



CREATING MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE

A Discussion Guide to Use with Peers

As a Carolinian ...

I will practice personal and academic integrity;

I will respect the dignity of all persons;

I will respect the rights and property of others;

I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;

I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for the conditions which support their work and development.

Our country is more divided than ever. As demonstrated by the Carolinian Creed, the UofSC community values all people and strives to discuss different opinions in a respectful way, while discouraging bigotry and hatred. During these difficult times, we must all step up as leaders to create the dialogue our campus and communities desperately need. Having conversations with people you disagree with is important now more than ever. Respecting the identities of all is crucial in starting productive dialogue. Below are some tips and questions to get you started!

Tips to try:

- **Practice** Empathy -Try to understand the values of what someone with a conflicting viewpoint is saying.
- **Listen** to understand rather than respond – Exercise active listening to develop genuine questions that seek to understand rather than judge.
- **Challenge** the point and not the person – Aim to focus the conversation on the topic of contention rather than the character or intelligence level of your peer.
- **Research** - Dive into some sources that explain why America is so divided to better understand systems of oppression/privilege that influence many social issues.
- **Reflect** and brainstorm – Spend time reflecting on how you can advocate for identities other than your own and why “us vs them” is so ingrained in the minds of many.
- **Learn** about and try to counter “confirmation bias”
 - 1) Use a media bias chart to explore the reliability and political leaning of your news sources
 - 2) Seek out sources that may not align with your opinion OR compare multiple sources on one topicHere are some of our favorites:
 - Allsides.com
 - Procon.org
 - Factcheck.org
 - Politifact.com
 - The Skimm

Questions to ask:

- 1) How do you feel about current events happening in our country?
- 2) What experiences or values influence your viewpoint on this issue?
- 3) What does democracy mean to you? Why is democracy significant to our nation's functioning?
- 4) What affect do these events have on us as college students? How does it affect our other identities?
- 5) How can we use our sphere of influence to create positive change?

Looking for additional resouces?

We are here to help!



Leadership and Service Center
University of South Carolina