



Calvert Peace Project

Broadview Church | Peace Through Action

Peaceful Speakers Event

Transformative Listening and Other Essential Skills for Facilitating Civic Dialogue

Mon. May 16, 2022

Sheri Tardio

Community Mediation Center of Calvert County

Jessica Harding

Peace Through Action USA

**TRANSFORMATIVE
LISTENING**



& OTHER ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR FACILITATING
CIVIC CONVERATIONS

Monday, 5/16/2022

7:00-8:30 PM

PeaceThroughAction.org/Calvert | [@CalvertPeaceProject](https://twitter.com/CalvertPeaceProject) | [#CalvertPeaceProject](https://twitter.com/CalvertPeaceProject)

Calvert Peace Project Purpose

Increase understanding, collaboration, and community among youth and adults in Calvert County, Maryland by providing civic and social engagement activities with a focus on peace.

Key Activities

- Peaceful Leaders Youth Program
- Adult peacebuilder preparation course
- Peaceful Speakers series
- Peaceful Readers book club
- Peaceful Viewers film and discussion nights
- Civic dialogues
- Community service projects



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Session Goals

- Reflective Listening
- Listening Practice
- The Facilitator's Role
- The Facilitator's Toolkit
- Guidelines
- Setting the Tone
- Actions that support and actions that shut down conversations
- Living Room Conversations
- How to Respond to Challenging Situations
- Upcoming Events



Reflective Listening

- Reflective Listening
 - Being present for the speaker
 - Repeating back the important points that have been expressed
 - Uses the speaker's own words to reflect back
- Reflective Listening allows individuals to:
 - Feel that they are being heard
 - Hear their own words
 - Correct any misunderstandings
 - Clarify what they really mean



Reflective Listening

When people feel they are being heard, they are more able to hear the other's point of view. As we hear ourselves and each other, we gain clarity on what is important to us and to the other person. We are then more likely to be able to work together to resolve conflict.

Listen Like a Dog...

Listen WITHOUT:

- Interrupting
- Judging
- Giving advice
- Trying to fix the problem
- Offering an opinion
- Asking too many questions
- “Stealing” the other person’s story



“Here’s why I will be a good person. Because I listen. I cannot speak, so I listen very well. I never interrupt, I never deflect the course of the conversation with a comment of my own...Learn to listen! I beg of you. Pretend you are a dog like me and listen to other people rather than steal their stories.”

It's Not About the Nail



Listening Practice Exercise



DOs

- **Maintain Eye Contact**
- **Look interested – BE interested**
- **Be aware of what is said**
- **Be aware of what is not said**
- **Ask questions to clarify (not a lot!)**



Listening Practice Exercise

“A goal I am working on and some things I am doing to achieve it...”

Partner A speaks for **2 min.** & Partner B listens

Partner B reflects back the main points for **1 min.**

Partner A clarifies or comments for **1 min.**

Switch → Partner B speaks for **2 min.**



The Facilitator's Role

A Facilitator ...

- Follows/Not in charge
- There are no “correct” answers
- No end goal-just good conversation (unless participants specify a goal)
- Does not express their personal opinions/neutral
- Comfortable with conflict; doesn't try to shut it down
- Not a disciplinarian-group decides how to deal with situations



Facilitator's Toolkit



- **Reflections:**



- Mirror comments
- close to participants' language
- match emotional level



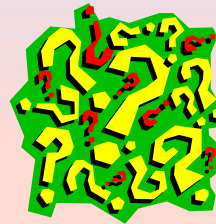
- **Check-Ins:**

- “Does that sound about right?”
- “What would you like to do?”
- “Is this still useful?”

- **Summaries:**



- By subject area
- back-and-forth among participants
- not taking sides



- **Following (Open-Ended) Questions:**

- “Would you like to say more about that?”
- “What are your thoughts?”

- **Silence:**

- Staying in the moment
- comfortable with conflict



Setting the Tone



Set a *CONVERSATIONAL* tone

Allow the participants *CHOICES*

Follow and honor where they are...

REMINDER: Facilitators are not part of the conversation. Our job is to support the participants' conversation.



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10 Actions that Shut Down Conversation

1. Facilitator is stiff and nervous...not having fun.
2. Facilitator is friendlier to some than others.
3. Facilitator takes control and establishes him/herself as the “leader” in the role of a teacher. Remember: the discussion belongs to the group, not the discussion leader. The facilitators are there to help the participants have a conversation, not teach, push their own agenda, or “get to” a particular outcome.
4. Facilitator makes all the decisions as to how people will have the conversation, including setting guidelines for them.
5. Facilitator advocates for some people and ideas.



10 Actions that Shut Down Conversation



6. Facilitator avoids and ignores conflict.
7. Facilitator makes judgments regarding comments, ideas, and/or progress.
8. Facilitator allows a few people to dominate the conversation.
9. Facilitator inserts opinions and personal stories, being the center of attention.
10. Facilitator does not demonstrate good listening skills and “reframes” what people are saying and feeling to soften the message.



10 Actions that Support Good Conversation



1. Facilitator creates a safe space by setting the tone for the conversation, remaining relaxed, non-judgmental, non-authoritarian.
2. Facilitator supports the participants and their conversation rather than directing the participants and leading the discussion to an intended result.
3. Facilitator lets go of the need to “control” the process and/or content, trusting the participants to decide what is most important for them.
4. Facilitator maximizes opportunities for participant choice.
5. Facilitator avoids taking sides and advocating for people or ideas.



10 Actions that Support Good Conversation

6. Facilitator is comfortable with conflict, remaining calm and centered.
7. Facilitator holds up disagreement, as well as areas of agreement.
8. Facilitator interacts with participants in a balanced manner making sure everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard.
9. Facilitator avoids giving advice and making suggestions.
10. Facilitator demonstrates and models good listening skills.



Guidelines



- Speak from the heart <3
- Listen with respect/ Share the air
- Keep confidentiality
- Okay to “pass”
- Others?



Lead Your Own Community Conversation



“belonging starts with conversation.

We connect people across divides—politics, age, gender, race, nationality, and more—through guided conversations proven to build understanding and transform communities.”

Toolkits, Conversation Guides, and Resources on how to join or host a conversation can be found at their website:

www.livingroomconversations.org



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Responding to Challenging Situations

- Impasse
- Getting side-tracked
- Interruptions
- Discussion hog
- The critic
- Silent but deadly
- People not participating
- Conflict



Upcoming Events



- **40-Hour Basic Mediation training on Transformative Mediation, Community Mediation Center of Calvert**
 - **Dates 6/3, 6/4, 6/5 & 6/10, 6/11, 6/12**
- **Civic Dialogue hosted by Calvert Library System, follow-up to Productive Community Conversation**
 - **Dates: Fall 2022**



Project Contact Information

Website

PeaceThroughAction.org/Calvert

Social Media

FB, IG: [@calvertpeaceproject](https://www.facebook.com/calvertpeaceproject)

TW: [@calvertpeace](https://twitter.com/calvertpeace)

[#CalvertPeaceProject](https://www.facebook.com/CalvertPeaceProject) [#PeaceBeginsInCalvert](https://www.facebook.com/PeaceBeginsInCalvert)

Jessica Harding, Peace Agent

calvert@peacethroughaction.org



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