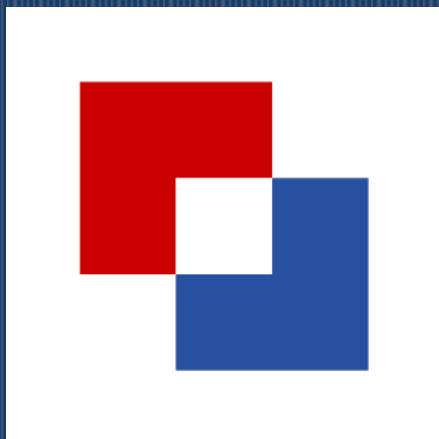


2020



Braver Angels Ambassadors Toolkit

A Step-by-Step Guide to Sharing the BA Message

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For Help

Here's who you can reach out to for help or more info:

James Coan

jcoan@braverangels.org

240-676-5325

- Content designed to depolarize, including op-ed assistance
- BA Social media, including consideration of wider publication of your presentation

Linda Beck

lbeck.teacher@gmail.com

717-256-2298

- Toolkit questions or suggestions
- Public speaking
- Visual Aids
- Ambassador Training

Introduction

What is the Braver Angels Ambassador Toolkit?

As Ambassadors, we strongly believe in the mission of Braver Angels, which is to depolarize our country. And, there are many ways to go about that. While we have large numbers of people who participate in our workshops and debates, we also recognize the need to reach others more directly—especially by appealing to their emotions.

The Ambassador Toolkit provides you with a step-by-step process to reach others through public outreach, whether that's a live event (in person or online), recorded video, op-ed or blog post.

How this Toolkit is Organized?

This toolkit is organized in modules so you can select the pieces that best fit your needs. It includes a checklist so you can track what you need to do to create effective content and deliver it well. The checklist is also linked to each section of the document so you can easily maneuver your way through each piece.

Throughout the document, you will find links to additional information. These are underlined and in blue. Some will make it easy for you to quickly find other areas in the toolkit, while others will take you to valuable external resources.

Note:

The content you create will be based on the message you want to send and the format that works best for you—written or oral. In some cases, the material presented here will only work for a speech or an op-ed. In that case, we have specified those terms.

Overview

Welcome to YOUR toolkit. There's no doubt you'll find a lot of information in it. We purposely provided a lot of information for those of you who would like to learn more. But we've also developed it so you can pick and choose the parts that you want to use. Some of it may work for you; some of it may not. The key is that it was developed to **aid** you as you strive to spread the BA message.

Feel free to go through the kit from start to finish or just check out the parts that might help you along the way.

	If you...	Then...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know your message and have a plan to deliver it	Skim through the steps to see if there's anything else you might find helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would like to firm up your knowledge about Braver Angels before you finalize your content	Check out Step 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Need to (better) establish the reason WHY you are delivering your content	Check out Step 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aren't sure about HOW you are going to deliver your message	Check out Step 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Want to better understand your audience before delivering your message	Check out Step 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Want help with organizing your material	Check out Step 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would like to use some existing speeches that you can tailor	Check out the speeches in the Toolkit Supplement. You may also find Step 5 helpful.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan to use visual aids	Check out Step 6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Could benefit from some guidance on effective delivery skills	Check out Step 7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Would like help in evaluating how well you did	Check out Step 8

Checklist for Creating a Message

Here is the “soup to nuts” plan for creating your content. This will also give you an idea of what’s included in each step as you go through the toolkit.

- [Step 1](#): Know Braver Angels Key Concepts
 - Links to valuable information about Braver Angels
- [Step 2](#): Identify the Reason for Your Message
 - Narrowing Your Topic
 - Determining Your Goals
 - Goal statement examples with links to corresponding speeches
- [Step 3](#): Identify Delivery Method
 - Live audience (face-to-face or virtual)
 - Video
 - Op-Ed or Blog Post
 - Social Media
 - Other methods
- [Step 4](#): Analyze the Potential Audience
 - Who is your audience?
 - What is their expected reaction to your message?
- [Step 5](#): Determine Points and Organize the Material
 - General Guidelines
 - Specific Steps for Persuasive Content
- [Step 6](#): Design Presentation Aids (if needed)
 - Tips for Designing and Using
 - Example Slides
- [Step 7](#): Deliver Content
 - Presentation/Delivery Tips
 - How to Deal with Challenges to Your Message
- [Step 8](#): Evaluate Your Success

Step One: Know Braver Angels Key Concepts

To be a credible Ambassador, you must have a strong understanding of the organization as a whole and various concepts. We recommend that you consider the following information:

- Review the [Braver Angels story: “Building a House United”](#) on the BA website. This includes information about polarization in the United States.
- Watch the 3-minute video about [“Affective Polarization”](#) which is “the degree to which Democrats and Republicans in the United States don't just disagree on policy positions, but actually dislike one another as groups.” (If you are interested in more on this concept and like to read educational studies, you might also be interested in [this paper](#).)
- Familiarize yourself with how BA uses the terms [“reds”, “blues” and “others”](#).
- Watch the documentary [“Reuniting America”](#) (available in the Members Portal area). It is almost an hour long but provides a good deal of insight into BA's first venture into depolarization.
- Time permitting, you may also want to familiarize yourself with the myriad of other resources available in the Members Portal area (see below) on the Braver Angels website. Some of these are referenced in this toolkit.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Braver Angels mission and “story”
- Depolarization
- Affective polarization
- Reds, blues, and “others”

Resources

📁 Workshop Resources	📁 Public Outreach Resources	📁 Debate Resources
📁 Alliance Resources	📁 State Coordinator Resources	📁 List of State Coordinators
📁 List of Organizers	📁 List of Moderators	📁 List of Events
📁 List of Debate Chairs	📁 List of Alliances	📅 Calendar of Calls
📁 News Archives	📁 Current Performance Dashboard	

Step Two: Identify Your Content's Message: Topic and Goal

WHY
ARE
WE
HERE?



Narrowing the Topic

When formulating your content and message, you need to start with being able to identify what you'd like to accomplish through it. So, you'll need to recognize your topic and goals. These are related, but separate concepts. Obviously, your topic includes something about Braver Angels or is related to the topic of depolarization. But, what's your bottom-line message? (You don't need to know all the details right now, but you should have a good understanding of your main message.) That's your topic.

Determining the Goals

After you have your topic, decide if you want to inform or persuade others. That's called the general goal. If you simply want your audience to know about the Braver Angels organization, you will create an informative message. However, you probably want your audience to do/believe/feel something; in that case, you will create a persuasive message.

Then, you can create your goal statement that answers the question of what action you would like your audience to take after they have heard your message. It is the primary reason for your message and should guide you in the rest of your planning. For example, if you're trying to decide whether to include something, just refer back to this goal and ask: Is this helping me meet my primary goal?

You can use the following formula to create your goal statement:

After hearing my message, I want my audience to fill in the blank with what you would like your audience to Do/Believe/Feel/Know.

Examples

In this toolkit, we have created multiple example goal statements and corresponding speeches. Please see the Toolkit Supplement, which has four example speeches. Each speech has its own goal.

After hearing my speech, I want my audience to:

- **Believe** they are more similar to members of a different political party than they may have originally thought. (Speech 1 – Similarities)
- **Recategorize themselves** as belonging to similar groups as those from another political party. (Speech 2 – Cross-categorization)
- **Begin to think** of themselves and others more as unique individuals rather than as political party stereotypes. (Speech 3 – Decategorization)
- **Know more** about Braver Angels and consider joining the efforts. (Speech 4 – Explaining and seeking participation in Braver Angels)

How to Use the Examples

You may choose one of these speeches or you can create yours from scratch. Feel free to use any of these speeches as a starting point.

Keep in mind you should stay focused on your primary specific goal. That is why creating a specific goal statement as one of your first checklist items will help you as you plan your message.

Step Three: Identify the Best Delivery Method

Now, it's time to think about how you want to deliver your message. You may have already determined an approach that works best for you. And, if so, go for it! If not, consider the following options—each of which has their own pros and cons.

Scheduled Live “Synchronous” Events

Do you plan to present a speech in front of a live audience? Logistically, you will need to schedule a time and invite your audience to a live event. We'll skip the “how to” details (contacting organizations, planning a date, sending invitations) in this toolkit, but you can find many resources in the Workshop and Public Outreach Resources in the Members Portal of the Braver Angels website.

Remember that your state coordinators (whose contact information is also available in the portal) can be helpful resources as well. You have two options for live events described below—virtual platforms and face-to-face meetings.



Virtual—this can be done through an online meeting platform such as [Zoom](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), [Skype](#), [WebEx](#) or via social media gathering places such as [Google Hangouts](#) or [Facebook Live](#). While this is a great option to reach many people virtually, it should not be undertaken lightly. In many respects, it can be challenging to present an engaging presentation virtually. We strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with whatever software you choose to use.



Forbes article: [Best Practices For Virtual Presentations: 15 Expert Tips That Work For Everyone](#)

Stanford Business article: [Ten Tips for Giving Effective Virtual Presentations](#)

[Make the Most of Your Virtual Communications](#) video by Stanford Graduate School of Business Lecturer, Matt Abrahams

Face-to-Face

Perhaps you already have a meeting location that would work perfectly for a face-to-face presentation (if/when appropriate)? Or, maybe your local library or religious organization can provide a meeting place.

Regardless of which type of event you plan, make sure to think about the following steps organized roughly according to the order you would complete them.

Considerations for Live Presentations		
	Virtual	Face-to-Face
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have existing access to a platform you could use? Is there a company or organization that could provide you access? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your location have adequate parking? Are there appropriate ADA accommodations?
Cost/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What, if any, are the costs involved for the software? (Many offer free options with limited services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What, if any, are the costs involved for the venue?
Time limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you limited to a certain length of time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you limited to a certain length of time?
User-friendliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How easy will it be for your audience to join you and troubleshoot issues from their end? Will the platform work with a multitude of Internet browsers and mobile options? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many others can attend? Is there a set amount or is it unlimited? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the seating capacity?
Interaction with Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a chat room option? Can participants mute/unmute themselves? Will you see the participants? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Recording Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you record the presentation to use it for other purposes later? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you record the presentation to use it for other purposes later?
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should you have someone in a support role to handle the technical issues, chat rooms, etc.? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need a projector, screen, microphone and/or recording equipment? Will you have a live feed for virtual attendees? Will the venue have a support person to help troubleshoot any issues?

Other Opportunities

You also have many opportunities to get your message across asynchronously—that means in a way that doesn't require people to be together at the same time. In this section, we'll explore how to create videos and how to distribute them. Plus, we'll also take time to review principles of writing if you choose to make your point in writing rather than public speaking.

Video

With the proliferation of virtual platforms, you have plenty of opportunities to create a video to share your ideas. And, most people have the means to create their own



videos. If you choose to do this, remember that, if you want your video to be taken seriously, it must have high quality audio and video. Now, is not the time to just sit down in front of your web camera and start talking!

You should still carefully plan what you intend to say AND make sure you have the means to make yourself look and sound good! Because of that, we highly recommend that you get help from someone who has experience in video production and editing to record your presentation.

Having said that, you can review the example speeches in the Toolkit Supplement to get a better idea of the content we recommend.

Once your video is created, you can distribute it in a variety of ways. Feel free to disseminate it through your own personal social media channels or any association you may be connected with. Please also share it with Braver Angels for consideration of sharing it through official BA channels.

Note: *The above information pertains to the recording of a presentation—essentially a videotaped speech! But, there are other ways to create video—such as a narrated PowerPoint or even something like [Powtoons](#), an animated video product. We don't want to limit anyone's creativity or ability to share their message, so reach out to us if you have other ideas.*



Penn State website: [Media Commons Video Production Tips](#)

Op-ed or Blog Post

Some of you may prefer to write your arguments rather than present them orally. Many of the same considerations exist for sharing your thoughts in written form—whether an op-ed or a blog post.

In order to have someone else publish your work (such as an op-ed), you will still need to have a good understanding of your topic and specific goal. So, be sure to [Review Step Two: Identify the Message's Topic and Goal.](#)



Generally, an op-ed will need to be highly focused and relatively short—between 750-800 words. A blog post can be longer, although it should still be focused on your message. And, good writing is key! [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) can help catch a lot of errors and typos! (Best of all, its free version works really well!)

Once your piece is written, you will need to find outlets who will publish it. Maybe you have your own blog and can self-publish. Or, maybe you can become a guest blogger on another appropriate blog. Perhaps you have a local news organization that frequently publishes op-eds. Here is another opportunity to use some of the resources on the BA Members Portal to help you get contacts.



Harvard Kennedy School: [How to Write an Op-Ed or Column](#)

Social Media

Braver Angels has its own social media pages (on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). We invite you to participate in our social media efforts and share content from them to your own social media platforms.

However, you can also use your own personal social media as an opportunity to curate your own message based on these examples. You can share your video, op-ed or other content. Or, you can create a short, focused message specific to a social media audience.

Step Four: Analyze the Potential Audience

A major factor to consider when creating a message is your audience—especially if you are trying to persuade them. Who are you trying to convince? Are you “preaching to the choir” or will yours be a dissenting voice? That's why it's important to analyze your audience as you create your message.

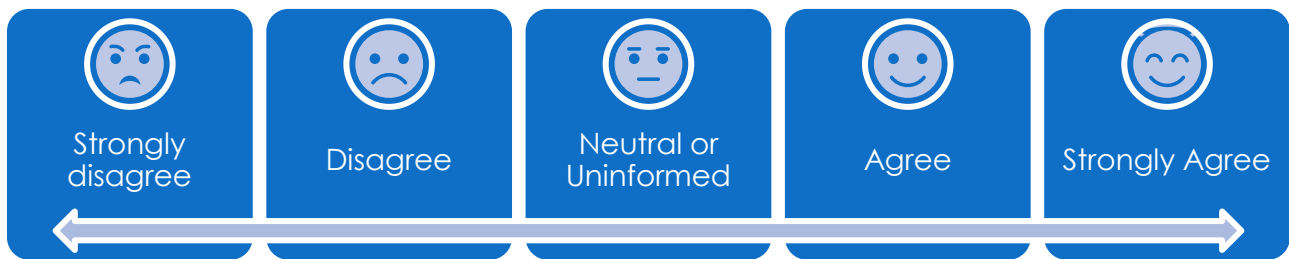
First, consider the demographics of your potential audience. You can use some of the following considerations in thinking about this:



- Age range: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Sex/Gender: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Race: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Socio-economic status: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Level of Education: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Occupation/s: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Expectations: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Political Affiliation/s: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Pre-existing knowledge of the topic: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Religion: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Other considerations: Click or tap here to enter text.

You can make your best guesses at this information, talk to others who might be helping you organize or even send out a survey. But, use whatever information you have to tailor your message to a specific group or publication.

You will also need to consider the audience's predisposition to your topic. Where do they fall on the following continuum?



Depending on where you predict your audience falls on this continuum should influence how you word your message. Remember, it's awfully challenging to “flip” someone from strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing—especially in the span of one opportunity. Your ultimate goal is to move anyone even one step closer to strongly agreeing. And, of course, you don't want to word your message in a way that would lose supporters!

Check out [Monroe's Motivated Sequence](#) to help you structure your persuasive argument!

Step Five: Determine Points and Organize the Material

Now that you have your basic plan, it's time to consider the specifics of what you will present. So, you may want to revisit the information about specific goal statements from [Step Two](#).

General Guidelines for Drafting Content

Let's first look at some general guidelines for drafting your points and overall content—regardless of your ultimate goal.

Your stories

When giving a presentation, it's important to engage your audience in a variety of methods that involve different parts of the brain. A good presentation engages someone through auditory, visual and kinesthetic-tactile (KT) methods. (KT methods in this case usually involve experiencing, such as by hearing a story that allows the listener to connect with its subject, situation, or main message.) Obviously, a presentation will automatically include the auditory and we'll talk about visual aids in a little while. Stories will engage the KT part of the brain—the part that wants or needs to be active.

So be sure to share stories in your message. You can use compelling stories from any place, but we also encourage you to consider the impact YOUR story can make. Have you been affected by political polarization? Has a workshop or conversation with someone from “the other side” made a dramatic difference for you? Use these stories to bring out your larger message. Eventually, we plan to have a repository of stories from BA on the website.

Make sure your story carries an emotional impact. You can best persuade someone to listen or agree with you if you appeal to his or her emotions.

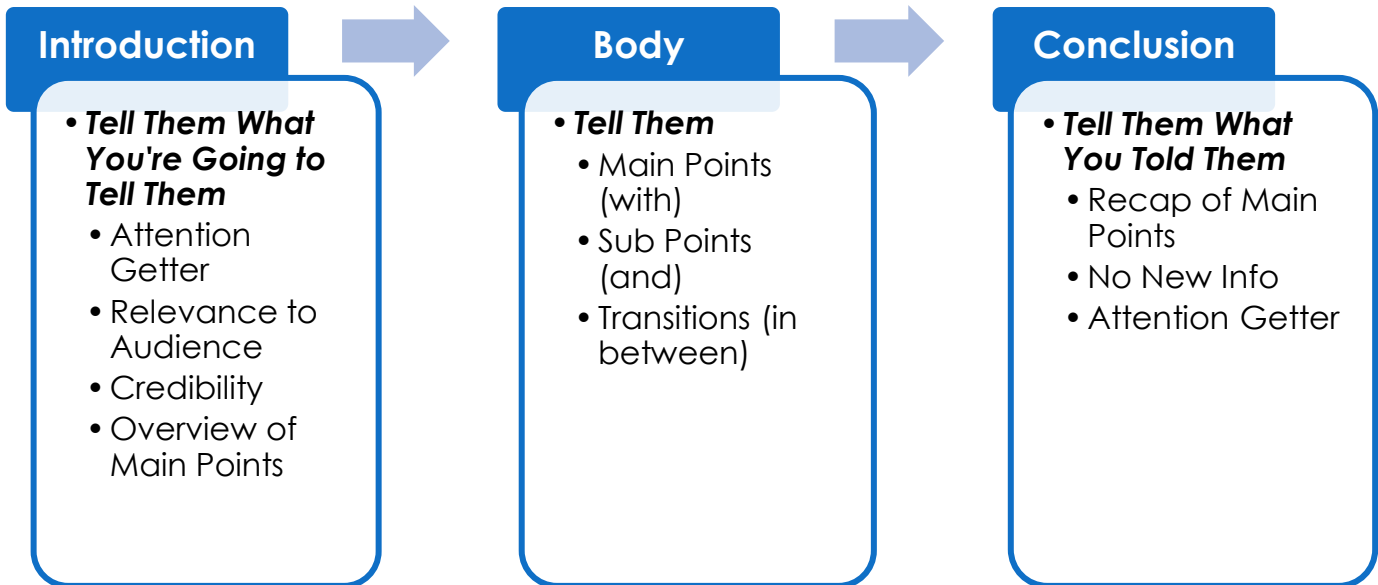
Why Should Your Story Have an Emotional Impact?

Need to be convinced about the need to include emotional stories in your presentation? Think about beer commercials where there's always a fun party going on. Or, what about the ones to save children or animals that have the sad music playing in the background? Advertisers use these strategies because they work!

Organizing Your Content

Note: The following primarily encompasses how to organize a speech, but it can be used to create an op-ed or other written piece as well.

You want to organize your content using an easy-to-follow structure such as this. :



The average person needs to be exposed to an idea 7-11 times to remember it. That is why the repetition in the structure and the use of transitions is important. For instance, in a speech, a person might say 7-11 times how we are similar across divides, so a speech more naturally leans toward repetition of a single point. On the other hand, it can usually be helpful for people to hear a message on another occasion, too.

You can break those steps down a little further like this:

1. Tell Your Audience What You're Going to Tell Them

- Have a strong, emotional attention getter! (Don't start with an introduction of yourself as the first thing YOU say.)
- Share the relevance of your message with your audience. Answer the question—Why should they listen to you?
- Explain why you're credible. Maybe you have done a lot of research. Maybe your personal experience has dramatically changed you.
- Give the audience an overview of your message: "Today, I'm going to tell you about.... list your main points."

2. Tell Them

- a. This is widely known as the “body” of the message and should take up approximately 85% of the length of the presentation.
- b. Remember to use transitions between each main point.
- c. If you want to persuade your audience, consider using [Monroe's Motivated Sequence](#) in the next section.

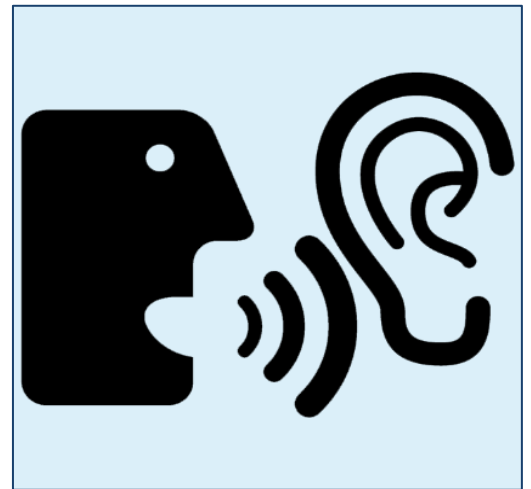
3. Tell Them What You Told Them

- a. Provide a cohesive and strong recap of your main points.
- b. Leave them with something memorable to think about.

Writing for the Ear

If you are writing a speech, consider a technique long used by broadcast journalists called “writing for the ear”. Essentially, that means you should write your presentation as if you would speak it. Generally, that means shorter sentences, less formality and visual “signposts” (also known as transitions). You can easily transition from one point to another by saying, “Now that I’ve told you about ABC, we can talk about DEF.”

Similarly, if you are producing written content, remember to write conversationally. The best way to determine if you are writing conversationally, is to read your work out loud. If it doesn't sound like the way you might phrase it while speaking, you may want to reconsider writing a little less formally.



If Your Goal is to Inform About Braver Angels

The Public Outreach section of the Members Portal on the BA website offers a multitude of resources to share the story of Braver Angels, including:

Speeches

You can also find sample speech outlines for speeches about Braver Angels in the Members Portal/Resources/Public Outreach area on BraverAngels.org. Each of these sample speeches focuses on Braver Angels as an organization. In the Toolkit Supplement, we have included a speech (“A Speech Explaining and Seeking Participation in Braver Angels”) that is a composite of those informative speeches.

Specifically, you can find these resources (and much more!) on the Braver Angels website:

- 9-minute speech and PowerPoint on Jonathan Haidt's Six Moral Foundations and Braver Angels
- 15-minute speech and PowerPoint on Elections, Polarization and Braver Angels
- Presentation templates for 30, 60 and 90-minute speeches
- PowerPoint slides for presentations to civic and service organizations



Library Resources

You will find information about how to work with your local library to sponsor a program such as a documentary viewing/discussion.

Handouts

The handouts section has materials you can use to advertise your event or provide as supplemental material. It includes:

- Informational brochures
- Testimonials
- Signup Sheet
- Logo
- Handouts
 - Social Media Pledge
 - Do My Daily Actions Support Depolarization?
 - Skills for Thanksgiving Conversations

Videos

The Public Outreach section also includes several videos that could be used as part of a message for the audience to learn more about the work of Braver Angels.

"When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and a true maxim, that a "drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall. So with men."

Abraham Lincoln

If Your Goal is to Persuade

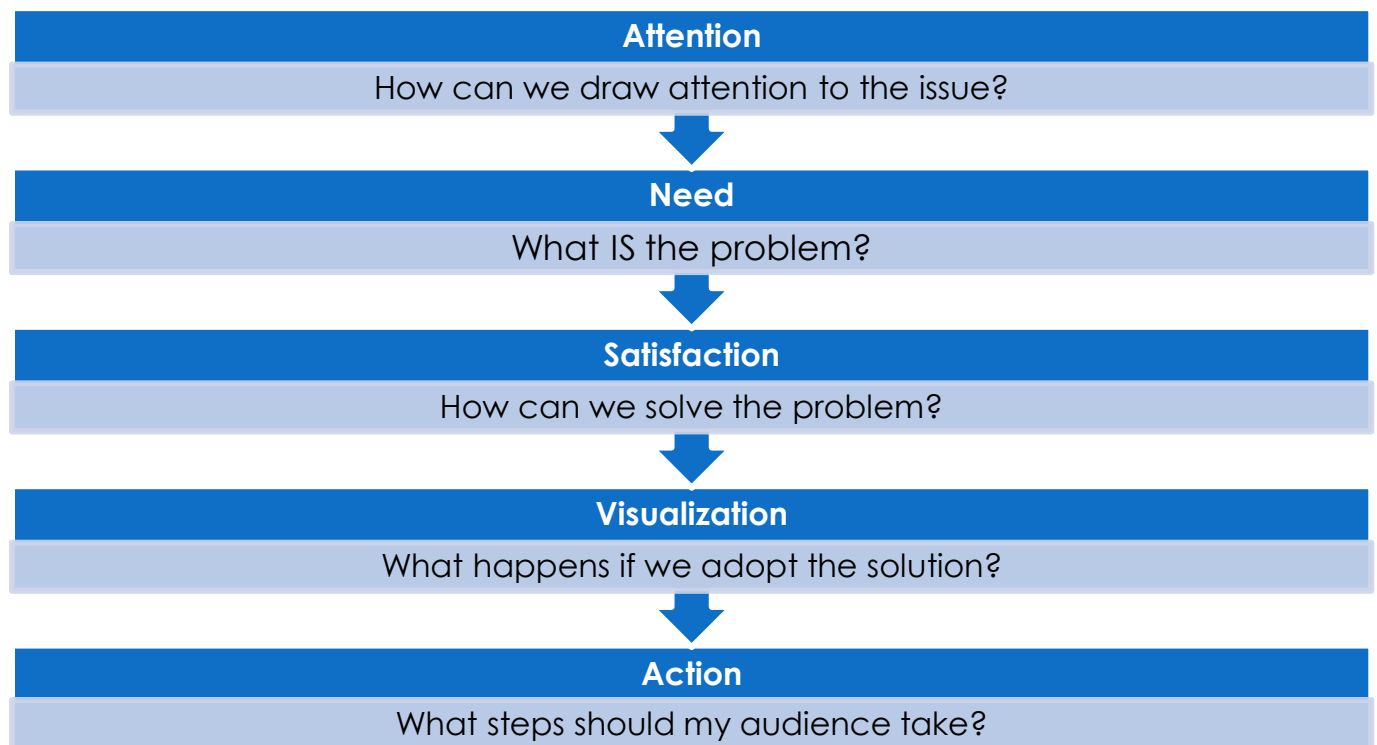
Just like the Members Portal offers sample speeches, we have included examples of various speeches in the Toolkit Supplement. You can use them as the basis for your speech or modify them to use as an op-ed.

Regardless of which you choose, we strongly encourage you to include two important elements (both of which are seen in the sample speeches).

- YOUR personal stories/impact, and
- The use of Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence Explained

Let's start with talking about Monroe's Motivated Sequence, a highly beneficial means of structuring an argument that includes the following steps:



A Few Tips

Consider these recommendations as you plan your sequence.

- Make sure that your first sentence grabs your audience's attention by really making them think. Statistics and stories are good examples to begin with.
- Use personal stories to illustrate your points. The best stories are YOUR stories. You can build your entire speech around one story or you can use a variety of brief, but impactful stories in different areas of the speech.

What Monroe's Motivated Sequence Looks Like

Take a look at the speeches in the Toolkit Supplement to see how we have crafted various "stock" speeches that you can use to build your message.



Mindtools: [Monroe's Motivated Sequence—Perfecting the Call to Act](#)

Step Six: Design Presentation Aids (If needed)

Visual aids can enhance your message. As mentioned earlier, they can engage your audience in a slightly different means. Using visual aids will depend on multiple factors, including the setting, available equipment, and your level of comfort in using them. Carefully consider whether to use visual aids and, if you do, make sure they supplement your presentation appropriately.

Tips

Here are some tips for designing visual aids.








- Choose a standard template and stick with it. Be consistent in your slides.
- Avoid using more than one graphic or picture per slide unless you have really good design skills.
- Use key words only—no sentences.
- Use the “7 X 7” rule—no more than seven lines with no more than seven words on each line. (Note—this is the MAX! Try to use more pictures and fewer words.)
- Consider animation to “fly in” bullets, but use sparingly—only basic or moderate animation. Do not use any sounds.
- Use a font large enough—generally somewhere in the 30-point range. Don’t use more than two levels of bullets—otherwise, the font gets way too small. And, PowerPoint adjusts the size of your text as you type. If you see the size adjusting, STOP and eliminate some words!
- Have a title on each slide.
- Don’t “fade to black” at end of PowerPoint. Have a concluding slide.

Less is
More!

Presentations aids
should AID in
delivering the
message. They
should not BE the
message!

Examples

Here are some example slides that show you good practices of slide design. The content mirrors the pervasive speech example. The slides can be made available upon request. (Note—they were made with Canva Premium; see table below.)

<p>Overcoming Depolarization</p> <p>SEEING OURSELVES AS SIMILAR TO OTHERS</p>  <p>Presented on Behalf of Braver Angels</p>	<p>Think about someone you know from an opposite political party.</p> 
<p>What is true about YOUR "side?"</p> 	<p>AGENDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem• Possible Solution• Solution• Visualization• Action
<p>What Is The Problem?</p> 	<p>What is a Possible Solution?</p> 
<p>What Could This Look Like?</p> 	<p>What Can We Do?</p> 

Using Presentation Aids

Don't forget to think about "how" you are going to use your presentation aids. See [Section 7: Deliver Content](#) for a few tips.

Presentation Templates/Programs

When most people think of presentation aids, they think of PowerPoint, but there are many other high-quality presentation aid programs, including:

Program	Features	Cost
Power Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well known and commonly used• Later versions offer "Slide Design" guidance and easy insertion of pictures and video from online sources• Needs MS Office to use	Comes with Office 365
Prezi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses a large "canvas" instead of slides so it allows for more interactive features, including "zooming" in on content• Has a new video-maker feature• Easy to insert videos and photos from online sources	Various versions, including free and .edu access
Google Slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers many of the same well-known features as PowerPoint• Requires no additional software to use	Free
Canva	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has easy-to-update pre-made slides• Includes professional templates and photographs as part of its packages (limited in free version). These can be downloaded into PowerPoint.	Free and Premium



Lumen Learning: [Presentation Aids—Design and Usage](#)

Fast Company: [Five Reasons Why Slide Presentations Suck Today More than Ever](#)

Step Seven: Deliver Content

The plan is in place and all that's left to do is deliver it! This section will provide considerations for how to prepare for your presentation and then deliver it well.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

What do good athletes and strong presenters have in common? They PRACTICE! A good public speaker will develop muscle memory just like an athlete does. For example, a golfer will practice his swing over and over again to get the right distance and power. A softball pitcher will pitch multiple times to manage her control and delivery of the ball. Public speakers gain confidence and improve their skills through practice!



Doing so is one of the best ways to...

Manage Anxiety

There's a saying attributed to Jerry Seinfeld that says the fear of public speaking is so great that most people would rather be the one in the casket than the person chosen to give the eulogy. Even if you are an experienced presenter, it's not unusual for a little anxiety to enter in—especially if it's not a topic you've spoken about before.

There are many tricks to managing anxiety (and, truly, picturing people in their underwear isn't that great of an idea). Many studies have shown that there's a correlation between the amount of practice a speaker does and the level of his or her anxiety. So, the more you practice, the less anxiety you may have.

Studies show that anxiety will spike in the first few minutes of a presentation and, after about five minutes, level off to the lowest it will be. Therefore, it's crucial to develop muscle memory for the introduction. Doing so will help the speaker feel confident and encounter less of an anxiety spike.

The best place to practice is in the place where you will give your presentation or a similar environment. You should also practice with any equipment you plan to use.

Delivery Tips

Here are some more tips for delivering your message. Most of them are for a live face-to-face environment, but they also work for other delivery methods.

- Appearance is important—and you should dress to fit in with your audience and/or according to their expectations. In other words, if you are speaking to a business audience, you would probably want to wear a suit. If you are speaking to a group of acquaintances, you could dress more casually.



- If possible, avoid using a lectern or podium. That creates a physical barrier between you and your audience and sets the presentation up to be much more formal than necessary in most cases.

- It's OK to use note cards. Just remember to put key words only on the note cards to avoid reading from them. You want to think of your speech as a conversation. You can also use your PowerPoint slides as your note cards. Avoid turning your back to the audience to read the slides or looking off of

the laptop. To avoid turning your back, always be sure your toes are pointed to the back wall.

- Make sure you maintain eye contact with your audience. Sometimes, people “lose” this due to anxiety. You can't connect with your audience if you're not looking at them.
- MOVE! If you stay centered in one place while speaking face-to-face, the audience can lose interest. But, move purposefully and try not to get lost in any projector lights! If you remember to keep your toes pointed to the back wall, you can simply angle them to a different location, and this will automatically move your body without having to walk around.
- Speak loudly enough in a room with physical noise (like blowers, etc). Or, check your microphone levels before you speak.

- Humor is a double-edged sword. The best kind of humor to use is to poke fun at yourself. Otherwise, you risk offending someone and that means they would not listen to what you have to say.



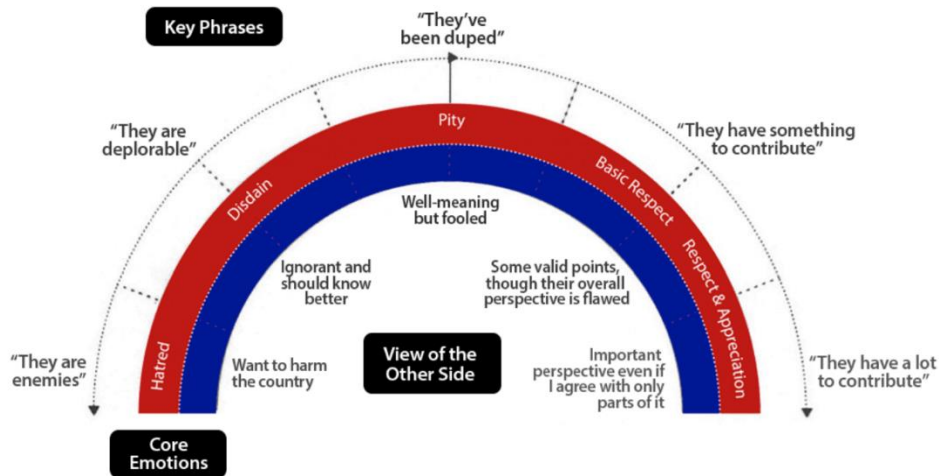
Stanford Business: [Matt Abrahams--Tips and Techniques for More Confident and Compelling Presentations](#)

Tips for Dealing with Challenges to Your Message

No matter how well you plan and prepare your message, you can expect to have challenges.

Your best bet is to remember the BA Pledge and the Tenets of Depolarization:

- As individuals, we try to understand the other side's point of view, even if we don't agree with it.
- In our communities, we engage those we disagree with, looking for common ground and ways to work together.
- In politics, we support principles that bring us together rather than divide us.



The Emotional and Intellectual Transformation of De-Polarization

It may also help to review this Braver Angels Model of Emotional and Intellectual Transformation (shown below) before speaking. As a BA representative, you want to stay in the respect and appreciation area.

Step Eight: Evaluate Your Success!

Hopefully, you've enjoyed some well-deserved kudos for your message! And, more importantly, we hope that you have engaged your audience in a way that made your message resonate with them.

We do encourage you to solicit feedback from your audience. It can focus on the following questions and be provided to them as a handout, an email or even an online survey (like [Jotform.com](https://www.jotform.com) or [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)). Regardless, it's time to put your feet up and evaluate your results. Take a few minutes to consider the following:

1. Overall, what did I do well? Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Overall, what could I improve upon? Click or tap here to enter text.
3. What should I do differently the next time? Click or tap here to enter text.
4. What lessons have I learned? Click or tap here to enter text.
5. What information do I need to share with others? What recommendations might I make to others? Click or tap here to enter text.

Please share your results with our Ambassador Coordinator, whose contact information you can find on the first page of this toolkit.

Sample Speeches

Here, you will find an overview of the speeches in the Toolkit Supplement. You can use these speeches “as is” or a guide to produce your own. Remember you can also modify them for an op-ed. (Please note this works in conjunction with the supplement; you will need to have that to access these speeches).

As we’ve indicated, these are sample speeches that you can use pretty much “as is” or you can use them as examples to create your own.

These speeches are designed to:

- Improve emotions and views of the other political party and its members.
- Encourage personal actions, including participation in Braver Angels events or volunteering for the organization.

Here are the options, along with some considerations of which to choose. Note that psychological concepts are sometimes used to make ideas seem more robust. However, the other content and stories in the speeches depolarize much more than simply understanding a psychological concept:

Expected Goal	Considerations	Speaker’s Comfort Level and Knowledge	Audience Interest in Psychological Concepts	Potential for Use of Stories with Emotional Power
Similarities: Recognition of things in common with members of the other political party	Does the audience feel distant from the other party?	Does not require any significant knowledge of terms	Not needed	Stories of similarities between groups
Cross-categorization: Recognition that there are overlapping group memberships (beyond political party affiliation)	Does the audience feel distant from the other party?	Requires some familiarity with a psychological term (cross-categorization), although this is further defined in the speech itself.	Some interest	Stories of overlapping group memberships
Decategorization: Belief of uniqueness of individuals (beyond their party)	Does the audience view the other party in terms of stereotypes?	Requires some familiarity with a psychological term (decategorization), although this is further defined in the speech itself.	Some interest	May have fewer options but does allow for stories of uniqueness

Participation in Braver Angels	Does the audience want to learn about the organization?	Requires knowledge of BA programs	Not needed	Has some options
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Appendix: Glossary of Terms

- **Affect / Affective:** This includes both emotions and attitudes (either as a noun or an adjective).
- **Affective polarization:** Technically, this is an increasing difference between the emotions and attitudes toward an in-group, and the emotions and attitudes toward an out-group. In terms of politics, [Pew Research has shown](#) that very unfavorable views of the other political party increased by nearly 3x from 1994 through 2016. Affective polarization is also sometimes visualized with a “feeling thermometer.” A feeling thermometer asks people how they feel about other groups, where “0” represents the coldest and most distant one group can feel toward another, while “100” represents the warmest and closest they feel. Feeling thermometer readings between political parties in the U.S. [have worsened over the past few decades](#). In most cases, solutions will focus on improving out-group emotions and attitudes. Thus, affective polarization can often be shorthand for increasingly negative emotions and attitudes toward the other partisan side (e.g., contempt, distrust, disgust, anger, resentment, prejudice). If the in-group and out-group relate to political parties, then there is “affective partisan polarization,” which Braver Angels tries to reduce.
- **“Blues” (Braver Angels):** In the context of Braver Angels, these are people who lean toward the Democratic Party and/or liberal political positions in the U.S. context.
- **Braver Angels:** Braver Angels is a citizens organization uniting red and blue Americans in a working alliance to depolarize America.
- **Conservative:** This is a general ideological orientation, often in the U.S. political context (e.g., less government intervention in the economy, more government restrictions on social practices).
- **Cross-categorization:** This is a social psychological approach for improving emotions and attitudes between two groups by identifying a “cross-cutting” group identity that some people from both groups share. People then can see

“out-group” members as also “in-group” members. People tend to feel closer and warmer to fellow in-group members.

- **Decategorization:** This is a social psychology approach for improving emotions and attitudes between two groups. It involves encouraging people to think of the other side more as unique individuals rather than as stereotypes. The term refers to taking people out of the category of their group, thereby “decategorizing” them from their group to a more unique individual identity. When the other side is seen as many distinct, unique individuals, it is harder to stereotype the other political party as a monolithic block. Some individual characteristics and identities are likely to overlap with one’s own, allowing people to feel closer to those on the other side.
- **Depolarization:** This can either mean reducing the gap between ideological viewpoints (issue depolarization), or generally improving emotions and attitudes toward those in the other political party (affective depolarization). Braver Angels encourages people to have their own political viewpoints, and it does not seek moderate political beliefs. Thus, Braver Angels is more focused on affective depolarization.
- **In-group:** This is a group that one belongs to. In general, people tend to feel better about members of a group that one belongs to than members of groups one does not belong to. However, affinity for one’s own group is not necessarily predictive of one’s emotions and attitudes toward other groups (e.g., one can like their group and another group).
- **Issue polarization:** This refers to the divergence of political attitudes to ideological extremes. For example, [Pew Research has shown](#) that the median Democrat and the median Republican have diverged substantially in their beliefs between 1994 and 2017.
- **Liberal:** This is a general ideological orientation, often in the U.S. political context (e.g., more government intervention in the economy, less government restrictions on social practices).
- **“Other” (Braver Angels):** In the context of Braver Angels, these are people who do not sufficiently feel they lean enough toward Democrats and/or liberal political positions in the U.S. context to call themselves “Blues” or “Reds.”
- **Out-group:** This is a group that one does not belong to. In general, people tend to feel worse about members of a group that one does not belong to than members of groups that one belongs to. However, affinity (or lack thereof) for

another group is not necessarily predictive of one's emotions and attitudes toward one's own group (e.g., one can be a member of a group mainly because it is seen as the lesser of two evils).

- **Polarization:** This can either refer to the gap between ideological viewpoints (issue polarization), or the increasingly negative emotions and attitudes toward those in the other political party (affective polarization). Braver Angels encourages people to have their own political viewpoints, and it does not seek moderate political beliefs. Thus, Braver Angels is more focused on affective polarization.
- **Prejudice:** This is pre-judging, making a conclusion or making an evaluation about another individual solely based on their membership in a group, without knowing more about that specific individual
- **Stereotypes:** These are “fixed, over-generalized beliefs about a particular group or class of people.”
- **Recategorization:** This is a social psychological approach for improving emotions and attitudes between two groups. It involves finding a “superordinate” identity shared by all in both groups. For instance, a superordinate identity for Democrats and Republicans is “American.” When used appropriately, the technique can help people feel closer and more warmly toward their fellow in-group member.
- **“Reds” (Braver Angels):** In the context of Braver Angels, these are people who lean toward the Republican Party and/or conservative political positions in the U.S. context.