



# Managing Difficult Conversations with Constituents

BRAVER ANGELS:  
BRAVER POLITICS



# Today's Workshop Team



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Co-Moderator

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Co-Moderator

## Goals

- Show people they have been heard.
- Find areas of commonality
- Share your views in a way likely to be heard

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

## Agenda





## Introductions

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

## Why did you come to this workshop?

- Raise Hand
- Unmute when called upon
- Re-mute yourself when finished



- 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

- 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



## **The Prime Directive:**

**Connect First, then  
Explain Your View.**

**When people feel heard,  
their negativity usually  
decreases.**

## **The Prime Directive:**

**Connect First, then  
Explain Your View.**

**Has this worked  
for you?**



## AAA-P

- Acknowledge
- Appreciate
- Agree
- Perspective



## A: Acknowledge

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







How does beginning with acknowledgement contribute to a good exchange?

**“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

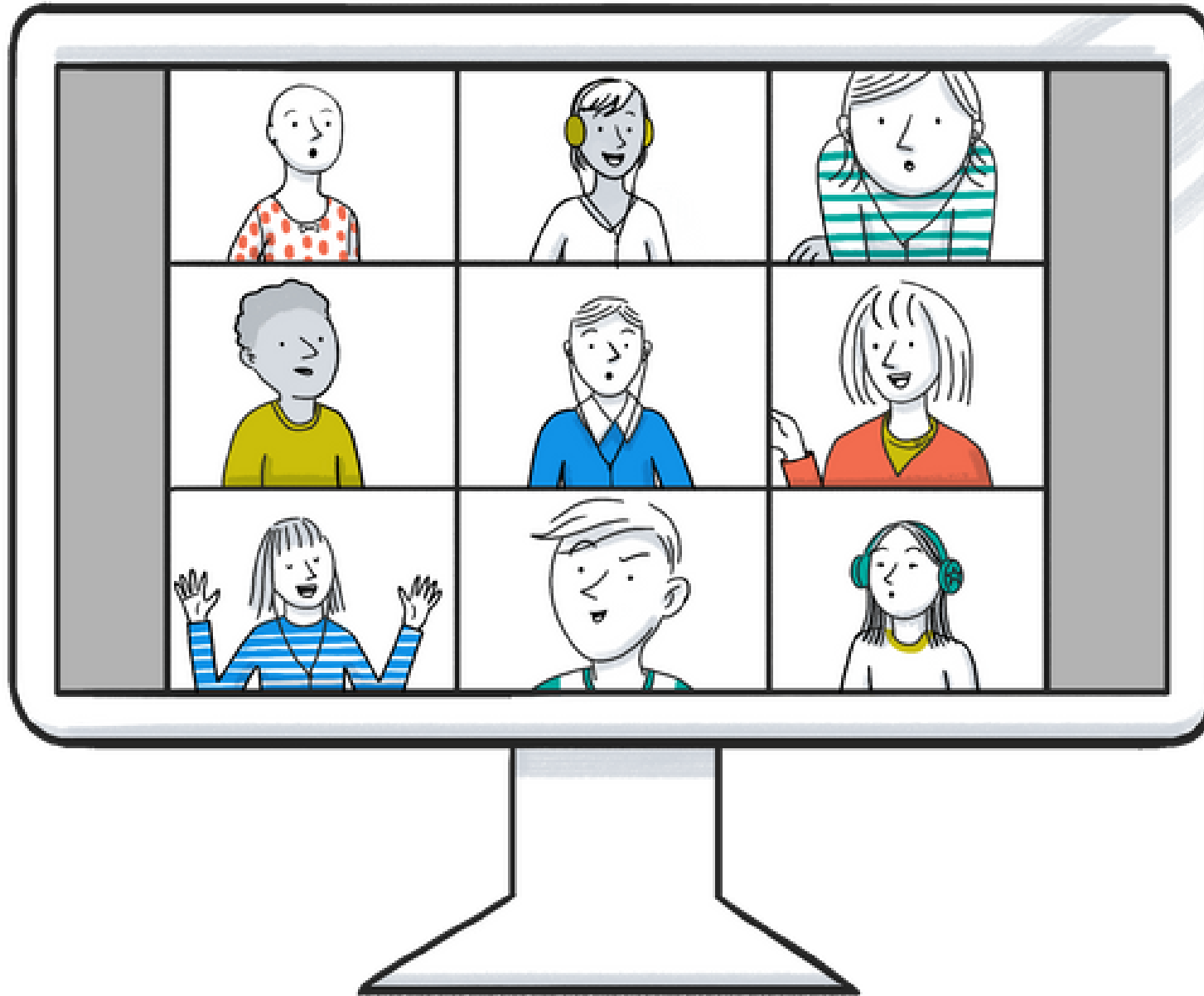


**“You seem to think that throwing more money into policing is going to solve the crime problem. Crime comes from poverty and discrimination, and has to be solved by addressing those problems. Communities of color in particular don’t trust the police, and for good reason. One of the public safety bills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

## Personal Reflection

Write down your acknowledgement.



## Groups Acknowledge

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



# Acknowledge

Who wants to  
share their  
statement?



## A: Appreciate

Appreciate the person for bringing their concern to you.

## Appreciate

Why is it important to affirm?



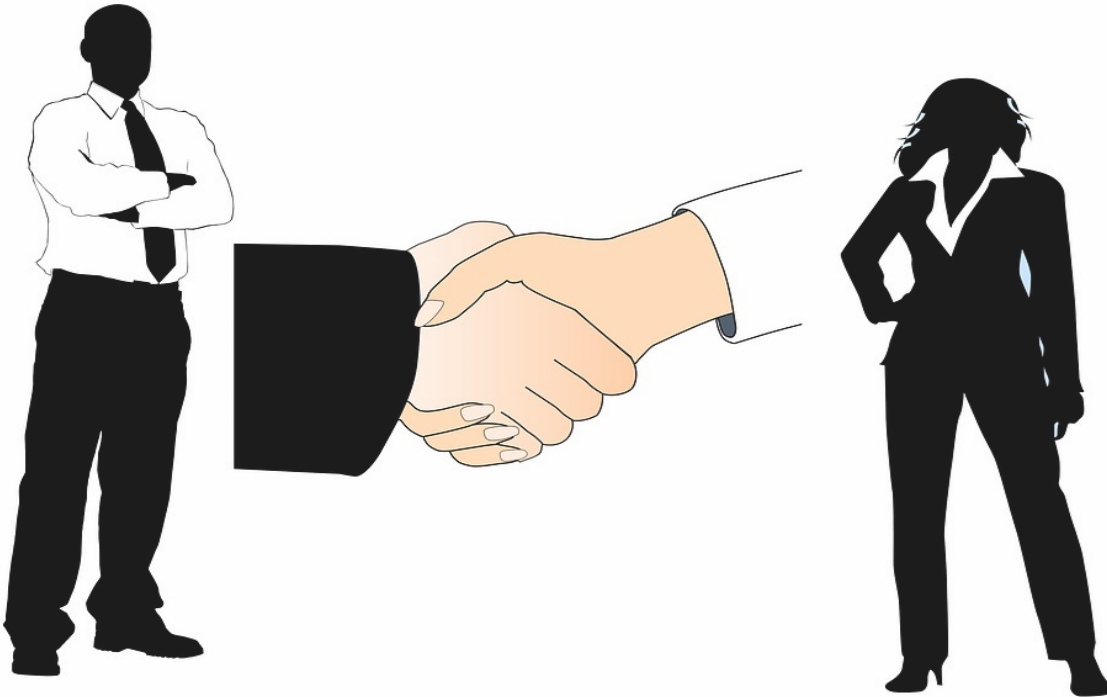


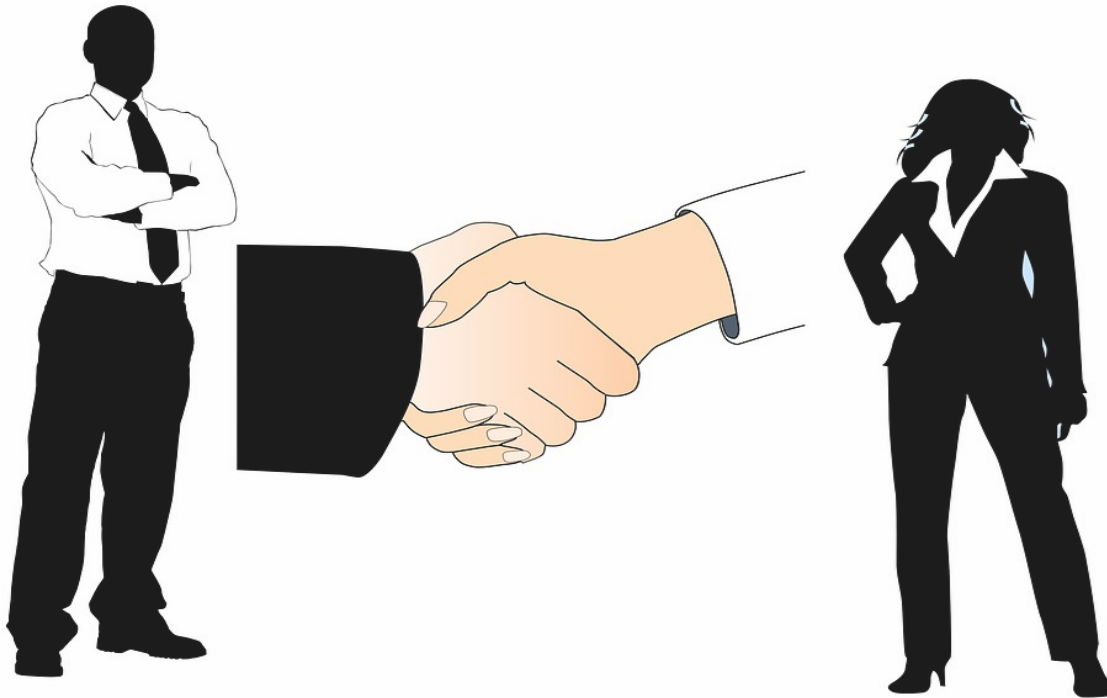


## Stand up and Stretch

## A- Agree

Find something to  
agree with  
(if possible).





## Agree

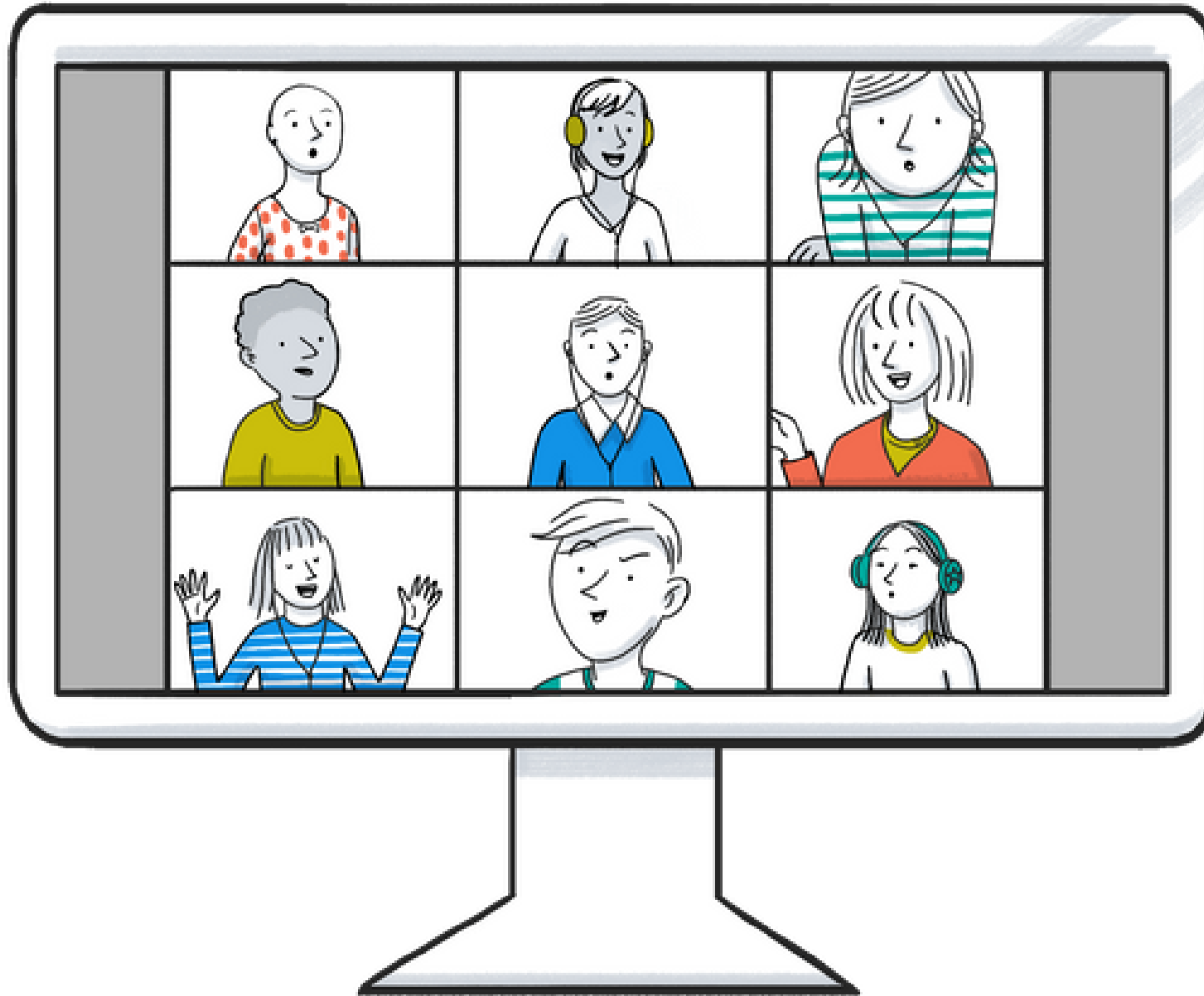
Why is it important to agree before you go on to disagree?





## Personal Reflection

Write down your Agree Statement.



## Agree - small group

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



## Agree

Share your  
statement





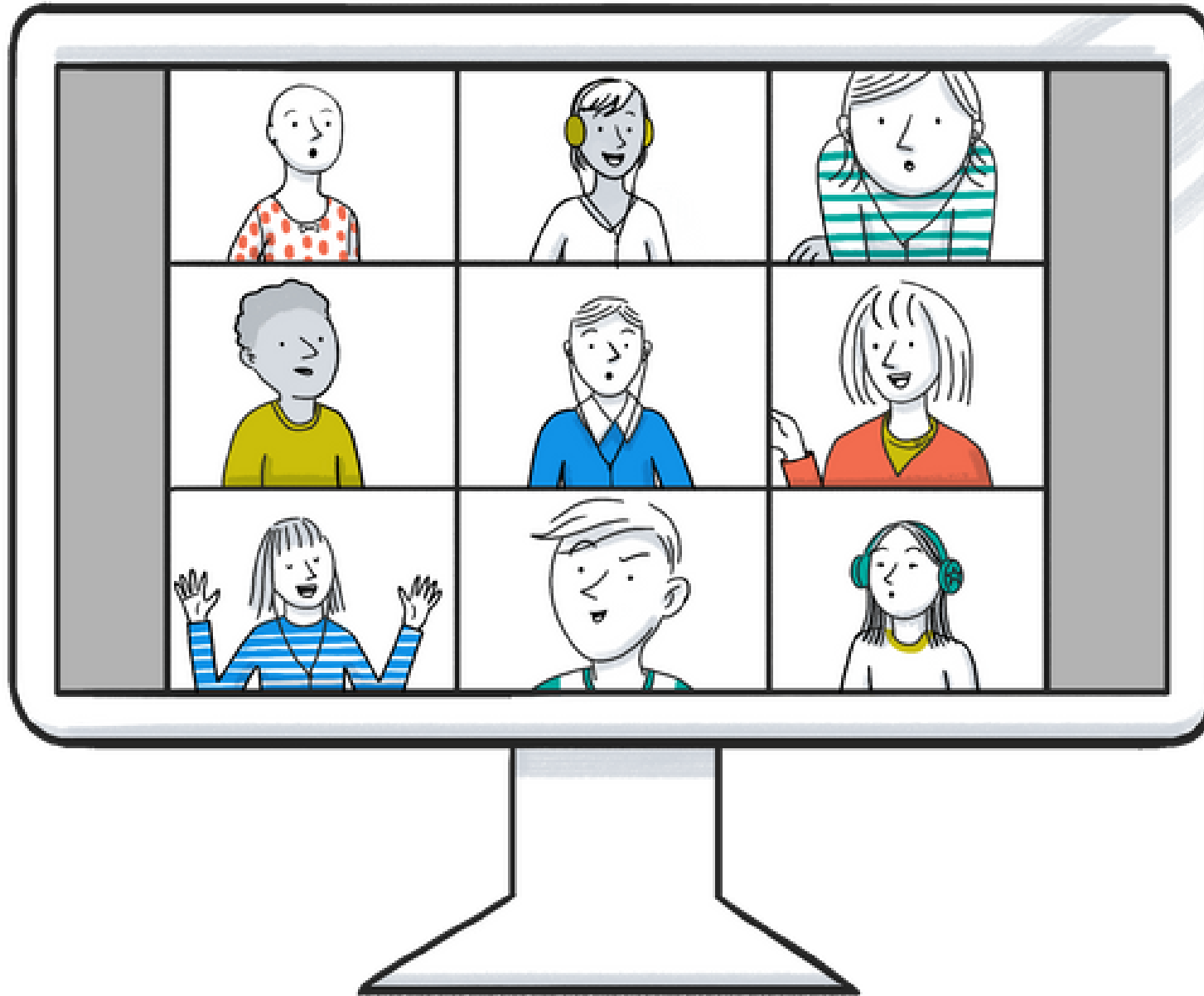
# Perspective

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



## Personal Reflection

Write down your Perspective Statement.



## Perspective Group

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

# Perspective



Who is willing to  
share their  
Perspective?



## Closure

How will you  
end the  
interaction?



## Handling Verbal Attacks

- Don't be either a victim or a counter-attacker.
- Don't stoop to defending your character or integrity.
- Stay calm and firm.





EXIT

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## Exit Skills

- Soft exit: “This conversation is no longer constructive, so I’m going to move on.”
- Medium exit: “What you just said crossed the line into personal attack. If you want to stick with the issue you’re concerned about, I can continue. Otherwise, let’s stop.”
- Hard exit: “I am not going to stay in a conversation where my integrity is questioned, so we’re finished.”



Demonstration of  
the skills



Demonstration of  
the skills

What did you see?

# Wrapping Up - Evaluation Form

EVENT ID: 2229

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/2229>



# Braver Angels

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





Special  
Thanks  
To....



*Group  
Picture!*

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

## What's Next







# Managing Difficult Conversations

Event Organizer Debrief and  
Evaluation Review