

Civil Discourse for Citizenship

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HUMAN VALUES



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

It seems like we're losing the ability to talk to each other about our political disagreements or to work together to solve our political problems. Often we are **trapped in ideological bubbles** where we only hear from people who already agree with us.



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When we do try to talk to people who disagree with us, **it feels like we're talking past, rather than to, each other. Too often public discourse is disrespectful, angry, or even threatening.** Many of us are tempted to give up on controversial discussions altogether.



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WHY

Civil Discourse?

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Why Civil Discourse ?

The capacity for vigorous and respectful discussion across disagreements is fundamental for the health of our democracy.

Expands **knowledge** and
promotes **understanding**

Builds civic **trust** and
a sense of **community**

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Why Civil Discourse ?

Civil discourse does not replace other forms of democratic engagement, but it is the aspect of citizenship that a public university is uniquely well-positioned to promote.

Advances Ohio State's **mission** and
shared **values**

Encourages personal **growth** and
social **engagement**

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the 4Cs

Be Curious

Be Charitable

Be Conscientious

Be Constructive

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The 4Cs

Be **Curious**, Charitable, Conscientious, and Constructive



The 4Cs

be Curious

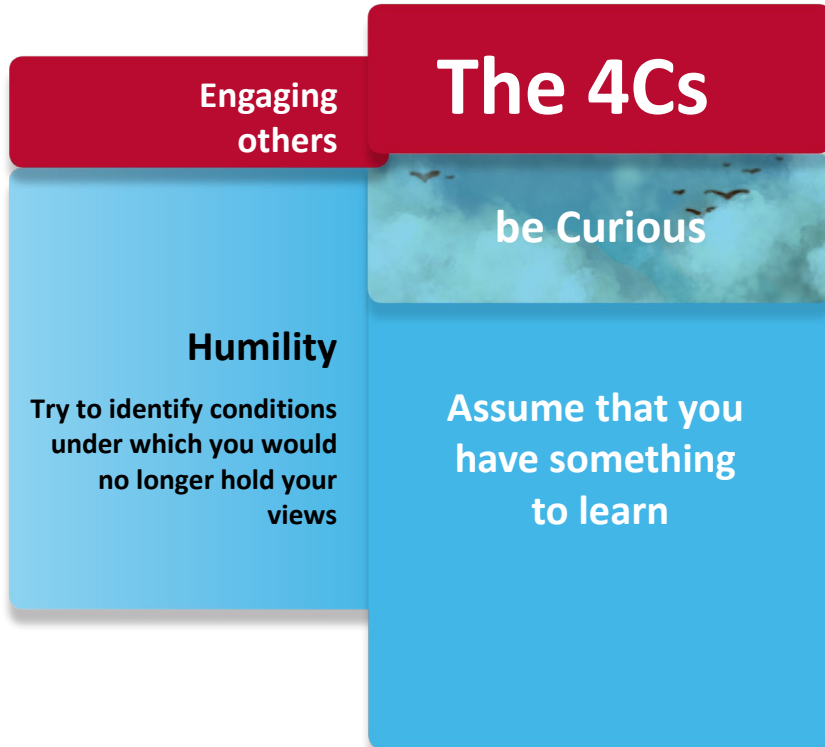
Assume that you
have something
to learn

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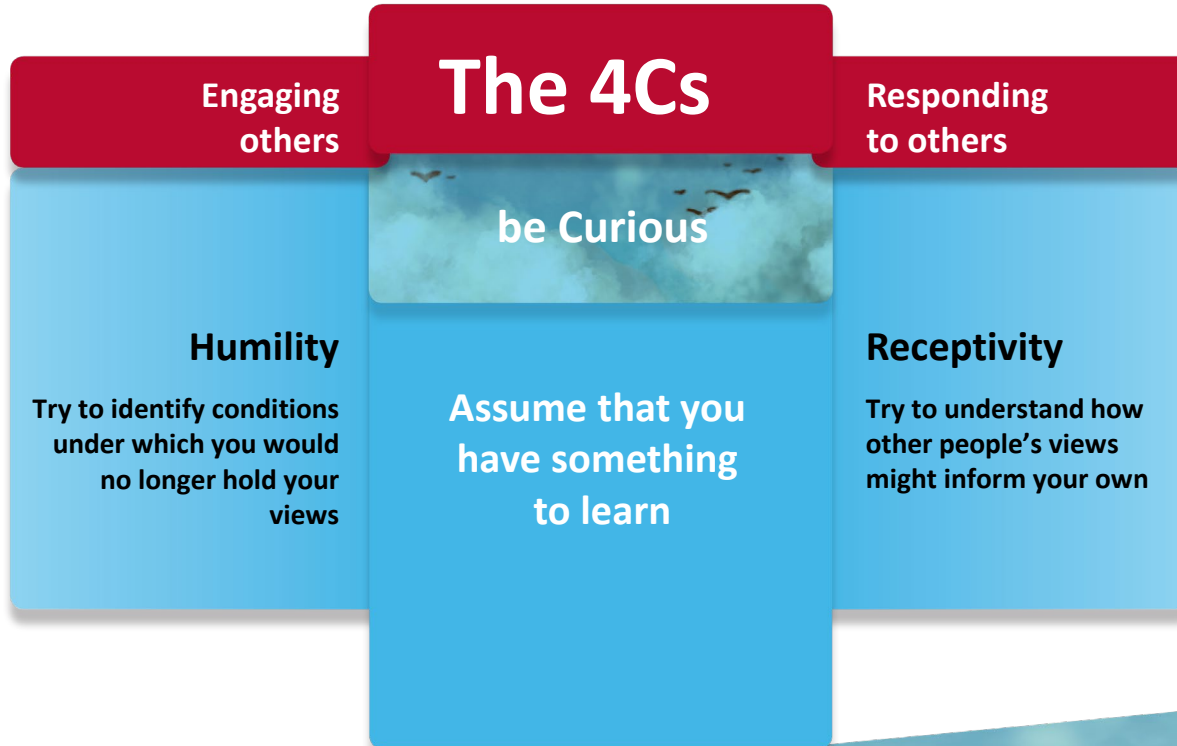


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We often disagree about what key concepts mean, how to weigh competing values, and how to evaluate the evidence.

Civil discourse requires that we remain open to the possibility that people we disagree with might have something to teach us.

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The 4Cs

Be Curious, **Charitable**, Conscientious, and Constructive



The 4Cs

be Charitable

Assume that each
participant has
good intentions

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Be Curious, **Charitable**, Conscientious, and Constructive



Engaging
others

The 4Cs

be Charitable

Empathy

Try to describe other
people's views in a way
that they would
recognize and accept

Assume that each
participant has
good intentions

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The 4Cs

Engaging
others

Empathy

Try to describe other
people's views in a way
that they would
recognize and accept

be Charitable

Assume that each
participant has
good intentions

Responding
to others

Forgiveness

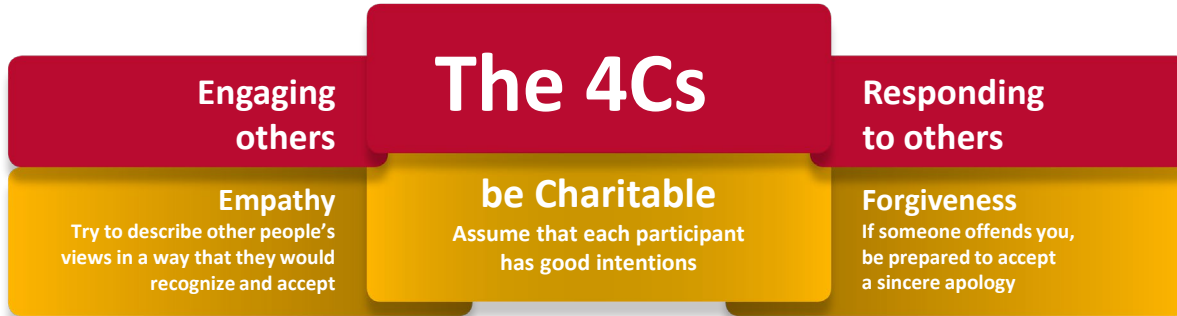
If someone offends you, be
prepared to accept
a sincere apology

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Sometimes we look for reasons to dismiss rather than engage those who disagree with us. Civil discourse requires that we try to understand where people are coming from and accept that we all sometimes make mistakes.

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Be Curious, Charitable, **Conscientious**, and Constructive



The 4Cs

be Conscientious

Listen carefully and
speak thoughtfully

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Engaging
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Fairness

Don't exaggerate the
strengths of your views or
the flaws of others'

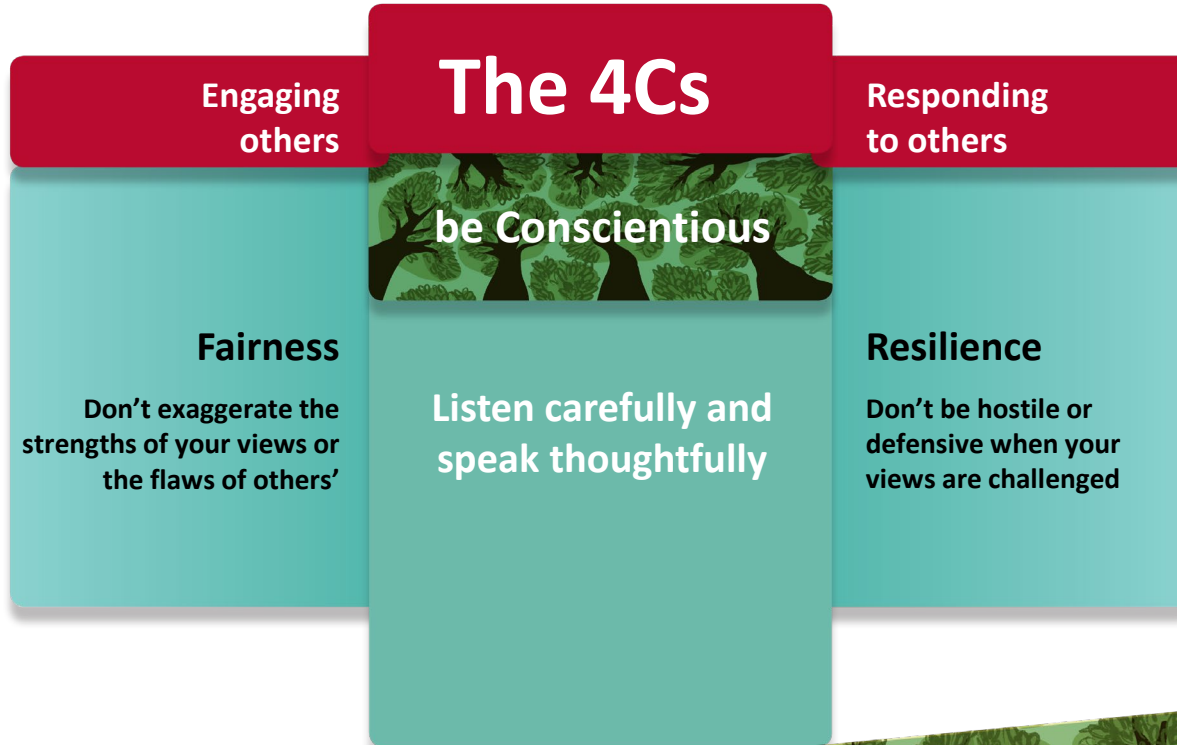
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It is sometimes tempting to make claims that we can't back up with good evidence, and to try to talk over or shut down people who disagree with us. Civil discourse requires that we proportion our claims to the available evidence and allow others to challenge our beliefs and values even when it makes us feel uncomfortable or angry.

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Be Curious, Charitable, Conscientious, and **Constructive**



The 4Cs

be Constructive

Remember that the goal
is not to win,
but to promote better
understanding

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Engaging
others

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be Constructive

Practicality

Look for opportunities to
work toward common
ground

Remember that the goal
is not to win,
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A democracy whose citizens aren't able to communicate across lines of disagreement lacks a healthy civic culture.

Civil discourse requires that we remain open-minded and committed to working together to address important problems.

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The 4Cs

Be **Curious**, **Charitable**, **Conscientious**, and **Constructive**

The 4Cs		
Engaging others		Responding to others
Humility Try to identify conditions under which you would no longer hold your views	be Curious Assume that you have something to learn	Receptivity Try to understand how other people's views might inform your own
Empathy Try to describe other people's views in a way that they would recognize and accept	be Charitable Assume that each participant has good intentions	Forgiveness If someone offends you, be prepared to accept a sincere apology
Fairness Don't exaggerate the strengths of your views or the flaws of others'	be Conscientious Listen carefully and speak thoughtfully	Resilience Don't be hostile or defensive when your views are challenged
Practicality Look for opportunities to work toward common ground	be Constructive Remember that the goal is not to win, but to promote better understanding	Flexibility Be prepared to change your views

Taken together, the 4Cs give us a concrete and practical set of guidelines for conducting ourselves in civil discourse, both as we engage with others, and as we respond to them.

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cehv.osu.edu/civil-discourse-initiative



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