

Having
difficult
conversations
ABOUT MIGRATION



Why Now?

- **Brexit**
- **Global context: Trump, Bolsonaro, Orban**
- **Street movements like EDL, DFA, UKIP**
- **Election reflections of racist sentiment: Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage**



Who are we talking to?

The **SPECTRUM** *of* **SUPPORT**



We have our work cut out... We're taking on the prevailing ideas in society



And people would much rather hear things that confirm what they already think

What works and what doesn't

Works

- Persuasion
- Finding common ground
- Having a conversation (that means talking AND listening)
- Not shying away from the harsher arguments
- Storytelling

Not works

- Going for point scoring and a 'win'
- Screaming "racist" at racists
- Screaming "racist" at people who don't regard themselves as such
- Pure myth busting
- fact bashing

Key techniques for constructive conversations

- **Empathetic listening**
- **Socratic questioning**
- **Storytelling**
- **Experience**
- **Facts and knowledge**

Empathetic listening

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Understanding others before being understood
- What are their core values?
What do they really care about?
- Find the person behind the statements

WHY?

- Reduces tension in discussion
- Creates a safe space to develop mutual understanding
- Builds trust, respect and more chance of being understood yourself!
- Finding common ground to start from

It's not about showing empathy for prejudiced views!

Socratic questioning

Asking the right questions to provoke a person into thinking differently on their own terms.

- Ask for clarification: what do you mean by that? Can you clarify?
- Probe assumptions: What makes you say that?
- Probe evidence: what would be an example of that?
- Ask for alternative perspectives

What do you mean by this?

What is the main point you are making?

Could you put this another way?

You seem to be assuming that...

Could you give me an example?

Could you explain this a bit more?

Is that always the case?

Could there be another explanation?

What else can you assume?

Why have you made this assumption?

What evidence are you basing this on?

What effect would this have?

Does this reason depend on the idea that...

How can you find out if this is true?

Is there any reason to doubt the evidence?

Who benefits from this? Who loses?

Why do you say that?

Why is this issue important?

What is the counter-argument?

What are the implications of that?

Samaritan's listening wheel



Putting this into action
Los Angeles LGBT canvassing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdjtFRdbAo>