

Engage beyond the screen with our offline conversation guide

Our Offline Conversation Guide is designed to help us move away from online debates and engage in face-to-face, meaningful conversations. This resource offers practical tips and strategies to foster empathy and understanding on frequently misunderstood issues like comprehensive sexuality education and queer/trans rights.

Break free from digital echo chambers and connect with others on a human level. Let's work together to create a more inclusive and supportive community. Use this guide and start engaging beyond the screen today.



Prioritize Safety in Conversations

When engaging in meaningful conversations, safety is our top priority. This guide draws on principles of deep canvassing—a technique designed to foster open, empathetic dialogue about contentious issues.

While deep canvassing is typically done with strangers, our campaign urges you to start conversations with your community and foster connections.

- Trust your gut and assess the context to ensure it is safe for everyone to have the discussion.
- Avoid engaging when emotions are already running high or if you feel dysregulated. Remember, the goal is to foster understanding and empathy, not to put yourself at risk.

- If a conversation becomes too distressing, feel empowered to pause or end it. Protecting your mental and emotional health is crucial.
- If the conversation brings up feelings or leaves you feeling unheard or upset, reach out to trusted sources of support such as friends, therapists or counsellors.
- Make sure to take care of yourself. If tempers rise or hateful words are shared, have a plan for how to exit the discussion and what support you'll need after.

Foster Meaningful Dialogue

True dialogue requires active listening.

- Give full attention to the concerns and opinions of others, allowing them to express themselves fully without interruption. This means being present, showing empathy, and validating their feelings.
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage deeper reflection and understanding.

By truly listening, you create a space where others feel heard and respected, which is essential for meaningful conversations. Active listening helps uncover the underlying values and motivations behind a person's views, paving the way for more productive and insightful discussions.

Build Empathy and Understanding

Use personal stories and anecdotes to build empathy and find mutual understanding.

- Sharing your experiences can resonate emotionally with others, helping them see the issue from a different perspective. The goal isn't just to talk but to connect and for people to better understand where we all come from, which often moves the dial.
- Highlight shared values and common experiences to bridge divides and foster empathy.

By creating an emotional connection, you can influence beliefs and encourage others to think more deeply about their positions.

Maintain Ongoing Dialogue

Change doesn't happen overnight. Plan to keep in touch and continue the conversation, as ongoing dialogue can gradually influence how people see the world or understand an issue. Follow-up conversations show that you are committed to the relationship and to finding common ground.

They also provide opportunities to address new questions or concerns that may arise. By maintaining a consistent and respectful dialogue, you can build trust and encourage more open and honest discussions in the future.



What is Deep Canvassing, Where Did it Come From, and Why Will it Work?

Deep canvassing is a technique designed to foster open, empathetic dialogue about contentious issues. It involves having in-depth, non-judgmental conversations where participants listen intently and share personal stories that resonate emotionally. Developed in response to growing polarization and misinformation, deep canvassing moves beyond merely exchanging information; it aims to touch on shared values and experiences, creating a space for transformative change.

Although deep canvassing is typically done with strangers, our campaign urges you to start conversations with people you know. Rooted in community organizing principles, deep canvassing emphasizes empathy, connection, and understanding. By building genuine connections through these conversations, we can bridge divides and shift deep-seated attitudes, making deep canvassing significantly more effective than traditional persuasion methods, and certainly more effective than arguing to win or fighting on social media.

If you need support with your mental health, please visit: [It Gets Better Canada](#)

Who is Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights?

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights is a national organization championing sexual and reproductive health and rights both in Canada and around the world. We are the team behind this campaign and we are at the forefront of transformative policy change, advocating for the kind of laws, health care access, and education that propel sexual and reproductive rights forward for everyone. Through wins like securing universal contraception coverage in Canada, our advocacy resonates in the everyday lives of communities we serve.

We believe in the power of education, advocacy and real-life conversations to create a more inclusive and equitable society. Our mission is to ensure that everyone has access to the information and services they need to make informed decisions about their health and lives.

While we recognize the complexities of and the need for dialogue, our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment is steadfast. We unequivocally support the rights and liberation of all queer and trans individuals. We believe education must be inclusive, reflecting the diverse realities and experiences of all people. We reject divisive rhetoric and stand against policies that undermine the rights of marginalized communities. Because of you, we believe in optimism and hope for the future.

Learn more at actioncanadashr.org

get offline & talk.



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