

BRINGING NEW HARMONY TO THE FULL CHORUS

New Harmony Task Force members regularly have conversations with individuals, and chorus committees, who are struggling to convince chorus leaders and chorus members to embrace the important work of Equity, Access and Belonging. We've collected and crafted a few ideas for you to try. If you think of others, please send them our way:

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Pushing a political agenda can backfire but personal stories are powerful. In 2011 a proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage came up for a vote by Minnesota citizens. Opponents created a year-long campaign where queer and queer supportive allies were trained in telling their own personal stories in conversation with conservative voters in greater Minnesota. Stories were shared through phone calls, in community meetings, places of worship, and individuals were encouraged to share their own stories at family and social gatherings. The result? Minnesota was the first state to successfully vote down an anti-marriage amendment – through story-telling. How might sharing personal stories aid your effort to generate New Harmony conversations within your chorus?

First Steps

- Pick a New Harmony topic that connects to a theme in your upcoming concert and invite a small group of singers/leaders to a dinner party to explore the *New Harmony* workbooks. Invite them to read “Setting the Stage” before arriving or show a relevant video at the gathering. Around the table, invite participants to share their own connection to any of the topics in *New Harmony Workbook I or II*.
- At rehearsal announcement time, share a short personal story about your connection to a New Harmony topic. Share your excitement about exploring these topics related to equity, access, and belonging. Invite singers who are interested to gather after rehearsal to explore these ideas.
- Pull video links from a *New Harmony* workbook chapter and share them in the chorus newsletter

with a personal story about why this topic is important to you.

- Pick a regular time to meet so that these conversations become familiar for singers. Maybe you invite interested singers to meet 30 min before rehearsal on the first week of each month. Perhaps you create a monthly Zoom meeting with a group of interested singers to explore a New Harmony topic.
- Contact the New Harmony Task Force to find other choruses who have committees leading this work. Ask if you could sit in on some of their meetings via Zoom to learn how they have structured their conversations and gathered interest from singers.

Bigger Steps

30-min at Rehearsal: Print out all 11 New Harmony topics on separate signs. With the chorus in a circle around the room, lay the topics in the middle facing out. Invite singers to select a topic that most interests them, take the sign to a corner of the room and share a personal story that relates to the topic with others in that topic circle.

45-min: Request time at a chorus board meeting for a small group of singers to share why equity, access and belonging are important to them as chorus members. Prepare your stories carefully and ask the board to support you in creating next steps for addressing these topics.

2-hrs at a retreat: For an upcoming Saturday retreat, request a 2-hour workshop time to explore New Harmony. In preparation for the conversation, engage singers in brainstorming and ranking which of the New Harmony topics they most closely resonate with.

2-hrs at a retreat: Start with a topic that is accessible and present in most choruses, like Intergenerational Relationships or Mental Health & Neurodiversity. Engage the chorus in sharing and discussion through the scenarios provided. Close the session by asking how the chorus might take these conversations further. 🌸