



How to...



Talk to people you disagree with

Use these ideas to avoid arguments and have meaningful conversations.

Everyone occasionally has disagreements with friends or family members. For example, you and your friends might not agree about what game to play at recess, which restaurant makes the best pizza, or which baseball team is the best in the league. Sometimes you may also have different views than a friend or family member about more serious topics, like events happening in the US or around the world. While disagreements can be uncomfortable, there are some steps you can take to make conversations more civil and productive. Here's how.

See their perspective

Even if you don't share someone's point of view, you can still listen to what they have to say. Show that you're paying attention by listening attentively without interrupting them. Think about how their life experiences may be different from yours, which gives them a perspective that's different from yours too. Another way to show that you're listening is by asking questions or repeating what they said. You can start by saying, "OK. If I understand you, you are saying..."

Use respectful language

When someone has an opinion you don't agree with, it can be easy to dismiss it—especially if it's on a subject

you're passionate about. Some people shoot down others' opinions by using sarcasm or attacking the person's judgment. (If you've had this happen to you, you know it doesn't feel good!) Avoid using insulting adjectives, like "stupid," "dumb," or "ridiculous." Instead, focus on speaking calmly. Start with statements that begin with "I" instead of "You." For example, you might lead your opinion with "I feel" or "I see this another way."

Stick to the facts

If you have a strong opinion, you can make a better case for it with facts instead of feelings. Start by asking if you can share your opinion. Then relax your shoulders and say what you would like to say in a calm voice. If you get interrupted, gently remind the person that you gave them a turn to speak and now you would like to speak. Then give the person a chance to respond.

Find common ground

You may find that you can't change the other person's mind, and they may not change yours. Still, look for points you do agree on. You may also gain a better understanding of each other's opinion. In the end, it's worth the effort because healthy communication builds strong relationships and communities.

WOW!
The longest debate marathon lasted 27 hours, 58 minutes, and was achieved by the College Historical Society at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, in 2023.

Ways to feel calm



If you're feeling stressed out, here are some quick solutions to feeling calm and in control.

Get outside Exercise can help you forget the irritations of the day. Do what brings you joy, whether kicking a soccer ball, running, or doing yoga.

Keep a journal Writing down your feelings can help you vent your frustrations. You can also record your gratitude for what's going right, which can help give you perspective.

Pet an animal Research shows that simply petting a dog lowers the stress hormone cortisol and increases the feel-good hormone oxytocin.