

Call for extended abstracts: "Difficult Conversations Concerning Identity and Difference," Special issue of *Human Communication Research*. Deadline: **November 7, 2021**.

Guest Editors: Srividya Ramasubramanian, Syracuse University and Jordan Soliz, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

From community dialogues about polarizing social issues to managing different ideologies and identities in families to critical conversations about different lived experiences (e.g., differences in experiences of bias and discrimination, experiences with chronic illness and disability), our daily lives are often infused with conversations that can be characterized as difficult, contentious, uncomfortable, or anxiety-inducing often requiring courageous, bold, and vulnerable engagement by individuals, organizations, and communities.

Further, popular conceptions of what constitutes “appropriate” conversations can often silence dissent, suppress voices of marginalized communities, or ignore experiences of individuals. These difficult conversations and dialogue are often necessary to achieve social justice goals, to build inclusive community or relational solidarity, to enhance individual well-being, to critically engage social issues and truth-telling, or to serve as the foundation for community-led initiatives to enact social change. As such, we benefit from additional inquiries, theorizing, and critical examination on what contributes to effective and empowering conversations in these contexts as well as the personal, social, institutional, and cultural factors that influence engagement in and outcomes of these interactions.

Authors are invited to submit theoretically-informed proposals that enhance our insight, understanding, and recognition of the complexities of difficult conversations. We encourage proposals focusing on a wide range of social, relational, cultural, and organizational contexts from various theoretical traditions. For instance, topics could include (but are not limited to) empirical inquiries or essays on (a) the efficacy of dialogue programs related to racial issues in a community, (b) the role of social media or online interactions in facilitating or hindering effective conversations and dialogue on salient social concerns, (c) critical conversations in personal relationships related to different experiences, identities, or social positions, (d) cultural variations in difficult conversations

about physical and mental health, (e) community-led initiatives to provide voice to marginalized groups in our communities, or (f) critiques of current approaches to teaching and researching difficult conversations. We encourage proposals from a variety of scholarly areas (e.g., intercultural, political, interpersonal, health, intergroup, media, organizational, technology) and welcome all methodological approaches.

Both empirical research reports and theoretical or conceptual essays are welcome. For the proposal, authors should submit an extended abstract no later than November 7th, 2021. Extended abstracts should consist of no more than 1,500 words (not including references). For quantitative and qualitative empirical research papers, the extended abstract should highlight the theoretical rationale and focus of the proposed project as well as the manner in which the findings will contribute to the focus of the special issue. For theoretical or conceptual essays, the extended abstract should clearly elaborate on the conceptual, theoretical, and applied contribution of the proposed essay. After final decisions on the extended abstracts are made (no later than January 2022), authors invited to proceed will be given, at minimum, six (6) months to complete a final manuscript. Final manuscripts will undergo peer review. Page limits and other parameters for the complete paper will be allocated at time of invitation. Our goal is to work with invited authors on timelines that allow for accommodations and considerations related to various pandemic-related factors that emerge during the completion of the contribution.

In addition to our emphasis on methodological pluralism and a variety of scholarly areas and contexts of inquiry, we also hope for submissions that reflect global experiences. Authors for whom English is not a primary language are welcome to contact the guest editors to learn about programs and services to support research endeavors.

For questions, please contact Dr. Jordan Soliz (jsoliz2@unl.edu) and Dr. Srividya Ramasubramanian (srramasu@syr.edu). Proposal submissions (i.e., extended abstracts) should be submitted to Dr. Soliz by November 7th, 2021.