why Some Women Call This Recession a 'Shecession'](#) *New York Times*
- [The Economic Crisis Exacerbates How Much We Undervalue Women's Work](#) *Vox*
- [The First Female Recession Threatens to Wipe Out Decades of Progress for U.S. Women](#) *Bloomberg*
- [For Black Working Women, COVID-19 Has Been a Heavy Burden](#) *Wall Street Journal*
- [Working Moms, Their Careers Hit Hard By Coronavirus Pandemic](#) *The Columbus Dispatch*
- Additionally, learn more about [pay equity](#), [child care and the benefits cliff](#), and [women's healthcare](#) – all issues that are impacted by the pandemic – by reading our [Spark Reports](#).

### The Gender & Racial Wealth Gap

The gender and racial wealth gap has intergenerational economic impacts on the lives of women and girls, and closing the gap is integral to women's economic security, good health, and civic and political engagement. Our groundbreaking [research](#) on the gender and racial wealth gap offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the opportunities and challenges for women, girls, and families locally. The findings are staggering:

*Nationally, single women own only 40 cents for every dollar that single men own. For Black and Latina women, the wealth gap is especially stark: single Latina women own **eight cents** on the dollar compared to all single men, and single Black women own only **two cents**.*

***Prompt: What would it mean for women to have the wealth and resources to weather unexpected economic hardships and have proactive control over their lives? How can we remove barriers to women building wealth in our community?***

Read our research:

- Report: [Assets for Equity: Building Wealth for Women in Central Ohio](#)
- [Report snapshot](#)