



7 Tips FOR Holiday Table Talks

For many of us, the holidays are a time to gather with friends and family and share a meal. Are you looking forward to seeing everyone and catching up over stuffing and pie, but nervous about the thought of Grandpa or Aunt Maria turning the conversation toward politics or current events? We get it – and we've got you!

It's both possible and important to have compassionate conversations with people with whom we disagree. Here are some tips from NCCJ to help you build more inclusive, respectful communities – starting with your nearest and dearest. Why not practice these tips at your holiday table?

1.

Don't assume they agree with you.

Just because you share DNA or a last name doesn't mean you share viewpoints.

2.

Stay calm.

If someone says something that makes your blood boil, slow down. Pause and reflect before you respond.

3.

Listen to understand.

Ask questions to help clarify, but don't interrupt.

4.

Exercise empathy.

Instead of judging, try to put yourself in their shoes. Why do they feel the way they do? What values and experiences helped form their opinion?

5.

Use "I" statements.

When it's your turn to talk, explain how you feel ("In my experience..." or "The way I see it...") It helps encourage others to listen to you.

6.

Value your relationships.

"Being right" feels good, but not at the expense of your relationships. Sometimes it's necessary to agree to disagree, so that you can keep talking and sharing ideas.

7.

Find common ground.

If your differences become too tough to talk about, focus on what brought you together over the holidays and shift the conversation toward common interests.

We hope you'll find these tips helpful as you reconnect with family and friends over the holidays. As you practice compassion and empathetic listening with your loved ones, don't forget to take care of yourself; everyone deserves to be treated with respect.

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