Managing Difficult Conversations with Constituents

BRAVER ANGELS: BRAVER POLITICS
Today’s Workshop Team

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Goals

• Show people they have been heard.
• Find areas of commonality
• Share your views in a way likely to be heard
Agenda

- Introductions
- Ground rules
- Principle
- Expectations to abandon
- Basic skills
- Skills practice
Introductions

- Groups of 3 people
- Name
- Position
- Why you came to the workshop
- 6 minutes
Why did you come to this workshop?

- Raise Hand
- Unmute when called upon
- Re-mute yourself when finished
Ground Rules

• Talk about skills, not policies.
• Permission to learn via making mistakes.
• Help each other out as we work on the skills.
• Standard stuff
• That you will persuade the other person that they are wrong and you are right.
• That the other person will use the skills taught in the workshop
• That these skills will work with contentious large groups
The Prime Directive:

Connect First, then Explain Your View.
When people feel heard, their negativity usually decreases.
The Prime Directive:
Connect First, then Explain Your View.

Has this worked for you?
AAA-P

• Acknowledge
• Appreciate
• Agree
• Perspective
A: Acknowledge

Acknowledge the other person’s view and the strength of their feelings about the issue.
How does beginning with acknowledgement contribute to a good exchange?
“I think you are ignoring the crime problem that’s rising in this community and scaring a lot of us. All I hear is Defund the Police or anti-police rhetoric. Of course there are bad apples in policing, but by and large officers are doing a good job. And it’s demoralizing for them to hear that our elected officials don’t support them. The public safety budget is coming up for a vote, and I hope you will do the right thing by expanding the law enforcement presence. I know cops can’t solve every problem, but they are our first line of defense and deserve our full support.”
“You seem to think that throwing more money into policing is going to solve the crime problem. Crime comes from poverty and discrimination, and has to be solved by addressing those problems. Communities of color in particular don’t trust the police, and for good reason. One of the public safety bills under consideration will move funds away from policing and into things like social workers responding to mental health 911 calls rather than armed police showing up. And that bill will fund community agencies that can get at root causes of crime. I urge you to stop over-emphasizing policing and have a broader view of how to promote public safety.”
Personal Reflection

Write down your acknowledgement.
Groups

**Acknowledge**

- Read your Acknowledge response - Taking turns
- Discuss if time permits
- 6 minutes
Who wants to share their statement?
A: Appreciate

Appreciate the person for bringing their concern to you.
Why is it important to affirm?
Stand up and Stretch
A- Agree

Find something to agree with (if possible).
Agree

Why is it important to agree before you go on to disagree?
Personal Reflection

Write down your Agree Statement.
Agree - small group

- Read your Agree Statement - Taking turns
- Talk about how to remind yourself to Agree in real life situations.
- 4 minutes
Agree

Share your statement
Perspective

- Use “I” statements
- Cite sources
- Incorporate
- Avoid labels
- No jargon
Personal Reflection

Write down your Perspective Statement.
Perspective Group

- Read your Perspective Statement - Taking turns
- Discuss with any extra time
- 5 minutes
Who is willing to share their Perspective?
Closure

How will you end the interaction?
Handling Verbal Attacks

- Don’t be either a victim or a counter-attacker.
- Don’t stoop to defending your character or integrity.
- Stay calm and firm.
Exit Skills

- Soft exit: “This conversation is no longer constructive, so I’m going to move on.”
- Medium exit: “What you just said crossed the line into personal attack. If you want to stick with the issue you’re concerned about, I can continue. Otherwise, let’s stop.”
- Hard exit: “I am not going to stay in a conversation where my integrity is questioned, so we’re finished.”
Demonstration of the skills
Demonstration of the skills

What did you see?
Use the camera app on your cell phone and aim at the QR code here. Don’t take the picture! A link will appear to the evaluation.

https://evals.braverangels.org/2229
How do you hope to use these skills in your work?
Special Thanks To....
What’s Next

● Join Us (via QR code)
● Experience a BA Debate
● Try another workshop
● Checkout our Videos
Managing Difficult Conversations

Event Organizer Debrief and Evaluation Review