



A Braver Campus Dialogue (ABCD) Fact Sheet

A workshop by the College Debates and Discourse Alliance

The College Debates and Discourse Alliance is pleased to introduce a new format of civil discourse programming for college campuses and classrooms: **A Braver Campus Dialogue (ABCD)**. Drawing inspiration from traditional Braver Angels Debates and workshops, BridgeUSA conversations, and visionary collaboration with Braver Angles co-founder Bill Doherty, ABCD Workshops enable participants to delve into the nuances of the most pressing social and political challenges of our day.

Braver Campus Dialogues foster solution-oriented conversations in which participants discover that differing viewpoints are not obstacles but essential components in addressing our most controversial issues. Guided

by an experienced moderator, participants navigate the intricate complexities of an issue, gain deeper understanding of its root causes, and explore potential solutions.

Workshop Elements

This 90-minute workshop includes an introduction and debrief session guided by a trained moderator. The moderator opens the session by introducing participants to the programming and guidelines for engagement. Participants then move into the main conversation, which consists of two parts.

To conclude, participants enter a debrief session. This final phase of the workshop is an informal and inspiring opportunity for participants to reflect on the

“You don’t really know your own viewpoint unless you know the best objections to it. This workshop promotes a kind of ‘passionate humility’: a willingness to advocate with conviction for the best solutions to pressing problems while accepting the uncertainties inherent in all public policies.”

–DR. BILL DOHERTY,
Braver Angels co-founder

experience and share their thoughts with the group. Once done, the moderator thanks everyone for their participation and brings the workshop to a close.

Part 1: Introducing the Issue

What is at the heart of this issue for you?

- Reflection
- Group discussion

During Part 1, participants share their personal perspectives on the issue.

Part 2: Solution-Oriented Conversation

What solution(s) would best address this issue?

- Reflection
- Group discussion

During Part 2, participants consider the merits of different proposed ideas.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was this format created?

Traditional Braver Angels debates are structured around respectful argumentation. Participants express their viewpoints on polarizing topics from a place of affirmation or negation. While this format has been widely embraced and implemented in higher ed, many of our debates have revealed that students are drawn toward further avenues of questioning and exploration beyond the “pros” and “cons.” After a debate, we often hear, “What’s next?” Students consistently signal interest in issues that invite discussion around nuances rather than debates around differences. They also express a strong desire to engage in solution-oriented conversations. This workshop empowers them to do so and, we hope, leaves them with a sense that they can bring constructive ideas and solutions to the table.

How is this different from a traditional Braver Angels debate?

This model does not use the traditional negation and affirmation format of Braver Angels debates. While the respectful atmosphere and light parliamentary format of our debates is maintained, the conversation that unfolds is distinctly animated by a spirited exploration of issues, ideas, and solutions.

What topics are good for this format?

- The new workshop format is designed for participants to explore open-ended questions and multifaceted topics that don’t have a traditional yes or no answer.
- Participants are given the opportunity to explore complex, nuanced issues, and possible actions that governments, NGO’s, communities, individuals and institutions could take to address or work towards addressing the issue at hand.
- Examples of issues that naturally resonate in this format include, but are not limited to: climate change, diversity, mental health, public safety and policing, etc.

What are the best settings in which to conduct an ABCD Workshop?

The ABCD Workshop can be implemented in both campus-wide and classroom settings.



If you have further questions or interest in hosting a workshop on your campus, contact: swebb@goacta.org or dsprei@goacta.org.