

# FRICTION LAB

A sisterhood of listening professionals  
who uphold the values of racial, social,  
and environmental justice.



**Listening**   
in the  
**FRICTION**

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## I. Introduction

### Welcome to Friction Lab

Welcome, and thank you for joining us for the first Friction Lab! Friction Lab creates a safe space within 120 minutes to practice having constructive friction conversations.

In this participant guide, you will find more information on your hosts and what you need to get the most out of the Friction Lab event, such as:

- What are friction conversations?
- To-do to prepare for Friction Lab
- Friction Lab Code of Ethics
- The agenda for Friction Lab
- Friction Lab participant guidance
- Framework for Constructive Friction Conversations
- Aftercare and additional resources

This Friction Lab is created and hosted by “Listening in the Friction”.

### Who is “Listening in the Friction”?

“Listening in the Friction” is a sisterhood of listening professionals who uphold the values of racial, social, and environmental justice.

We exist to amplify our members’ work for an equitable world and take powerful collective action to facilitate change.

### What are Friction Conversations?

A friction conversation is one of those essential, yet uncomfortable, conversations that may feel divisive or emotionally charged. That friction between 2 or more people may spark fear.

If you’ve ever felt triggered or hooked in one of these conversations, you know how difficult they can be as you attempt to stand for “what’s right.” Yet, as we see in global conflicts that have been ongoing for thousands of years, each side always believes they are standing for what’s right. “I’m right, you’re wrong” divisiveness is the last thing our world needs more of, yet it seems to be exponentially growing over the last few years.

The question then is: How can you navigate these conversations in ways that allow you to fully express yourself and what you really want to communicate? To stand for what you believe is right, in ways that also exercise true listening, respect, and seeking to understand ... even if you disagree with the other person’s perspective. And how can you do so without feeling powerless, flustered, emotionally charged, or like you want to annihilate the other side?

This is what we will explore and practice in the Friction Lab.

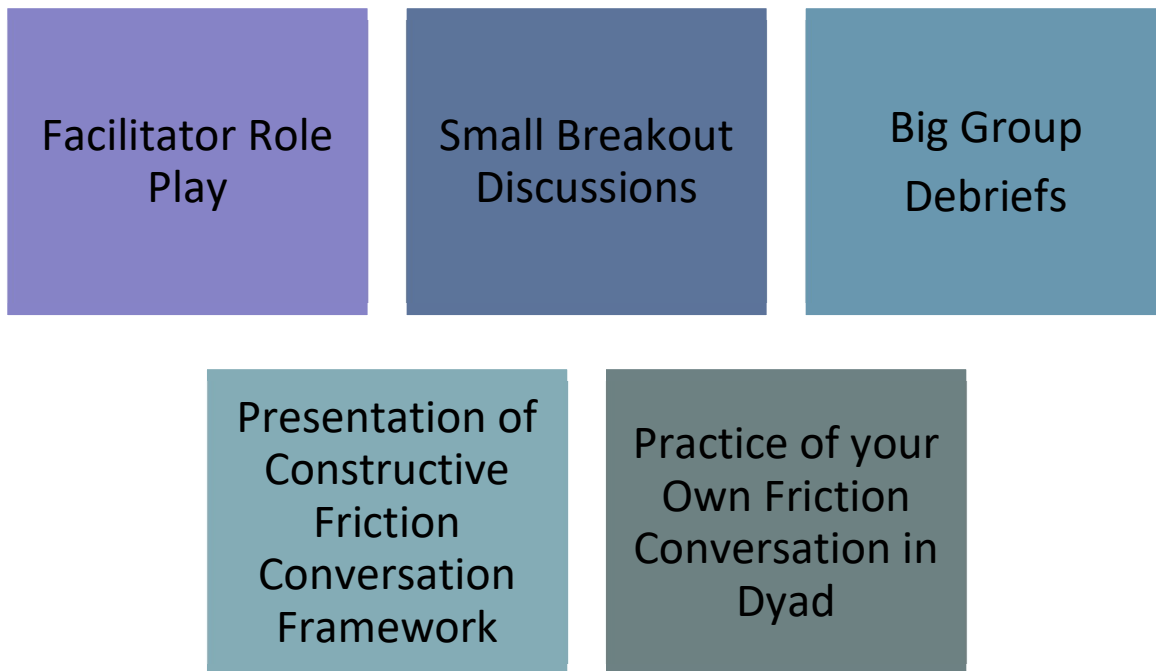
Friction conversations could follow 2 paths:

- **Destructive friction** – A space where differences spark a fire that burns bridges and destroys understanding.
- **Constructive friction** – A space where differences spark the building of something positive, such as new understanding, common ground, or meaningful connection.

## II. What is Friction Lab?

Friction Lab is a 120-minute virtual safe space to hold a conversation and practice your own constructive friction conversations. We will explore the differences between destructive and constructive friction conversations, as well as practice applying the constructive framework to a conversation that's important to you.

Friction Lab will include:



## III. Preparing for Friction Lab

To prepare for your Friction Lab participation, you need to:

- Come prepared with your own friction conversation that you would like to practice
- Look out for the link to join the event which you should have received via email
- Review the Friction Lab Code of Ethics

## IV. Friction Lab Code of Ethics

Please review this Code of Ethics before you arrive at Friction Lab. Following these guidelines is essential for creating a safe space for every participant. If you feel unable to follow any of these, please cancel your registration.

1. I will strive to be judgment free in this learning space.
2. I will demonstrate respect for everyone's thoughts, feelings, opinions even if they are diametrically opposed to the ones that I hold.
3. I will demonstrate judgment free awareness towards myself and my thoughts.
4. I will use "I" statements.
5. I welcome constructive feedback.
6. I will show up on time and fully present, for myself and everyone here.
7. Plan on dialing in 10 minutes ahead of time and stay for the full session.

8. Due to the nature of the conversations and the unique structure for this Friction Lab heavily based in partner interaction, it is critical that you participate in the full experience.
9. Anyone who attempts to join after 5 minutes of the start of the call will miss the important context and will be invited to join a future session.
10. What happens in the Friction Lab stays in the Friction Lab (confidentiality is sacred)

## V. Friction Lab Agenda

1. Welcome & Intention Setting
2. Destructive Facilitator Role Play & Discussion
3. Constructive Facilitator Role Play
4. Presentation of Constructive Friction Conversation Framework
5. Breakout into Dyads: Practice your own Conversation Using Framework
6. Large Group Debrief
7. Closing Breathing Exercise

## VI. Friction Lab Participant Guidance

During the event, friction might arise. Come open and create space for yourself. If sparks arise that cannot be extinguished, please pause the conversation and raise your hand for “Help” on the platform. A Friction Lab co-hostess will join your breakout to assist you as soon as possible.

### Before Dyad

Come prepared with your own friction conversation that you would like to practice. Think about your goal for the conversation and what the other person is like.

### During Dyad

Rotate the role of Person A and Person B with your dyad partner so that you both get to practice your friction conversation. You will hear a ding when it is time to switch roles. Use our Framework for Constructive Friction Conversations to help you.

Person A (Main Speaker):

- Share with Person B in less than a minute:
  - Where are you having this conversation?
  - What is this person’s perspective, attitude, and beliefs about the situation?
  - What kind of tone/volume does this person speak with?
- Take a breath and check-in with yourself:
  - What is your intention in this conversation?
  - What are you trying to accomplish?
  - How do you want to show up?
- As you have this conversation,
  - Can you hear what the other person is actually saying?
  - How can you step into your curiosity?

Person B (Main Listener):


- You are stepping into a role/character for this conversation. Use your natural voice.
- What would this person you’re portraying sound like?
- What are their thoughts or beliefs? (Even if they’re very different from yours)

# Constructive Friction Conversation Framework



 Get in the mindset of constructive friction

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 Think of your goal for the conversation

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 Keep calm & breathe throughout

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 Be curious & reflective

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 Remember, you may both be experiencing fear & unmet needs

 Invite the other person to a safe conversation, expressing your hope for constructive friction

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 Listen openly to the other person's perspective

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 Ask questions to understand

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 Summarize & validate the other's perspective

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 Share your perspective with "I" statements

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 "How could we build from here?"

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 Thank the other person for something specific you learned

## *What is Constructive Friction?*

A space where differences spark the building of something positive, such as new understanding, common ground or meaningful connection.

## VIII. Resources

- Diversity and Inclusion at ICF: <https://coachingfederation.org/about/diversity-and-inclusion>
- ICF Resource Guide: [https://coachingfederation.org/app/uploads/2021/07/ICF-Coach-Training\\_DEIJB-Resource-Guide.pdf](https://coachingfederation.org/app/uploads/2021/07/ICF-Coach-Training_DEIJB-Resource-Guide.pdf)
- Open Mind Library: <https://openmindplatform.org/library/>

## IX. Survey

Since this is a prototype, it would be helpful if you provide feedback about your experience:

<https://bit.ly/FrictionLabSurvey>. Thank you!