

Intergenerational Dynamics Discussion Handout

Instructions

- ✓ Identify the issue/s surrounding equity, access, and belonging in each scenario.
- ✓ Reflect on how this situation may or may not be relevant or present in your own chorus.
- ✓ Brainstorm a range of possible responses to the scenario. In your chorus, whose responsibility is it to speak up and challenge, or support, the issue presented?
- ✓ Record your conversations and responses for reporting back to the larger group.

Scenarios for Discussion

1. A long-time singing elder in the Bemiji Gay Men's Chorus passed away and the social committee decides to hold a Zoom memorial that weekend to allow a space for members to share stories and grieve his passing. The chorus announced the event on the Chorus Facebook page and Instagram account.
2. Deante recently graduated from college and works at a marketing firm. In his new job he is required to work late nights and to travel. He has missed the last three rehearsals, but has been practicing with his rehearsal tracks. John, an older singer, is recovering from a broken hip but negotiates transportation with other singers each week to catch up for the two rehearsals he missed. To John, it feels like other singers should be making as much effort to attend rehearsals, and he talks to his section leader about this perceived inequity.
3. Hanh has been a member of the chorus for almost 30 years. His chorus family means the world to him; he joined at a time when he had to be closeted as a teacher and the chorus provided a space of safe intimacy. Before rehearsal one day, Hanh greets 22-year old Michael with a friendly squeeze on the shoulders. After rehearsal, Michael tells the director that Hanh's touch made him very uncomfortable.
4. Dominique sings tenor in their local GALA chorus. They are very fashionable and love to wear the latest trends, enjoying both men's and women's styles. Dominique's section leader Jim has worked as an HIV prevention specialist for 30 years. One day, Dominique overhears Jim telling a singer: "I don't understand, why doesn't he just pick a side? We'd love him regardless of either gender."
5. Mary has been singing with her non-auditioned GALA chorus for 25 years and considers it her family. Her voice has changed as she's aged; her pitch is strong but her range is smaller and weaker. One afternoon before rehearsal, she receives an email from her artistic director citing his concern about the chorus commitment to music excellence. He asks that she consider becoming a board member or other non-singing member rather than continuing to sing.

Action Steps

What are some concrete steps your chorus could undertake to help your chorus be more welcoming for people of all ages and at all stages of life?
