

Braver Angels Guidelines on Tolerance

Braver Angels leaders are sometimes asked about our approach to holding events where participants make public assertions that may be unsupported by facts or harmful to others. Such questions include:

- Would Braver Angels debate (something horrible)? Are some topics off limits?
- Should we tolerate or invite those who make false statements or advance conspiracy theories?
- Should we tolerate or invite those who say things that deeply offend individuals and groups?

These are important questions. In our workshops, debates, podcasts, forums, meetings, and other activities, we seek to choose topics and tolerate and invite participant viewpoints based on five basic standards.

1. Does creating space for discussing this issue advance our mission?

We're trying to heal the country, recognizing its challenging divisions. We choose issues and select approaches that we believe can advance our mission of "bringing Americans together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic."

2. Does the issue divide the country?

We aren't interested in sensationalism, marginal influences, or controversy for its own sake. We focus on important issues that fundamentally divide us.

3. Will we discuss the issue in terms of our values?

Our model isn't designed to settle disputes over facts. It's designed to clarify differences and seek common ground on what we value as citizens and on priorities for the future.

4. Will we present diverse and opposing perspectives on the issue?

Favoring particular viewpoints over others or excluding arguably harmful viewpoints contradicts our mission. Bringing together on equal terms those who disagree is fundamental to who we are.

5. Will participants follow our rules of procedure?

Our events aren't free-for-alls. Our ground rules require civility toward others and the willingness to listen as well as speak. Within that framework, participants can speak their minds freely and without fear.