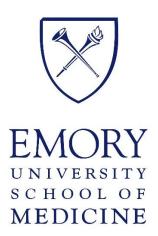
## DIVERSITY DIALOGUE FACILITATOR TRAINING MANUAL

### EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

# DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES



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#### **Diversity Dialogue Purposes and Aims**

The specific purpose of diversity dialogue conversations is to provide a space dedicated to constructive exchange among members of a constituency group on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion. More broadly, the purpose of these conversations is to advance change at the individual, organizational, community, and societal levels in the service of an increasingly respectful, inclusive, and equitable world.

Consistent with these purposes, the specific aims of diversity dialogue conversations are to: (1) offer participants an open and brave space to process difficult and emotion-provoking societal issues; (2) engage participants in a candid, genuine, and good-faith discussion of the harm wrought by bigotry, intolerance, and inequality relative to one or more intersectional social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality); (3) encourage deep personal reflection about inequality, societal disparities, discrimination, racism, and other "isms"; (4) promote honest self-evaluation and awareness of personal biases affecting views of diversity and difference; and (5) identify and empower enactment of action steps that challenge and redress psychological, interpersonal, social, and structural drivers of discrimination and inequity.

This manual is intended as a guide for conducting and maximizing the productivity of diversity dialogue conversations. It is envisioned as an ever-evolving living document anchored by the guiding value of cultural humility. As such, it will be revised and updated over time to reflect new knowledge, perspectives, learning, and experience in facilitating diversity dialogue meetings, as well as feedback from participants in these diversity dialogue trainings.

#### **Before You Begin: Preparing for Diversity Dialogue Conversations**

#### **Facilitator Self-Preparation**

Careful self-preparation is essential for effective facilitation of diversity dialogues. This includes self-evaluation of personal emotional readiness to facilitate these discussions; bias self-assessment; and self-education to close gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

#### **Emotional Readiness Self-Evaluation**

Although rich with opportunity for productive exchange, diversity dialogues routinely activate strong emotions, (e.g., anxiety, guilt, anger, frustration, sadness); can feel threatening; and often reveal tensions that stem from widely disparate worldviews, attitudes, opinions, values, and perspectives among participants. To guide productive discussions, facilitators must first prepare themselves through a process of honest self-appraisal and self-evaluation regarding their emotional readiness to support effectively strong emotional responses in the diversity dialogue process, including those that may or may not be congruent with their own intersectional identities, social locations, and experiences. While not intended to be all-inclusive, the following questions can help guide this emotional readiness self-evaluation process:

➤ What are my motives and intentions as a diversity dialogue facilitator? What do I hope to gain? What are my apprehensions?

- ➤ What assets do I bring to the diversity dialogue table? What are my growing edges?
- ➤ How comfortable am I in the presence of strong expressions of emotion? With which emotions am I most comfortable? Least comfortable? How do I show my discomfort?
- ➤ To what degree am I willing to sit with my own discomfort? What can I learn from this process?
- ➤ How do I manage disagreement and conflict?
- ➤ How do I manage uncertainty and ambiguity?
- Regarding what topics or perspectives would I have significant difficulty productively regulating my emotions and engaging the group in a supportive way? Are there topics or perspectives that I would have difficulty making room for and how would I address these during a dialogue?
- ➤ How receptive am I to opinions and values that differ from/conflict with my own? How can I tell the difference between moments of receptivity and unwitting complicity and/or inaction in response to potentially harmful expressions or actions?
- ➤ What concepts or aspects of diversity do I need to further educate myself about so that I may actively attend to all aspects of the dialogue?

These questions can be addressed via individual self-reflection and/or in dialogue with trusted colleagues or confidants, as well as formal bias self-assessment (see below). In considering them, it is critical to remember that "good enough" is the self-evaluation yardstick against which one's appraisal of emotional readiness is measured. It also is important to keep in mind that practice and experience over time are key to increasing one's sense of emotional readiness and comfort in facilitating diversity dialogue conversations.

#### Bias Self-Assessment

Social biases are an inescapable element of the human experience that inform our attitudes and beliefs about a person or group of people. We all have biases that extend from our psychological, social, and cultural backgrounds and experiences. These biases may be explicit (i.e., we're consciously aware of them) or implicit (i.e., we're unaware of them). Diversity dialogue facilitators must be willing to survey and challenge their own biases. Examples of strategies to increase awareness of social biases include:

- Attending mindfully to your initial impressions of unfamiliar people you encounter in your daily routines and activities as a way of identifying possible implicit biases (e.g., a new client/patient, people you encounter in the store, people you pass walking down the street)
- > Reflecting mindfully on your consciously held stereotyped attitudes and beliefs
- > Systematically evaluating how your personal history and experience may contribute to stereotyped beliefs or prejudicial views and your day-to-day actions/decisions

Bias self-assessment is an ongoing process requiring a commitment to continuous effort and learning. One tool that can facilitate this process is the completion of the Implicit Association Test (IAT), along with the creation of an associated action plan (see Resource Catalogue below for website). Keep in mind that the IAT is not a perfect instrument and should be interpreted with caution, though it is helpful in promoting awareness of implicit bias. Despite its psychometric limitations, the IAT is the best available tool for examining one's own biases related to diverse

groups. Bias self-assessment also should propel actions to mitigate your social biases and their impact. For example, mindful perspective-taking exercises can help cultivate understanding of the experiences of persons or groups that differ from your own while also heightening awareness of experiences that reflect common humanity. Biases and stereotypes also can be challenged by expanding your social and community spheres so that they are more inclusive of people from backgrounds that are different from your own.

#### Closing Knowledge Gaps

Knowledge and understanding of the inter-related current and historical, social, and political contexts that pertain the issues and themes comprising the focus of a diversity dialogue conversation is critical for effective facilitation. Facilitators must educate themselves about the histories, pertinent cultural practices, and experiences of relevant constituencies, along with current and historical drivers and consequences of oppression, discrimination, racism, and social and economic inequality. Because historical narratives reflect particular social and political perspectives, facilitators and participants alike are apt to demonstrate differing understandings of inequities based on their individual social and political outlooks and vantage points. Knowledge of current events as they pertain to present-day societal dynamics that sustain inequities in the distribution of power and privilege also is essential. Further, it is important that facilitators educate themselves about the issues and concerns that have particular salience or relevance for a given diversity dialogue constituency, and consider the power dynamics that determine which historical narratives become privileged in the society at large (e.g., differing narratives about the history of policing in the U.S.). It is incumbent upon facilitators to be proactive and take responsibility for their own learning process and not expect those who have been subject to ongoing discrimination, oppression, and inequity to also carry the burden of educating them about the key issues at hand.

#### **Preparing the Constituency Group**

The facilitator team works collaboratively to ensure that the diversity dialogue conversation aligns with the expectations, needs, and goals of the constituency group. The process of preparing the constituency group includes the following:

- ➤ Outline the purpose, structure and sequence of the discussion (e.g., large group introduction and overview, small group discussion, large group report out, closing reflections)
- ➤ Identify themes and foci for the group discussion
- ➤ Develop 1-2 questions that invite discussion of emotional responses (e.g., What did you feel when you heard about the incident? How are you feeling now?)
- ➤ Develop 1-2 questions that encourage discussion of action steps (e.g., What actions would you like to take to support yourself/your community? What actions do you recommend your organization/institution take?)

The collaborative planning process concludes with determination of an *a priori* plan on how and to whom to report out on the discussion content and recommendations from the diversity dialogue conversation. This includes formulating a plan to follow up on the discussions that occurred along with recommended action steps.

#### Facilitating the Diversity Dialogue: Steps and Process

#### **Creating a Respectful Space for Dialogue**

Because exploring the dynamics and consequences of power, privilege, oppression, and intersecting identities is invariably an emotionally challenging process, productive conversations about these issues require a willingness for participants to engage with honesty, genuineness, and openness. Therefore, careful attention must be given to creating a space for dialogue that balances support for sharing one's views with a challenge to encounter heretofore avoided and/or unfamiliar perspectives, experiences, and emotional responses. Engendering a conversational space in which participants are willing to step outside of their emotional comfort zones is critical to the process of cultivating awareness of inequity and propel action to promote equity.

Support is provided to enhance the safety and visibility of participants, especially those from marginalized and/or oppressed communities. This is sometimes referred to as creation of a "safe space," although this term must be used cautiously since diversity dialogue conversations aren't necessarily intended to feel emotionally safe for participants (i.e., free of emotional risk, discomfort, or challenge). However, the dialogue space must be a civil one where everyone is assured that they will be treated in a respectful manner even in the presence of deeply held disagreements. It also is important to ensure that efforts to create a space for productive dialogue do not recapitulate societal dynamics that sustain and/or reinforce existing structures of power and privilege. The aim is to facilitate a culture within the diversity dialogue group that supports productive conversations. Where feasible and if time permits, it is desirable to enlist participants in the process of creating this supportive atmosphere for the group and ensuring that everyone is agreeable to the guidelines for the discussion. The following are suggested elements that can contribute to such a culture of support among dialogue participants:

- > Be present and remain engaged
- ➤ Abide by confidentiality
- Engage with respect for the humanity of all participants
- Listen with openness and intention to try on ideas, ways of being, and experiences that may not match your preferences or what you're familiar with
- Acknowledge and seek to understand the impact of your comments rather than focusing exclusively on explaining or rationalizing your intent
- ➤ Refrain from attacks strive to not intentionally cause harm and address such harm when it does occur if possible

Productive and substantive diversity dialogue conversations require a focus on difficult and controversial topics and a willingness to be uncomfortable. It is these conditions of challenge that comprise what is commonly called a "brave space" in acknowledgement of the courage required to take risks, be vulnerable, and confront painful and inconvenient truths. When more people are willing to share, regardless of perspective, the opportunities for the group to learn

expand. The following are examples of factors that contribute to the culture of creating a brave space for dialogue:

- > Be mindful of rather than avoid discomfort
- ➤ Remain open to accepting varying opinions and engaging in controversy/disagreement with civility
- Accept strong emotional reactions (e.g., guilt, anger, shame, angst, hurt) as expectable and potentially important pathways to new understanding and perspective
- > Be willing to examine defensive or avoidant reactions
- > Consider that the potential benefits from engaging in challenging conversations outweigh the risks, both for participants and facilitators

The principles for creating a space that is conducive to dialogue must be front of mind throughout the diversity dialogue facilitation process. It also is critical that you as a facilitator model the behavior that you would like to elicit from participants. For example, demonstrate respect for different viewpoints, respond with compassion, and seek opportunities to offer genuine self-disclosure that demonstrate your willingness to share your own process in grappling with the tough issues at hand.

#### **Guiding the Process**

There are 3 broad phases of the diversity dialogue process. These are: (1) setting the stage for dialogue; (2) having a conversation; and (3) encapsulating themes and action steps. Where the number of participants is sufficiently large, all participants meet together for the first phase. The second phase is conducted in smaller breakout groups. The third phase may occur in the breakout groups, the larger group, or a combination of the two.

#### Setting the Stage for Dialogue

The diversity dialogue conversation begins with introductions and an overview of the purposes, plan, and format for the discussion. Careful attention also is given to creating an atmosphere and group culture that invites constructive dialogue (as detailed in the "Creating as Space for Dialogue" section above). Setting the stage includes the following steps:

- i. Introduce the facilitator team. If practical (i.e., the participant group is small), space also is provided for participants to introduce themselves if they would like to do so. In larger groups, participants can introduce themselves in their small breakout groups.
- ii. Summarize the purpose and introduce the plan for the conversation, including the sequence of activities and how the time will be structured. Detail the questions to be addressed in the small group discussions, share the plan to report out in the larger group the main themes and action steps that emerge from the small group conversations, and describe the expected plan for follow-up, if any.
- iii. Touch on key facilitators of productive dialogue:
  - a. if the diversity dialogue is being held over a videoconference platform, encourage participants to keep their video cameras enabled throughout the meeting as feasible.

- b. suggest that, in the group discussion, participants aim to find a balance between sharing their views and listening, learning, and identifying action steps.
- c. convey that group dialogues work best when there is opportunity to hear multiple perspectives and experiences.
- d. communicate that sitting back and not sharing at all can have a deleterious impact and that if participants find themselves uncertain of what to say they can simply express this experience of uncertainty with the group.
- e. indicate that the specifics of what is said in the group conversations and by whom (e.g., personal details and stories) should stay in the group and that only themes and action steps discussed in the groups will be shared more broadly outside the group. If the dialogue is being conducted via video conference, assure participants that they are not being recorded.
- f. review the key elements that are facilitative of a culture of safe and brave conversations presence, respect, receptivity to different views, seeking to understand impact, willingness to be uncomfortable, refraining from attacks
- iv. Set the tone for the conversation by offering initial readings, poems, personal stories, and/or thematically focused guided meditations.
- v. Invite questions, comments, or suggestions from participants prior to sending them to their pre-assigned breakout groups. This includes ensuring agreement among participants to abide by the guidance for brave and respectful dialogue.

#### Having a Conversation

In this phase, participants engage in small group conversations guided by the questions introduced at the start of the diversity dialogue meeting. If this is a breakout session involving a subset of participants from a larger group, facilitators should begin this meeting by reintroducing themselves and inviting participants to introduce themselves as well. If the meeting is being conducted over a videoconference platform, participants also should be reminded to keep their video cameras enabled if feasible so that they are visible to all group members during the conversation.

**Opening the Discussion.** To focus the conversation, remind participants of the dialogue questions that they are being asked to consider. These questions are varied depending on the needs, objectives, and goals of the diversity dialogue for a given constituency group. Example questions may be:

- ➤ When was the last time you were the only \_\_\_\_\_ (male, female, minority, ethnicity, Christian, LGBTQIA+, etc.) in a group? Can you describe your sense of self-identity during that encounter? What can that experience teach us in order to create more diverse spaces?
- What are your current emotions and thoughts about race relations and outcries for the elimination of structural racism (i.e., system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity)?
- ➤ Despite the current efforts to directly improve our immediate surroundings, we each may witness encounters where biases towards racial/ethnic/LGBTQIA+/Latinx/etc. groups occur. What steps can you/we take to mitigate against biases?

➤ What recommendations would you have for your/our organization or institution to advance systemic change?

There may be times where the conversation organically veers from a focus on the questions at hand. This is okay and expectable, particularly if the discussion is productive. Eventually, however, the facilitators should tie the conversation back to the questions under consideration. Also, if the sponsoring organization/group has intended goals (i.e., provision of concrete action steps), it is important that the discussion is timed to ensure those goals are met.

**Facilitating the Process.** The facilitators guide, but do not control the group discussion. Your role is to make space for a substantive exchange, while being careful not to take up too much space in the process. Core facilitation elements include:

- ➤ Encouraging discussion by fostering a culture of inclusion, expressing appreciation for participants' willingness to contribute to the conversation, and validating the emotional significance of personal experiences shared with the group
- ➤ Making room for all voices by encouraging everyone to share and redirecting the discussion if one or more participants take up a lot of space
- Cultivating support and respect for all group members, including those whose views differ from your own
- Allowing for productive silence and recognizing its potential to deepen the conversation
- ➤ Following the lead of the group while also utilizing your knowledge and emotional responses to guide the conversation where needed
- > Supporting a balance between sharing of thoughts/feelings and generating possibilities for action
- ➤ Develop a summary of main points and action items from the discussion. Consider designating one of the facilitators as note-taker who can quickly summarize main points and solicit participant feedback and consensus prior to ending the small group dialogue.

**Addressing Emotional Responses.** Paying attention and responding to the emotional responses that participants may experience is essential to the facilitation of productive dialogues. Expression of strong emotion and group tension can propel both constructive dialogue and learning. In working with emotional responses, facilitators may:

- > Offer validation of emotions expressed when a participant is sharing personal experiences
- Reflect back emotions that are expressed and ask if others in the group share similar feelings and ask if the situation raises other feelings for anyone
- ➤ Check-in on nonverbal emotional expressions by participants by inviting them to share how they're feeling if they're willing to do so
- > Encourage participants to share feelings when the group becomes emotionally heavy (e.g., participants are expressing sadness or anger)
- ➤ Invite pauses to reflect on lighter emotional moments of authentic connection among participants that arise spontaneously in the dialogue process
- ➤ Avoid acting too quickly to dilute the impact of an emotional expression or resolve productive emotional tension
- ➤ Defuse the situation if tension is confrontational or jeopardizes safety (see section below on responding to microaggressions)

➤ Redirect in-fighting by focusing participants on the process (e.g., "Seems like you're both struggling to feel heard right now – how can we help with that?") rather than the content of their disagreement

Responding to Microaggressions. Microaggressions refer to everyday subtle unintentional or intentional behaviors or interactions (e.g., slights, insults, invalidations, degrading messages, indignities) that communicate a bias toward historically socially marginalized persons or groups. These actions do significant harm and carry a sustained, cumulative, and significant stress burden for those who experience them. Diversity dialogue facilitators must remain vigilant and be prepared to respond when microaggressions occur in the conversations they are guiding. Because perceptions influence one's determinations regarding whether or not a microaggression has occurred, attending to the reactions of the group is essential so that facilitators do not rely solely on their own lenses to evaluate instances of microaggressions and how to respond.

In responding to microaggressions, facilitators can draw upon a toolkit of microinterventions. These are strategies that aim to: (1) validate, support, and affirm those who are targeted by microaggressions; and (2) disarm or offset the impact of microaggressions via subtle or overt challenge directed toward perpetrators of these acts. Among the microintervention strategies that facilitators may use are:

#### ❖ *Making the invisible visible*

- Raise perpetrator awareness of a microaggression and promote insight (e.g., "I'm curious if you can see how that comment might've come across to some people in our group?")
- ➤ Disempower the inference by naming it (e.g., "Maybe it wasn't your intention, but I wonder if your comment may have come across as stereotyping.")
- Ask for clarification (e.g., "Are you saying certain groups of people are more likely to be dishonest than others?")
- ➤ Broaden the ascribed trait (e.g., "I'm thinking what you just described applies to pretty much everyone and not just the group of people you mentioned.")

#### ❖ Disarming the microaggression

- Affirm, validate, and support the intended target
- Respectfully express disagreement with the perpetrator (e.g., "I don't agree with what you just suggested there.")
- ➤ Interrupt and re-direct when it is becoming harmful (e.g., "Hold on let's avoid insinuations and instead focus on the questions we've been asked to address.").
- Remind participants of the guidelines for productive dialogue

#### **&** *Educating the perpetrator*

- Distinguish intent from impact. If it appears that someone is bothered by something said, check-in and use a microintervention (e.g., "I'm sure you didn't intend this but your comment was hurtful to Sheila because you seemed to imply that all Jewish people are preoccupied with money.")
- Appeal to the values and principles of the perpetrator (e.g., "I wonder if you're aware of the ways in which your comments are at odds with what I can see is your clear commitment to promoting diversity and equity.")
- ➤ Highlight commonalities (e.g., "Actually all people value and invest in ensuring educational opportunities for their kids, regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds.")

- ➤ Encourage empathy (e.g., "Imagine how you might feel if someone implied you weren't trustworthy simply based on your nationality?")
- Emphasize benefits of addressing microaggressions (e.g., "I realize how dedicated you are as a teacher, and learning about the harmful impact of these labels is really going to help your relationships with your students.")

Instances of microaggression provide learning and growth opportunities both for individual perpetrators and for the participant group as a whole. This is why it is important to process reactions to microaggressions not only by enlisting the perpetrator to reflect on their statement or action and its intent, but also by asking the group participants how they heard and/or experienced that statement or action. While microinterventions can assist in bringing to light and/or neutralizing microaggressions, inviting both the individual perpetrator and the group as a whole to glean new understanding from the experience yields opportunity for microprogressions. Microprogressions refer to choices or actions that move the needle in the direction of increased societal equity, inclusion, and liberation of historically oppressed and marginalized groups.

More about the concept of microprogressions and their application can be found in work by Wakamatsu (2020), while the material on microaggressions and microinterventions presented in this manual is drawn from the work of Sue et al. (2019). The full references to both of these works can be found in the "Resource Catalogue" section below.

Being Mindful of Privilege and Power Dynamics. It is essential that facilitators remain cognizant of and acknowledge rather than minimize or avoid privilege and power dynamics when they are enacted in the diversity dialogue process. When directly highlighted and addressed, these enactments provide opportunities to advance awareness among participants about the pervasive impact of power and privilege dynamics along with new learning on how to mitigate their harm. For example, facilitators can:

- Attend to manifestations of privilege and power among members of the facilitator team and strive to engage in ways that do not collude with power and privilege dynamics (e.g., facilitators might consider introducing themselves using first names rather than Dr. \_\_\_\_)
- ➤ Be aware of the ways in which privilege and power affect the diversity dialogue conversation; note who is represented in the group and who is absent, as well as who is most vocal and who is not speaking. Redirect the conversation as is warranted to ensure the equitable distribution of opportunity for participants to express themselves.
- Remain attuned to the reality that some participants are unintentionally elevated as a result of hierarchies related to gender, race, organizational title/position, etc.

#### **Encapsulating Themes and Action Steps**

After concluding the small group conversations, all participants return to the larger group where they report out on the main discussion themes and offer tangible recommendations and steps for action. The facilitators then conclude the group with brief closing reflections that may include a summary of predominant themes, action steps, and questions left unanswered. In this concluding phase of the diversity dialogue process, facilitators should be mindful to:

- Manage time so that goals of the dialogue can be achieved and the discussion does not end abruptly. If co-facilitating, delegate who will be in charge of time management. Also, delegate who will monitor the discussion to ensure that the group and organizational goals are addressed.
- > Tie up loose ends to ensure that participants leave the conversation with a sense of closure
- ➤ Offer participants a listing of educational resources, information on upcoming events, and/or opportunities for direct action if available

#### **Post-Group Facilitator Processing**

Taking time for the facilitators to review and process the diversity dialogue conversation once it has concluded is a crucial practice. This review process includes taking inventory on the conversation process, identifying new learning, and planning for future diversity dialogue conversations. The following are suggested questions that can guide this review:

#### **\*** *Taking inventory*

- ➤ What overall impressions did you have of how the diversity dialogue conversation went?
- ➤ What went particularly smoothly or well?
- ➤ What was especially challenging and why?
- ➤ How did you manage group tensions or microaggressions if they occurred?
- ➤ How did the co-facilitation process flow?

#### Identifying new learning

- ➤ Can you identify at least one thing that you learned about co-facilitating diversity dialogues?
- Can you identify at least one thing that you learned about yourself?
- What knowledge or skill gaps are you aware of that need further development?
- ➤ Did you become newly aware of any social biases within yourself? Were there any of your known biases that you came to view in a different light?

#### **Planning for future dialogues**

- ➤ How might you change your facilitation approach in the future?
- ➤ What actions will you take to close learning gaps?
- ➤ What self-care steps will you take to unwind and decompress after conducting a diversity dialogue session and also ensure your emotional readiness to facilitate future diversity dialogues?

#### **Resource Catalogue**

#### **Dialogue Strategies and Examples**

• https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/dialogue-and-deliberation

#### Race Talk and Facilitating Difficult Racial Dialogues

• https://ct.counseling.org/2015/12/race-talk-and-facilitating-difficult-racial-dialogues/

#### **Racial Justice Resources**

http://psychiatry.emory.edu/documents/racial\_justice\_resources.pdf

#### **Tips for White Trainers Leading Multi-Racial Groups**

• <a href="https://www.trainingforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Tips-for-White-Trainers-Leading-Multi-Racial-Groups.pdf">https://www.trainingforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Tips-for-White-Trainers-Leading-Multi-Racial-Groups.pdf</a>

#### **Understanding and Working with Microaggressions**

- Sue et al. (2019). Disarming racial microaggressions: Microintervention strategies for targets, white allies, and bystanders. *American Psychologist*, 74, 128-142. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000296">http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000296</a>
- Wakamatsu (2020). From microaggressions to microprogressions, how small choices can make a big difference in the dance classroom. *Journal of Dance Education*, 20, 121-125. https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2020.1789148

#### **Assessing Implicit Bias**

 Implicit Association Test website <a href="https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html">https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html</a>