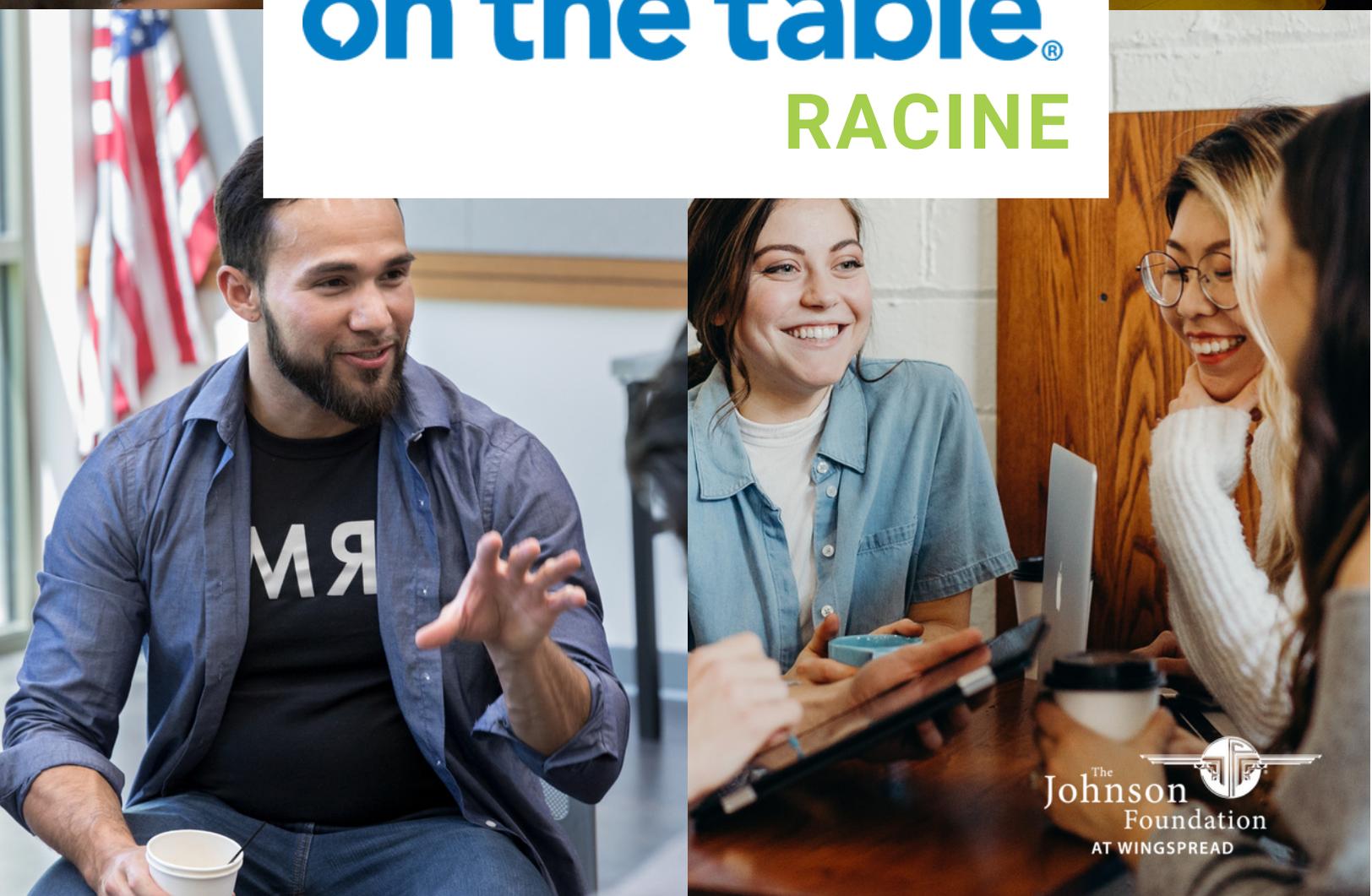




HOST TOOLKIT

**on the table.**<sup>®</sup>

RACINE





# Help launch a day of conversation across Racine

Join in on Tuesday, October 18, 2022! As a follow-up to **Racine Speaks: Real Data. Real People.** The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread is launching its first community-wide conversation.

*On the Table: Racine* seeks to encourage healthy dialogue, foster a connected community, and spark collaborative action. We invite you to host a conversation at your home, workplace or in your neighborhood, using this guide as a resource. We'll also hold a webinar for all hosts to help you prepare.

We all have conversations every day, but *On the Table* carves out a moment that goes beyond the everyday. Let's get started!

# What is *On The Table: Racine*?

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Created by The Chicago Community Trust, *On the Table* brings people together around a meal and a common purpose. It consists of small, independently organized gatherings where people talk about topics that matter in their lives and communities. Anyone can host a table and bring others together for collective impact.

*On the Table: Racine* is for people who live or work in Racine County - from diverse backgrounds, neighborhoods, and perspectives. It's an opportunity to listen and learn, discover the depth of our shared humanity and discuss new solutions to age-old problems.

## ***What Is The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread's role?***

The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread will provide the host registration infrastructure, support materials and guidance to make each experience as successful as possible. After the event, we'll share knowledge and outcomes that arise from the host's tables.





# Details

## ***When is the event?***

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

## ***Where can I host?***

Anywhere. Your dining table, a backyard, a coffee shop, or other public location.

## ***Who can host?***

Anyone. Individuals, groups, or organizations.

## ***What should we talk about?***

Anything. You decide. Use our conversation starters to help (see page 7).

## ***What's the point?***

When a group of people diverse in thought, background and experiences come together face-to-face to find common ground on community challenges, powerful things can happen. *On the Table: Racine* is the channel for conversations to take place. What happens next is up to you.

# Planning Your Conversation

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As a volunteer host, you make *On the Table: Racine* happen.

You're the organizer of your gathering, so its details are up to you. You choose the time, the place, who to invite, what to discuss, and the type of meal—whatever works best for your group and your goals.

## **Register to host**

If you haven't already, visit [www.johnsonfdn.org/ottracine](http://www.johnsonfdn.org/ottracine) to register as a host. You'll receive an invitation to an orientation webinar where you can get any questions answered ahead of the event. There is no fee to register.

## **Consider your topic**

What issues matter most to you? Where do you see the greatest opportunity for collaboration? Determining your topic ahead of time may influence who you invite to your table.

## **Choose a time**

Early morning, late night, or anytime in between—just plan your table for Tuesday, October 18. Conversations typically take 90 minutes.

## **Choose a place**

Gathering in your home or backyard is a great way to engage neighbors or friends. If you're considering a public location, get permission if required. We encourage in-person gatherings, but meeting virtually is okay as well.

## **Plan your meal**

Sharing a meal is at the heart of *On the Table: Racine*—breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Coffee, dessert, or snack. Potluck or catered. Dine-in or carryout. Fast food or fine dining. Brown bag or picnic. Whatever works best for you and your guests.

# Continued

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## ***Decide on the number of guests***

Smaller groups work better; six to 12 people helps ensure everyone has the opportunity to be heard. If you want to host a larger gathering, consider using multiple tables. Assign a captain to each table and allow time to report to the larger group.

## ***Invite your guests***

The invite list is up to you. Start with people you know – friends, family, colleagues, neighbors. Consider asking your guests to bring a friend, or invite people from your network who don't already know each other. Think about who will add value to your conversation. You can achieve a greater mix at your table by:

- Contacting a local nonprofit that relates to your topic and asking for introductions to people who may want to join your conversation
- Directly inviting one person and ask them to invite someone you don't know
- Co-hosting with a local organization, business, or congregation to connect with people different from you
- Opening seats at your table to the community at large

When sending your invitation, be sure to relay the event information such as the date, time, location, purpose, and meal arrangements so your guests can prepare.

# The Table is Set: Conversational Guidelines

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Think of the conversation as a journey, driven by every guest's ideas and stories. *On the Table: Racine* conversations should give all participants the chance to share their thoughts.

Focus on generating solutions. Listen for differing viewpoints and experiences, and invite everyone to contribute.

Be ready to share. The Johnson Foundation wants to showcase emerging ideas to spark collaborative action.



# The Table is Set: Conversational Dos and Dont's

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## Do's

- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Invite guests to follow up and expand on ideas.
- Be social!
  - Take photos or record video clips to document the experience.
  - Share your photos, videos or stories on October 18 using hashtag #OTTRacine on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
  - Follow The Johnson Foundation's social media accounts for news and updates @TJFWingspread.
- Call or email Danielle Johnson at [djohnson@johnsonfdn.org](mailto:djohnson@johnsonfdn.org) or 262-681-3336 if you have any questions.

## Dont's

- Micromanage the conversation; let it flow freely.
- Be judgmental or dismissive of any person's comments or ideas.
- Promote argument or unproductive debate. To defuse an argument, stop and take a couple of deep, slow breaths. Then try saying one of the following phrases:
  - What I heard you say is... (shows you care and want to understand them)
  - What's your biggest concern? (allows you to alleviate their fears)
  - Let's take a break until... (allows time to cool off and get a fresh perspective)
  - Do we need to agree about this? (finds a way forward you can both accept)
  - More phrases/ideas can be found [here](#).
- Be afraid to ask us questions – we are ready to help.

# Sample On the Table Conversation

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## ***Welcome***

The host/facilitator welcomes everyone and shares the purpose of the meeting and what guests can expect.

## ***Purpose of Conversation***

It is important to state the purpose of the meeting. Why are you convening people? Is it for networking purposes, to brainstorm solutions, to inform a project, or is it simply providing space for people to come together and connect? For ideas, explore our Racine Speaks website [here](#).

## ***Centering and Introductions***

Ask your guests to center themselves in the present moment. They can do this by closing their eyes, taking three deep breaths, and being fully present in the conversation. After this, provide an opportunity for guests to introduce themselves. Consider providing a prompt to break the ice.

## ***Agreements/Ground Rules***

It is important to set conversation agreements. The host can provide them beforehand and ask for guest feedback, or the group can develop them in real time.

## ***Open the Conversation***

To help get your conversation started, you can utilize our [\*\*Racine Speaks website\*\*](#) which includes data and experiences on education, economy, health, and justice in Racine. Additionally, here are a few sample prompts:

- What, from [\*\*Racine Speaks\*\*](#), surprised you? What made you think differently?
- Share something you love, or are most proud of, about where you live.
- What positive characteristics or qualities does our community embody?

# Sample On the Table Conversation

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## Open the Conversation (Continued)

- What does our community need at this time? What can we do individually or collectively to address those needs?
- If your table includes young people, consider asking them about the issues they observe in their school, neighborhood, and peer groups. How do they see themselves contributing to solutions?

## Deepen the Conversation

- What do we need for change to begin?
- What is your role in making this change a reality?
- Let's choose an issue affecting our community and talk more specifically about how we'd address it if we had adequate resources. Then as a challenge, discuss how we could create change if we had only \$100 and one day.
- Now let's look ahead. Residents from all walks of life across the region will be gathering today for conversations just like ours. How can we use these conversations to bring colleagues, friends, and neighbors together to lead change across greater Racine? What should happen next?

## Close the Conversation

- Thank everyone for joining your conversation.
- Agree upon next steps for action or follow-up.
- Exchange contact information and identify opportunities to stay connected around shared interests (optional).
- Take a group photo!

*For virtual conversations, we strongly suggest a practice run before hosting. Test your virtual background, your camera angle, and microphone. Think about enhancing your conversation by sharing your screen or using breakout rooms.*



# Next Steps for the Host

Congratulations on facilitating a successful conversation! Thank you for coming to the table.

Immediately after your conversation, please do the following:

1. Complete the Host Survey to share how it went and any outcomes. The survey will be emailed the day of the event and will also be available on our website at [www.johnsonfdn.org/ottracine](http://www.johnsonfdn.org/ottracine).
2. Share your group photo on social media with the hashtag #OnTheTableRacine or email it to Megan Dorsey at [mdorsey@johnsonfdn.org](mailto:mdorsey@johnsonfdn.org).
3. Follow up with your guests on any next steps, if discussed.