

From Confrontation to Communication: How to Disagree without Risking the Relationship

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What do we mean by *civil discourse*?

civ·il dis·course

/ˈsɪv(ə)l/ /ˈdɪs.kɔːrs/

- It is **not** about...
 - Polite conversation
 - Agreeing to disagree
 - Tone-policing people
- It **is** about...
 - Listening across difference to increase shared understanding around a public issue

What do we mean by *dialogue*?

di·a·logue

/ˈdiː.əl.əɡ, ˈdiː.lɒɡ/

Elevating lived experience and listening across difference to increase shared understanding.

Prepare

- What supports do you need heading into this conversation?
- What can you do to try and keep an open mind as you engage in the conversation?
- What knowledge do you need as you head into this conversation?

Engage

- How can you be an active listener?
- How can you share your perspective constructively?
- How can you remain curious about the other person's story?

Exit

- How do you know if you need to leave a conversation?
- How do you exit a conversation when the other person wants to continue talking?
- How can you practice self-care after an emotionally difficult conversation?

Courageous Conversations

1. Stay engaged
2. Speak your truth
3. Expect to experience discomfort
4. Expect and accept a lack of closure

(Singleton & Hays, 2008)

perspectives



experiences

What is it about *families*?

1. Families can feel like extensions of ourselves (my parent, my grandparent, my sibling, etc.).
2. This can heighten our emotional investment and response.
3. Families have a history; family members have backstories with each other
4. These backstories can spill over into the present moment
5. Family members tend to revert back to childhood roles with each other
6. This makes it harder to stay engaged in present terms

Strategies for dealing with challenging *family members*

1. Remind yourself that they are not you
2. Remind yourself that you are now an adult who can have adult conversations without reliving the past
3. Because family patterns are usually consistent and predictable, you can prepare and practice how to respond differently
4. Resist "conversation bait;" you decide when to engage
5. Allow yourself a personal mantra if the conversation goes awry and you need to exit it. Repeat to yourself, "Do not engage."

full video from presentation:



When Your Loved Ones Voted the Other Way | The New York Times



www.gvsu.edu/civildiscourse/



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