



## Dialogue Practice Development Groups

### WHAT?

From time to time, I convene a Dialogue Practice Development Group programme, which brings together 5 to 7 leaders from different organisations and uses a combination of inquiry, reflection, embodied practice, case-work and short inputs to support participants in:

- raising awareness of their contribution to, and impact in, leadership conversations; and
- increasing their versatility and resilience in challenging or delicate conversations.

A recent evaluation identified that the organisational benefits of participating include more productive meetings and conversations, more collaborative working and enhanced leadership capacity due to increased clarity about where to focus energy.

A previous participant described the experience as follows:

*'The programme is as explicit and focused as 1-to-1 coaching.'* Director of HR

### WHO?

Potential participants will be interested generating richer conversations and be ready to examine their own patterns in conversations and to experiment with them. As a previous group member puts it:

*'I can only succeed if the quality of my relationships is good. Superficially dialogue is easy to understand, but the practice is challenging. Working with the practice group has given me a new and deeper understanding of myself and how I interact with, and support, others.'* Chief Executive

Each participant will have a different starting place in terms of conversational style and habits and will have a different outcome in mind. However, we will find that we all face similar challenges in our conversations and this will provide the ground for our learning. A previous participant explains:

*'People experience similar patterns and difficulties in conversations, no matter what their background. This reduces the feeling of personal helplessness or anger.'* HR Director

Working together, we will co-create a compelling learning experience.

### HOW?

The group meets for a series of sessions, typically four one-day sessions or seven long-half-day sessions. Participants are expected to bring case-work to provide real scenarios as a focus for understanding what goes awry in business-critical conversations. The intervals between sessions allow participants to put their learning into practice.

Two features make the programme unique. Firstly, while it is routine to ask questions about alignment between what we say and what we do, it is less usual to examine *alignment between what we say and what we privately think and feel*. This is a key area of focus for this programme. Secondly, we will explore *the role of leadership presence in conversations*, using embodied approaches to gain insight into how the quality of our contribution changes when we are under pressure from deadlines, volume of work, demands on our time, exercise of power, opposing views and so on. During our work together, we will cultivate practices for resilient leadership presence.

## WHEN?

To bring together a Dialogue Practice Development Group, Amanda hosts an exploratory session in which potential participants come together to experience what is on offer. If you are curious about how you might change your impact in your leadership conversations and are willing to inquire into your current practices and to support and challenge others in their learning, the exploratory session is an opportunity to decide whether this in-depth experience will work for you.

In order to co-create an environment safe enough to risk changing ourselves and our conversations, it's important that members of the group commit to the whole series. The crucial role of the group was described by a member as follows:

*'The strength of the group became the most powerful force: the skills and experience to draw on was amazing; the combination of support and challenge, insight, humour and commitment to each other's learning.'* Senior Manager

For the next dates, contact me [info@originate.org.uk](mailto:info@originate.org.uk)



## ALUMNI VOICES:

*'I had often wondered why I couldn't get what I wanted out of certain interactions with others. Through my case-work I realised that my 'entry' into conversations could come across as aggressive, impatient and patronising thus lessening any positive impact of that particular dialogue.'* Civil Servant

*'The programme brought out bits of me that had fallen into 'disuse' because of circumstances/culture.'* General Manager

*'If you're a newcomer to this, as I was, don't be surprised if you feel uncomfortable at the beginning. Trust the process. Amanda understands how to support people through that twitchy 'what is this about?' phase to starting to practice new skills.'* Entrepreneur

*'I now have a completely different thought process when facing a potential conflict or challenging conversation. I ask myself: what would be a completely different pebble to throw into this pool to get a different pattern of ripples?'* HR Director

*'Very thought provoking, manageable and enlightening. It refreshes your management style and provides a basis for doing the same things differently which is stimulating and satisfying. It also provides the ability to deal with difficult situations rather than worry about how to deal with them.'* Head of finance

*'When faced with difficult and confrontational situations, I always knew intellectually that I should understand the other person's perspective. But I see now that this didn't always inform what I did.'* Associate Medical Director