

## Managing Difficult Conversations with Constituents & Colleagues

BRAVER ANGELS:  
BRAVER POLITICS



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## Today's Workshop Team



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Co-Moderator



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Co-Moderator

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- Show constituents & colleagues that you have accurately heard them.
- Find areas of commonality
- Express your views in a way that constituents & colleagues can hear even if they disagree.
- Express your views in a way that colleagues can hear even if they disagree

## Goals

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

## Agenda

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## Introductions

- Groups of 3 people
- Name
- Position
- Why you came to the workshop
- 6 minutes

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- Talk about skills, not policies.
- Permission to learn via making mistakes.
- Help each other out as we work on the skills.
- Standard stuff

## Ground Rules

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- 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

Expectations  
to  
Abandon

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- **No panaceas here.**
- **Relationships matter.**

Keep  
in  
Mind

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## The Prime Directive:

Connect First, then  
Explain Your View.

When people feel heard,  
their negativity usually  
decreases.

**Has this worked  
for you?**

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## 4 Key Principles

- Connect first, then explain your view.
- Aim for “Accurate Disagreement” instead of “Distorted Disagreement.”
- Focus on Policy and Not Underlying Motives
- Strive to be consistent.

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## 4 Key Principles

How have you seen any of these be useful in conversations across political differences?

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## AAA-P

- Acknowledge
- Appreciate
- Agree
- Perspective



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## A: Acknowledge

Acknowledge the other person's view and the strength of their feelings about the issue

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How does beginning with acknowledgement contribute to a good exchange?

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**“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.”**

***Practice:***  
Acknowledge

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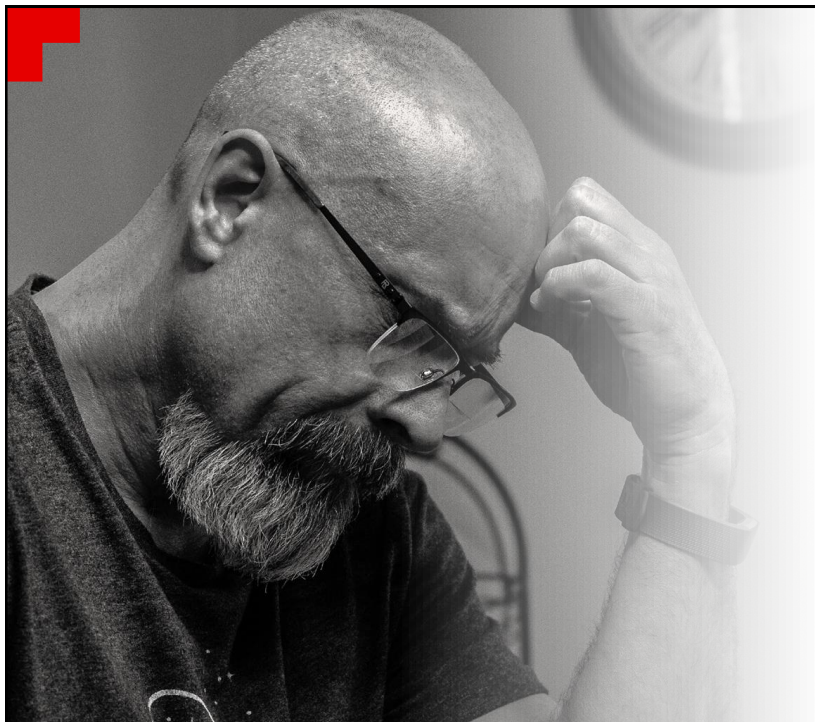
**“You seem to think that throwing more money into policing is going to solve the crime problem. Crime comes from poverty and discrimination, and has to be solved by addressing those problems. Communities of color in particular don’t trust the police, and for good reason. One of the public safety bills 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.”**

***Practice:***  
Acknowledge

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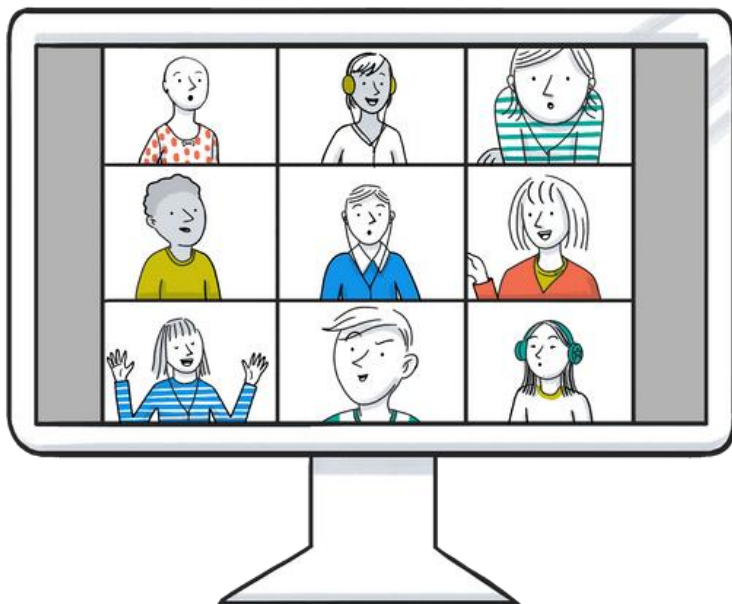


## Personal Reflection

Write down your acknowledgement.

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## Groups Acknowledge

- Read your Acknowledge response - Taking turns
- Discuss if time permits
- 6 minutes

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## Acknowledge

Who wants to  
share their  
statement?

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## A: Appreciate

Appreciate  
the person for  
bringing their  
concern to  
you.

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## Appreciate

Why is it important to affirm?

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## A - Agree

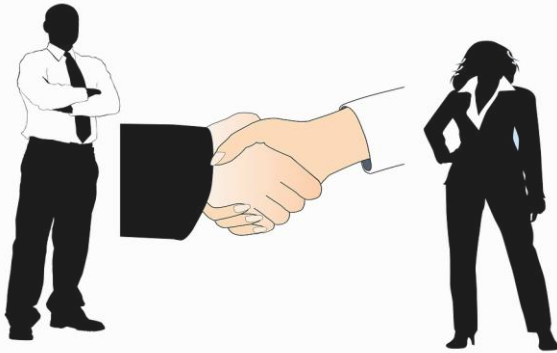
Find something to agree with (if possible).



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## Agree

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

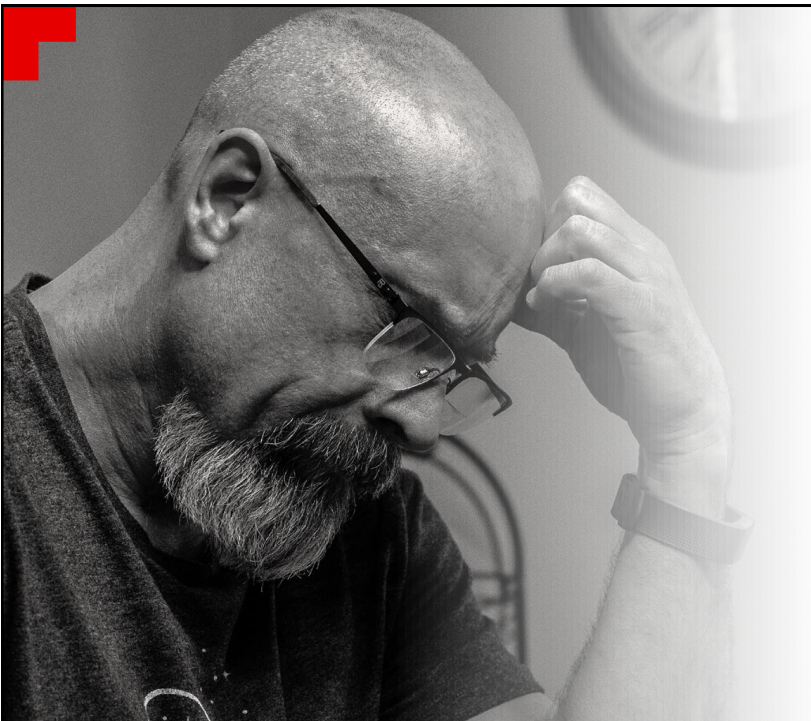


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## Personal Reflection

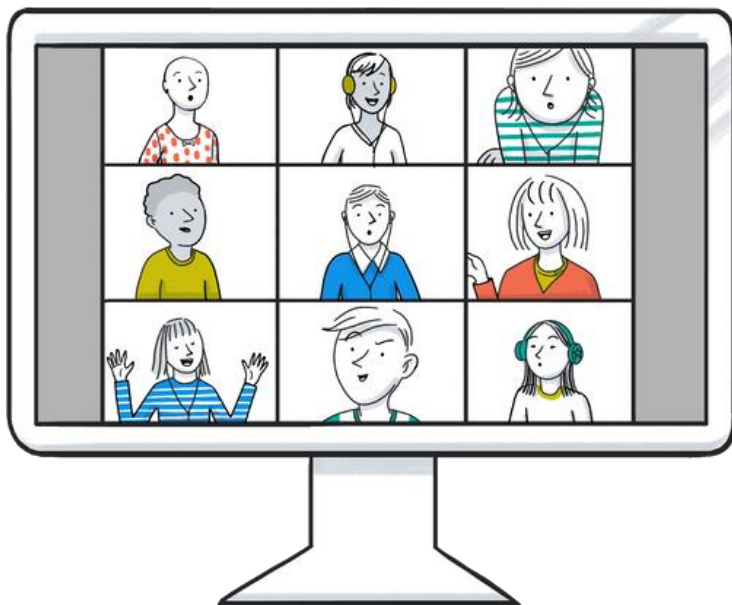
Write down your Agree Statement.



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## Agree - small group

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

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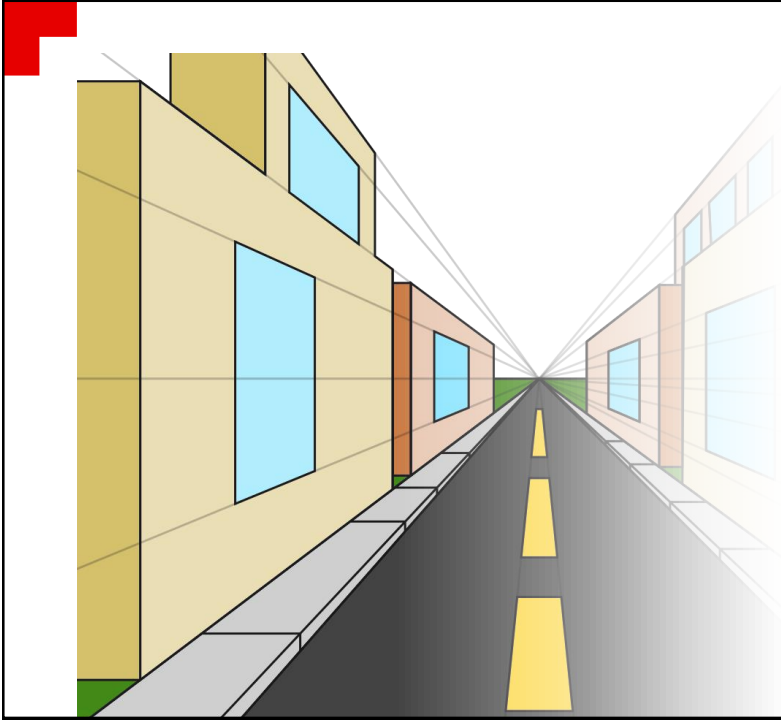
## Agree

Share your statement

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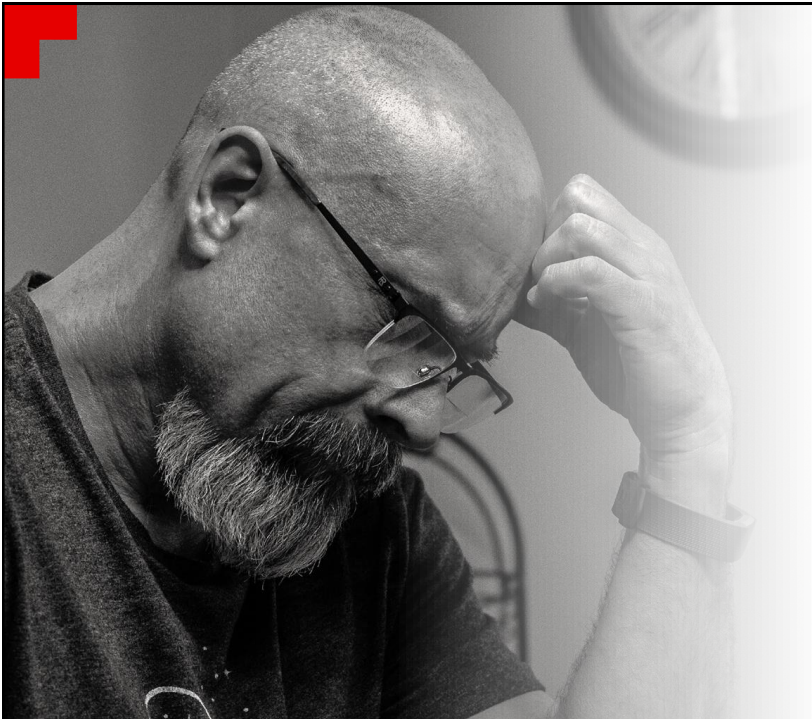




## Perspective

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

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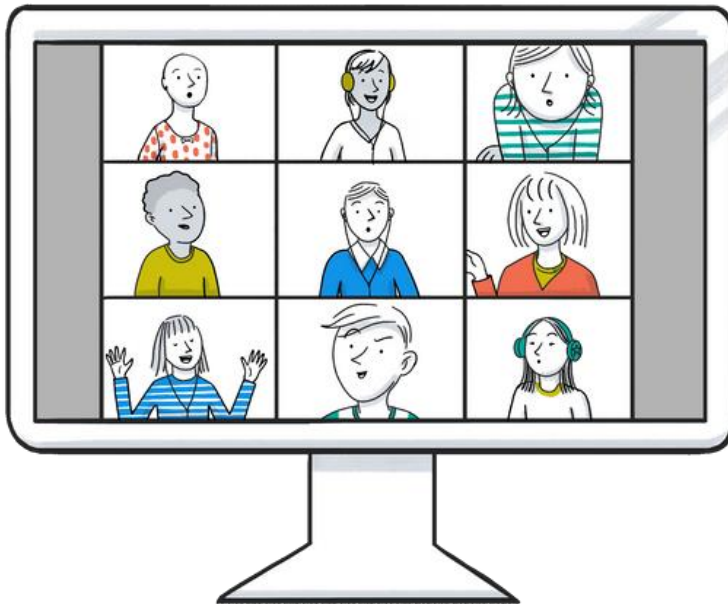


## Personal Reflection

Write down your  
Perspective  
Statement.

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## Perspective Group

- Read your Perspective Statement - Taking turns
- Discuss with any extra time
- 5 minutes

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## Perspective



Who is willing to share their Perspective?

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## Closure

How will you  
end the  
interaction?

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Demonstration of  
the skills:  
Dog Park

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## Demonstration of the skills

What did you see?

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A photograph of a gift wrapped in brown paper. A light green tag is tied to the gift with a piece of white string. The tag has the text "EVENT ID: 1940" written on it in a black, sans-serif font. The gift is wrapped in a simple, rustic style with the string tied in a bow.



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/1940>

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How do you hope to use these skills in your work?

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## Q&A

Do you have any questions for us?

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- Join Us (via QR code)
- Experience a BA Debate
- Try another workshop
- Checkout our Videos

What's Next

