

Braver Angels 2020-2021 Report

Depolarizing During the Pandemic

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Braver Angels expanded its programming, reach, and outcomes. Here we summarize the top priorities of the organization, our major achievements from March 2020 to February 2021, and the key findings from our larger report.

Top Priorities

Our mission at Braver Angels is to bring Americans together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic.

We have several priorities that are instrumental in achieving this aim:

- ☆ Equip people with the skills to navigate hard topics and difficult conversations
- ☆ Expose individuals to people with differing views in a productive manner
- ☆ Enliven our democracy through more respectful cross-party engagement
- ☆ Educate people about their own biases toward and stereotypes about others
- ☆ Encourage the sharing of knowledge obtained through our programming
- ☆ Expand our offerings to address more issues and better reach target participants

Major Achievements

Effectively depolarized participants in Braver Angels programs, even during a year of high polarization.

Dramatically increased membership from 2,950 in March 2020 to 9,262 by February 2021.

Hosted 443 unique events with nearly 6,000 participants between March 2020 and February 2021.

Agilely shifted our main in-person workshops to online.

Developed three new online workshops, as well as the common ground single-issue workshop.

Significantly diversified participant demographics compared with the 2019 report.





Key Findings

82% of Braver Angels participants feel more comfortable with people on the opposite political side.

86% feel they understand the other side, and 71% feel understood by the other side.

88% have a better handle on their inner polarizer and 81% feel prepared to apply their new skills.

Between 77% and 91% of participants are likely to share what they learned in a Braver Angels event.

89% to 95% evaluated the programs as well-designed and well-run.

Participant comments

“The variety of opinions was invigorating and gives hope for our democracy”

“Talking across the divide is worthwhile, healing and challenging”

“Common ground exists – we just have to be able to talk about it without being shut down”

“Family is more important than politics”

“Individual conversations with people you disagree with are invaluable. Seek them out, even if initially uncomfortable.”

“‘Ordinary’ Americans display a lot more thoughtful reflection, nuance, and intelligence about this issue than is often reflected in the media and fiery slogans.”

“Despite our differences, we can find common ground in our humanity. That should be our starting point in engaging folks of opposing viewpoints.”

“Reasonable people can disagree, and a respectful debate reminds us of what active democracy looks like.”