



Resources for Dialogue and Depolarizing Conversation

The polarized nature of conversation has been stifling—in politics, education, personal relationships, and the workplace. Effective tools and frameworks for dialogue can help us all navigate difficult conversations, so we can move forward in compromise and community. This inventory of nonpartisan resources for dialogue and depolarizing conversation is a [living document](#) put together by the [Civic Health of Wisconsin initiative](#).

Meaningful Vocabulary

Constructive dialogue: A form of conversation in which people who have different values, beliefs, and perspectives seek to build new ways to understand and interact with each other, even as they sustain commitments to their own principles and perspectives ([Constructive Dialogue Institute, 2022](#)).

Intentional listening: Intentional listening is active and voluntary focus on the speaker, with the intent of understanding ([Very Well Mind, 2023](#)).

Nonpartisan: Not biased towards a specific political group.

Political polarization: Divergence of political attitudes to ideological extremes ([European Center for Populism Studies, 2023](#)).

Restorative justice: A broad term encompassing a growing social movement to institutionalize peaceful approaches to redressing harm, solving problems, and upholding human rights ([Suffolk University, 2023](#)).

Organizations & Resources to Learn From

Forming Nonpartisan Relationships

[Braver angels](#) "Building a House United"

- Offers opportunities for people to come together across party lines and form productive relationships through workshops, eCourses, debates, 1:1 conversations, and speaker presentations. [Check out this link to become a member.](#)

[Crossing Party Lines](#) "Have a conversation that brings America together"

- Crossing Party Lines is an organization that hosts guided conversations in order to avoid polarized discourse. They specifically focus on the differences between listening politics and talking politics. Helps people foster relationships they otherwise wouldn't have.

[How To Become A Better Listener](#) Harvard Business Review Article

- This resource offers skills to become a more intentional listener during conversation. Listening intentionally is a great way to have more productive conversations.

[How to Disagree Productively and Find Common Ground](#) TedTalk

- Presents strategies to find a common ground in conversation over a variety of settings, whether it be with friends and family, or with important professional relationships. Great resource to present to folks rather than investing in workshops/guided conversations.

Programming Resources

[Urban Rural Action](#) "All UR Action programs bring together Americans across divides"

- URA provides free strategies and activities to put intentional listening and productive conversations into practice. [Explore URA's dialogue and facilitation approaches here.](#)

[Center for Creative Leadership](#) "Advance the understanding, practice, and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide"

- Participate in programs, licensing, coaching and customized solutions for a range of settings such as k-12 education, higher education, nonprofits, women's leadership, DEI etc,. People who participate are able to go forward with a new understanding of communication.

[Days of Dialogue](#) "[Creating] dialogue on sensitive social issues among diverse community groups"

- Hosts facilitated conversations around sensitive topics such as alternative policing, gun violence prevention, and community health. Informal and not time consuming way to engage in productive conversation. For a free consultation for a conversation, call: (213)-346-3271.

[Learning For Justice](#) "To be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond"

- Toolkit of Restorative Justice practices that can be taught in the classroom. This resource explains how to create a safer and more equitable school environment. Presents both school and community-wide approaches.

[Tips for Difficult Conversations](#) by the Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution

- List of 10 strategies for engaging in divisive conversation. Great free resource to present before starting a conversation on polarization or practicing intentional listening.

Community Building & Restorative Justice

[National Association for Community and Restorative Justice](#) “[Serving] people and organizations committed to building community and addressing harm”

- Hosts conferences on community advocacy and restorative justice. Caters to students, individuals, and institutions. [Become a member.](#)

[The Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution](#) “Revolutionizing the Science and Practice of Peace and Conflict”

- Up-to-date information on social justice practices, latest news in and research on polarization, and community building. They offer certificates in conflict resolution and cooperation at different levels such as advanced and practicing.

[Everyday Democracy](#) “[With] support, resources, and power, communities can create change from within”

- Technical assistance to groups and people in order to provide support for local democracy. Focused through a racial equity lens. Provides training, coaching, and tools in order to build capacity within organizations.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

[Civil Conversations Project](#) “Changing the Narrative About Race in America”

- Having uncomfortable conversations about race in America through published writing, documentary filming, podcasting, and blogging. Uses public media to challenge beliefs and encourage having difficult conversations. [Click here to sign up for a guided conversation workshop.](#)

[Learning For Justice](#) “To be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond”

- Toolkit of Restorative Justice practices that can be taught in the classroom. This resource explains how to create a safer and more equitable school environment. Presents both school and community-wide approaches. [Sign up for a workshop.](#)

[Hope in Cities](#) “A global network of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds committed to healing historical harms”

- Organization with resources on truth, racial healing, through different fellowships, cohorts, strategic planning, facilitation, and dialogue.