

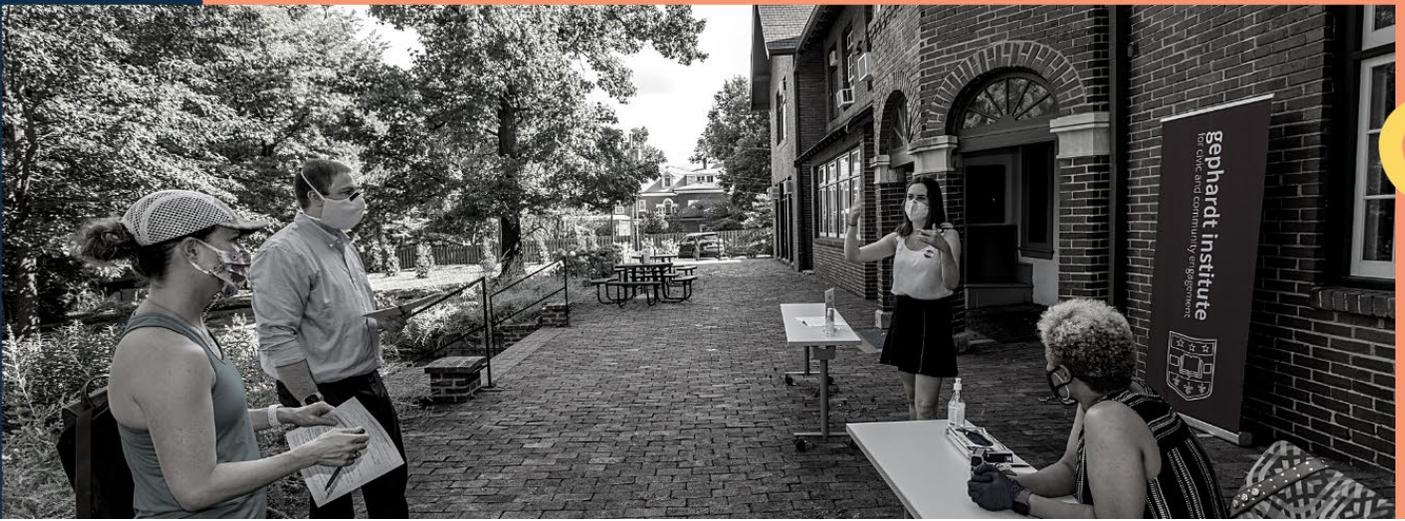


 Washington University in St. Louis

GEPHARDT INSTITUTE FOR
CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A GUIDE TO

WALK AND TALK WEDNESDAYS



Walk and Talk Wednesdays are an opportunity to engage in civic **dialogue** with your peers. **Dialogue is a “...process of... inquiry and listening, where the intention is to discover, learn and transform relationships in order to address practical and structural problems in a society.”**¹ The chart below outlines some difference between dialogue and debate.²

Dialogue	Debate
Collaborative: two or more sides work together toward understanding.	Oppositional: two sides attempt to prove each other wrong.
Personal experience is a key avenue for self-awareness and political understanding.	There is a right answer and one side has it. Individual background is irrelevant.
Listening in order to understand, find meaning, and points of connection.	Listening to find flaws in the other side’s argument.
Finding common ground is the goal.	Winning is the goal.

Active Listening from all participants is key to a successful dialogue. Consider the **LARA Model**:³

LISTEN

- Stay present with your partner as they are speaking.
- Seek to understand what your partner thinks and feels.
- The goal is to absorb what your partner means, not merely what they are saying.

AFFIRM

- Communicate to your partner that you hear and value their contribution:
 - "What I hear you saying is..."
 - "I sense that you feel..."
 - "I sense that we share (insert value)"
- Phrases like these not only make a speaker feel understood, they are also an opportunity to ensure that the listener does in fact understand the speaker’s meaning.

RESPOND

- Responses should directly address the questions or comments shared by the speaker.
- Refrain from labeling or attacking your partner.

ASK

- Open-ended questions are ideal for facilitating understanding and digging deeper.
- Add a personal story or opinion once you’ve fully listened to understand.

Getting Started

1. Begin your conversation with a check-in: Ask your partner how they are feeling today. Ask your partner what brought them to this conversation?
2. Use this week’s set of prompts to help guide your conversation.
3. At the end of your walk, return to Stix House for a hot beverage to go!

Please follow campus public health guidelines, including wearing a mask and maintaining appropriate social distance.

¹ Jessop, M., & Milofsky, A. (2014, May 1). *Dialogue: Calming hot spots calls for structure and skill*. United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2014/05/dialogue-calming-hot-spots-calls-structure-and-skill>

² Nagda, R., Gurin, P., Rodriguez, J., & Maxwell, K. (2008, July 23). *Comparing debate, discussion and dialogue*. Metropolitan State University of Denver.

<https://www.msudenver.edu/media/content/deanofstudents/conflictresolution/DebateDiscussionDilaougeHandout.pdf>

³ Stanford SPARQ (n.d.). *The LARA method for managing tense talks*. <https://sparqtools.org/lara/>