

GUIDE FOR BETTER DIALOGUE

How can we have meaningful conversations, even when we disagree?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES from the Constructive Dialogue Institute

Let go of winning. Approach conversations with the goal to learn and understand, rather than to convince someone you are right.

Share your story and invite others to do the same. We all have experiences and values that shape our views. Focusing on these stories is a powerful way to build understanding and connection.

Ask questions to understand. Asking questions helps us see context, motivations and values that inform others' views.

Make yourself and others feel heard. Use positive body language, practice active listening and stay open to new perspectives.

When possible, seek common ground. We share more in common than we think. Find places, big and small, where you agree and move the conversation forward with those ideas.

TIPS FOR BETTER CONVERSATIONS

One mic

One person speaks at a time.

Pass or pass for now

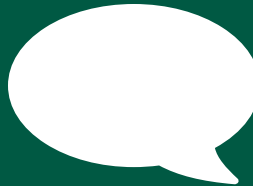
Allow yourself and others to pass on speaking if you are uncomfortable or not sure how to respond.

Respect time limits

Make sure everyone has a chance to share in the time you have.

Speak for yourself, not for others

Express your own experiences and point of view and allow others to speak for themselves.



Show mutual respect and non-judgment

Everyone's viewpoint is valid and shaped by their values and experiences.

Active listening

Paraphrase what has been shared, use good eye contact, and positive tone and body language.

Is this the right time for the conversation?

If emotions are high or participants are not following guidelines, consider whether a conversation at this time is productive.

Good conversations are not a debate

The goal is not to win but to gain understanding.

Asking curious questions is a great way to learn more and better understand others. Curious questions are

- Open-ended
- Positive

- Not leading or judgmental
- Built on what interests you

Examples:

- How do you see things?
- That is really interesting, can you tell me more?
- What options should we explore?

- Why is this issue important to you?
- What experiences shaped your views?
- Have you always felt this way, or have your views changed?