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# SALINE BRIDGE TO CIVILITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION #1: ASSUME GOOD INTENTIONS & LISTEN INTENTIONALLY

WED. APRIL 14, 2021

SALINE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT, SALINE MI



"AFTER ALL OF  
THIS IS OVER, ALL  
THAT WILL  
REALLY MATTER  
IS HOW WE  
TREATED EACH  
OTHER."

UNKNOWN

# Facilitator Outline

Time	Agenda Items	Resources/Teams
6:30-6:45	1. Welcome, Introductions, Purpose, & Guidelines	Steve, Diana, & Co-Facilitators
6:45-6:55	2. Saline Bridge to Civility – summary review of 9 norms	Diana
6:55-7:10	3. BREAKOUT #1, 10 min.: Common Grounds; 5 min. report out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Participants identify what they have in common and generate as many things as possible; try to identify unique commonalities</li> <li>b. Facilitators can take notes and ask someone to report out 2-3 uncommon commonalities</li> </ul>	Breakouts
7:10-7:20	4. Assume Good Intentions & Listen Intentionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review 2 norms – why are these important for civil conversations?</li> <li>b. 5 Reflective Listening Skills</li> <li>c. 4 Qualities of Empathy</li> </ul>	Diana &
7:20-7:50	5. BREAKOUT #2, 20 min.: My Diversity Story; 10 min. report out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 5-6 people per group</li> <li>b. Individuals share their experiences with diversity, equity, and inclusion; facilitators practice empathy and reflective listening without probing questions;</li> </ul>	Co-Facilitators
7:50-8:00	6. Reflections & Appreciations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Announcement: Next sessions May 4, 10, and 26</li> </ul>	

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# Purpose – why are we here today?

**PURPOSE** of the Saline Bridge to Civility Engagement is to build relationships across multiple dimensions of diversity through civil conversations and discussions that enable the exchange of ideas.

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# Guidelines for engagement



**Presence**



**Listen**



**Share**



**Learn**

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# Saline Bridge to Civility

## **TO PROMOTE A FAIR EXCHANGE OF IDEAS**

Civility is defined as caring for one's identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else's in the process (Institute for Civility in Government). The greater Saline (MI) community and the Saline Area Schools recognize the value of civil discussion. Residents are encouraged to democratically participate in all community matters even when it may be uncomfortable. We live together and create together. To civilly compromise is to admirably evolve as a community.

## WE PROMISE TO USE THE FOLLOWING NORMS AS WE ENGAGE IN CIVIL CONVERSATION:

<p><b>FIND COMMON GROUND</b> We will recognize that similarities exist among all people, and we will respect our differences. We will work to find our commonalities.</p>	<p><b>DEBATE THE ISSUE, RESPECT THE PERSON</b> We will recognize that we are all human beings trying to live a fulfilling life, and we will engage on issues and avoid personal criticism.</p>	<p><b>LISTEN INTENTIONALLY</b> We will be careful and thoughtful listeners.</p>
<p><b>OBSERVE AND REFLECT</b> We will seek to understand and then act with honor. Our intention is to understand, not persuade.</p>	<p><b>ASSUME GOOD INTENTIONS</b> We will presume the best intentions and practice empathy.</p>	<p><b>ALLOW FOR EMOTION</b> We will recognize that conflict is challenging and can be emotional, and we will strive to respond with understanding.</p>
<p><b>SPEAK ONE'S TRUTH</b> We will communicate our belief as we understand it. It is important to acknowledge that this is their truth. We will also respect alternative perspectives and experiences.</p>	<p><b>ENGAGE DIRECTLY</b> We assert that the setting for conversations matters. We will make every effort to engage others directly and not through social media which tends to make the conflict worse.</p>	<p><b>ACCEPT LACK OF CLOSURE</b> Civil conversations take time and require patience. We will accept that issues may be unresolved and allow for additional time when needed.</p>

## 2. SALINE BRIDGE TO CIVILITY



### 3. BREAKOUT: COMMON GROUND

10 MINUTES – identify what you have in common; report out one unique thing that you all have in common

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## Five Reflective Listening Skills

1. **Full attention** with presence of attention
2. **Positive acceptance** of the other person's perspective
3. **Encourage sharing** for the other person to open up more deeply
4. **Staying silent**, especially in awkward moments
5. **Reflective response**

**ENVELOPED IN  
EMPATHY**







Empathy is. . .

- to see from the other person's perspective; to see and feel as the other person does
- feeling WITH people
- fuels connection



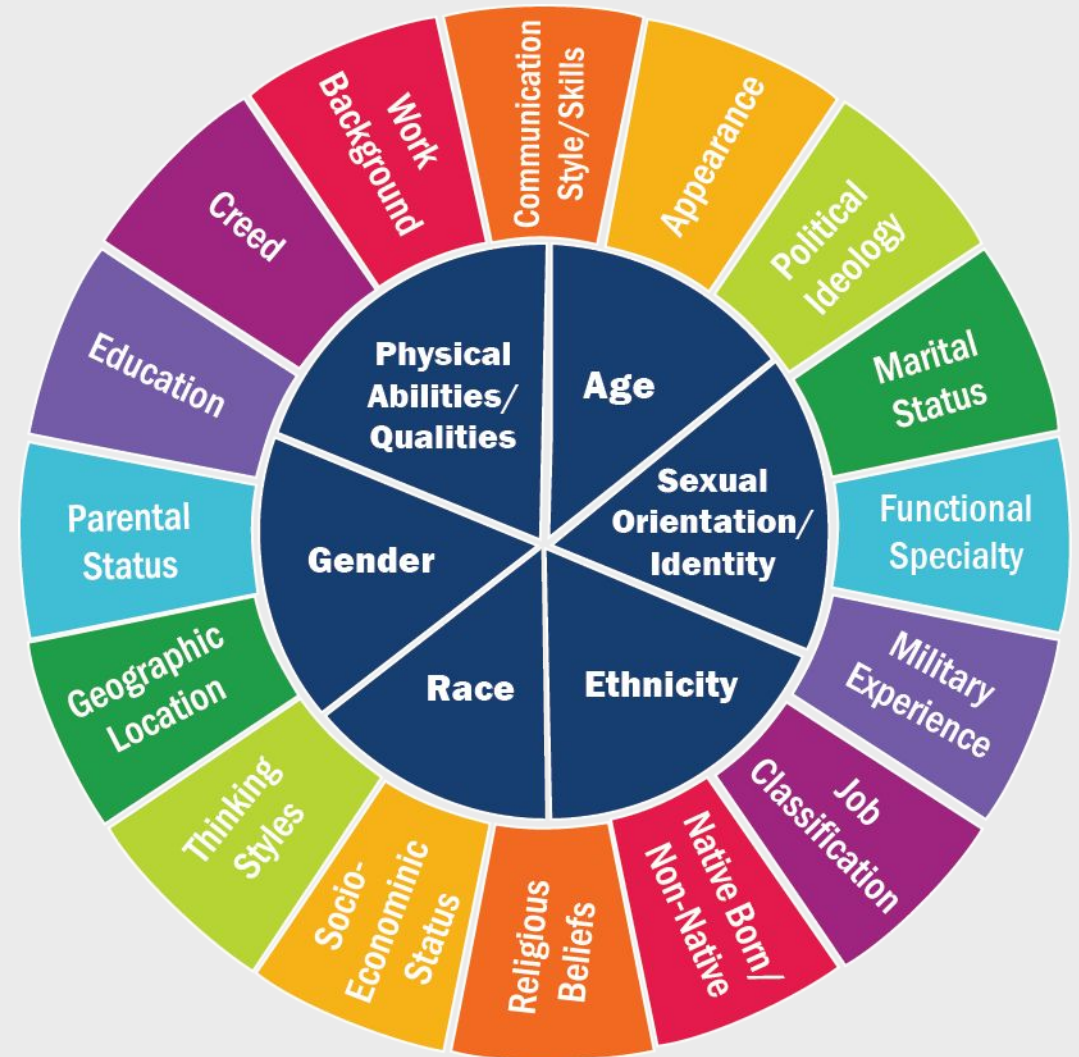
## Four Qualities of Empathy

- Perspective-taking
- Staying out of judgment
- Recognizing the emotion in others
- Communicating that recognition

# BREAKOUT #2: My Diversity Story

20 min.: My Diversity Story; 10 min. report out

- 5-6 people per group
- Individuals share their experiences with diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Self as an instrument of change
- Actively engage in self-directed learning
- Encouragement and positive support for learning in the process – it's a JOURNEY!



# Reflections and appreciations

## Future Sessions, 6:30-8pm

- **Tues. May 4**, Observe & Reflect; Speak One's Truth
- **Mon. May 10**, Debate the Issue, Respect the Person and All for Emotion
- **Wed. May 26**, Engage Directly and Accept Lack of Closure

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## Our Community Needs a Forum to Talk

In light of racist incidents that occurred with some of our High School students on social media and in this very Board of Education room just over a year ago, on top of recent shootings in Atlanta and Boulder, our community needs ***a forum to continue our conversation.***

When we engage this next time, we want to provide a forum to have ***civil conversations by using the Saline Bridge to Civility*** as a mechanism towards more productive dialogue and engagement.

Sign-Up process for this April 14th engagement session will be ***posted on our website and through Social Media.***