

SIoux CITY | SEPTEMBER 18-20 | 2024

STRONGER  
 **TOGETHER** 
ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBIT

Leading With Civility



The Robert D. and
Billie Ray Center

In Association with

The Center for Public Democracy

drake.edu/center-for-public-democracy



The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center

**The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center mission
is to improve civility
through character development and ethical leadership.**



The Ray Center vision is to transform lives and strengthen communities by equipping individuals and communities to embrace and practice good character by demonstrating trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Connection

- Stand and partner (one-on-one) with someone you do not know well
- Visit with each other going back and forth with questions as indicated
- Move back to your place when you have completed the activity or when requested

Connection

- What is your favorite Fall activity?
- What inspired you to attend this event?
- When have you seen civility demonstrated at a high level?
 - What were the habits you saw that made it stand out as being civil?

Weber Shandwick Poll

Poll finds Americans are united in seeing an uncivil nation

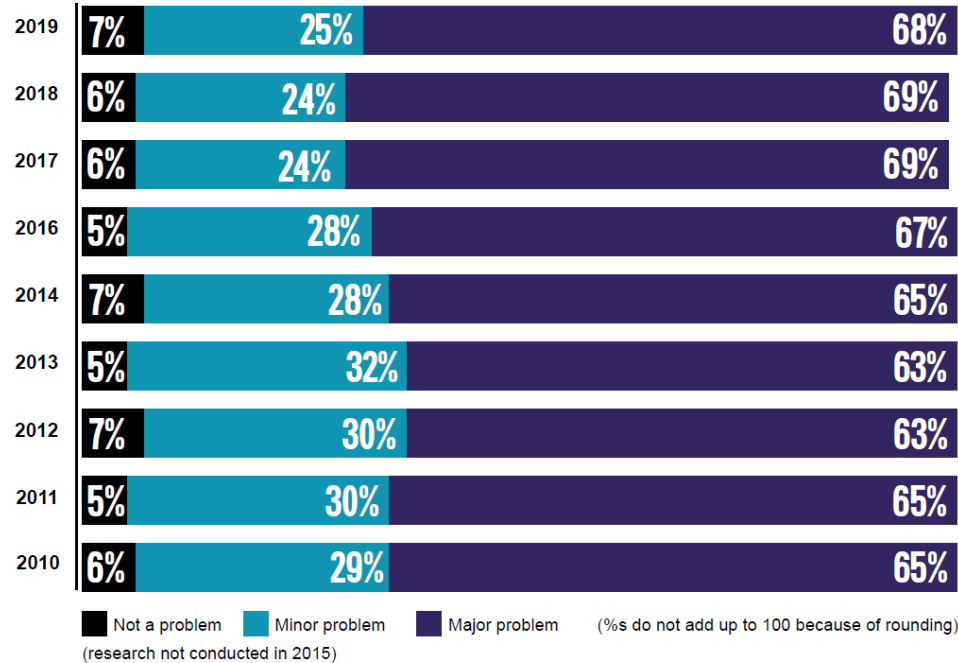
- 79% of Americans believe the 2016 and 2020 U.S. Presidential Election was uncivil
- 69% believe the U.S. has a major civility problem
- 75% of us now believe that incivility in America is a crisis



Weber Shandwick Poll

PROBLEM WITH CIVILITY IN AMERICA TODAY

(among total Americans)



Civility in America 2019: Solutions for Tomorrow



The continued trend and depth of incivility disrupts good governance.

Incivility in government inspires distrust of public institutions.

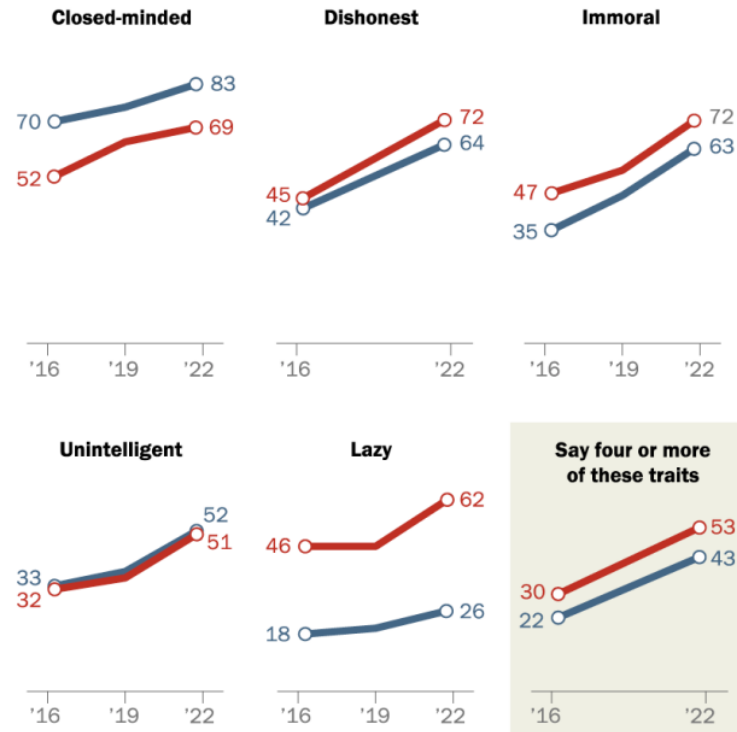
Pew Research Center

When it comes to civility - research trends indicate we are moving in the wrong direction.

Growing shares of both Republicans and Democrats say members of the other party are more immoral, dishonest, closed-minded than other Americans

% who say members of the **other** party are a lot/somewhat more _____ compared to other Americans

- Republicans say Democrats are more ...
- Democrats say Republicans are more ...



Note: Partisans do not include those who lean to each party.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 27-July 4, 2022.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

American Bar Association

In the recent annual Survey of Civic Literacy, 85% of Americans believe society is less civil than it was a decade ago, and they blame social media **and** public officials for that decline.

What We Know about the Impact of Incivility

- Incivility is increasing throughout society and at all levels of governance
- The depth of trending incivility disrupts governance
- Partisan intrusion in municipal elections is impacting governance
- Disruptions to municipal meetings is a growing issue and concern
- Incivility in government inspires distrust of public institutions
- Physical and verbal threats disrupt governance and impact the attraction and retention of good people willing to serve

Framing the Context of Civility

Civility includes issues of respect, decorum, kindness, and etiquette.

The depth of civility we seek to address includes how we can:

- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Approach difficult conversations and hard decisions with a focus on understanding - if not resolution
- Create a culture where elected officials can govern, staff can implement, and citizens can be involved and heard in a participatory process without fear or threat to any stakeholders

The Context of Civility

Civility is claiming and caring for one's identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else's in the process.

TOMAS SPATH AND CASSANDRA DAHNKE, FOUNDERS, INSTITUTE FOR CIVILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Civility is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of staying present even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements. It is political in the sense that it is a necessary prerequisite for civic action. But it is political, too, in the sense that it is about negotiating interpersonal power such that everyone's voice is heard, and nobody's is ignored.

And civility begins with us.

From The Institute for Civility in Government

Two decades of rising partisan antipathy

% of *Republicans* with a(n) ___ view of the *Democratic Party*

% of *Democrats* with a(n) ___ view of the *Republican Party*



Note: Based on partisans and does not include those who lean to each party.

Source: Yearly averages of survey data from Pew Research Center American Trends Panel (2020-2022) and Pew Research Center phone surveys (1994-2019).

Civility Context

1804 – Sitting Vice President (Aaron Burr) challenges former Secretary of the Treasury and political rival (Alexander Hamilton) to a duel – Hamilton was killed and Burr's political future was over.



DUEL BETWEEN BURR AND HAMILTON.

Civility Context

1856 - South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks chose to express his displeasure with Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner's impassioned anti-slavery speech by bludgeoning him unconscious with a metal-tipped cane – on the floor of the Senate. Overnight both men became heroes in their respective regions and went on to be reelected.



Context for Civility in Campaigns

1800 - Jefferson and Adams escalating war of words. Jefferson's backers called Adams a **“hideous hermaphroditical character, which has neither the force and firmness of a man, nor the gentleness and sensibility of a woman.”** Adams' supporters described Jefferson as **“a mean-spirited, low-lived fellow, the son of a half-breed Indian squaw, sired by a Virginia mulatto father.”**

There is HOPE and Optimism!

We can all become better!

“We” Improve When “I” Improve

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Leading With Civility Strategies

Connection

Intentional
relationship building

Ground Rules

Ground rules for
engagement set
boundaries

Carefrontation

For positive and
productive outcomes
address issues with
courage and
compassion

Self Awareness

Self awareness
through reflection
about individual
actions

MAKING “SURFACE TO SUBSTANCE” CONNECTIONS

1. Have the **courage and curiosity** to connect — especially with those who are new or different.
2. Connect by asking questions that go **“from surface to substance.”**



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Mutual *of* Omaha

Surface to Substance Connections

Bob and Donna

- Most unlikely person
- Follow-up
- No agenda – other than to get to know each other
- Courage to reach out – and respond
- Common Ground / Connections
- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Don't have to hurt each other
- Beliefs didn't change – approach did
- Find the person – reach out

NOW
THIS



© Cox for Governor

Elevating Civility in Local Elections Strategies

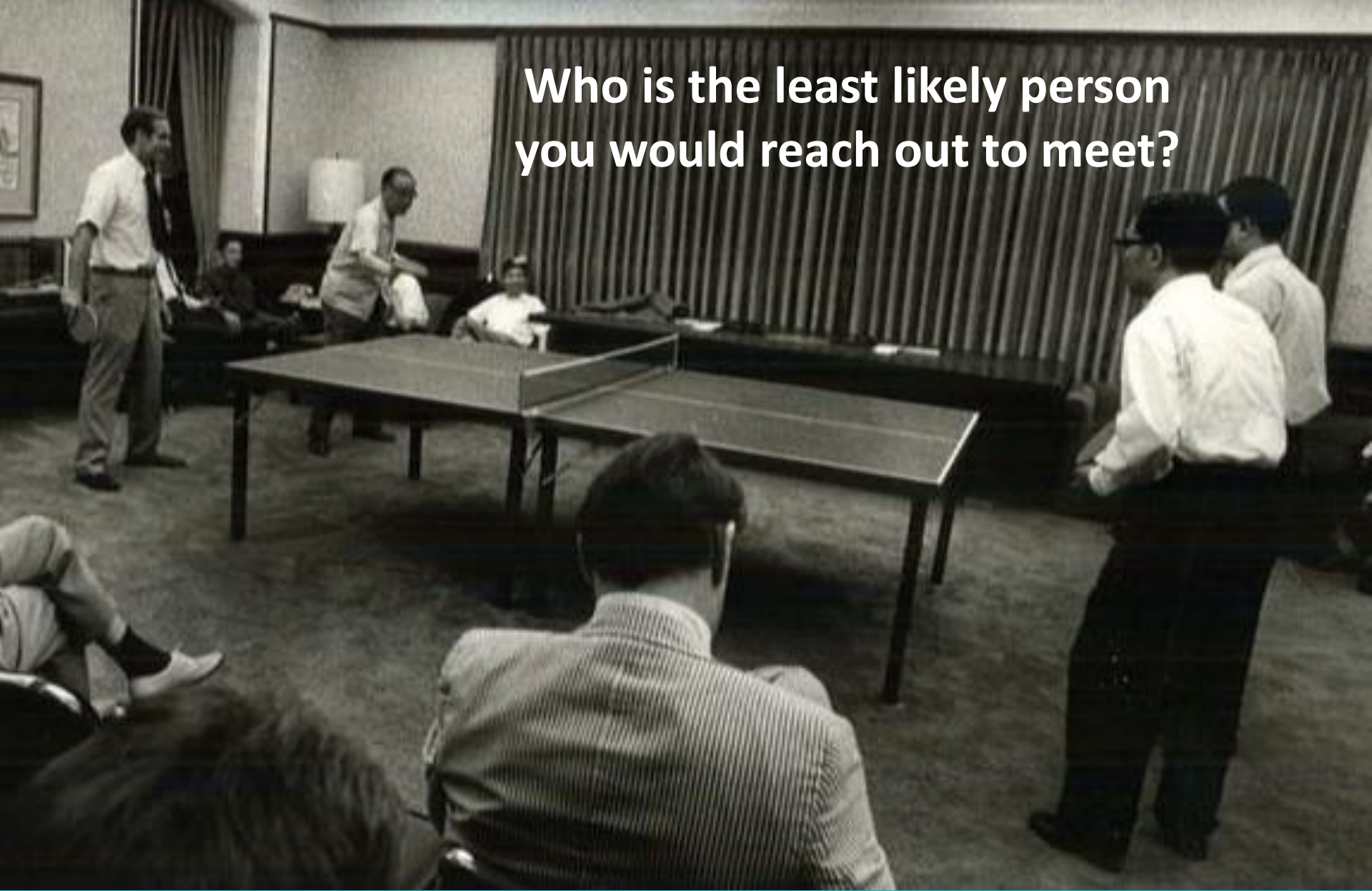
Connection

Intentional
relationship building

Ground Rules

Ground rules for
engagement set
boundaries

**Who is the least likely person
you would reach out to meet?**



COMPACT FOR EXCELLENCE TEMPLATE

In order to do our **best work** and treat each other with **respect and care**,
we each agree to/not to:

- » Participate – don't hide / don't dominate
- » Listen actively
- » Respect each other and the process
- » Essential IT use
- » Be open to new ideas
- » Candid conversations



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

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CHARACTER COUNTS!



The City of Urbandale

Urbandale is a national leader in CHARACTER COUNTS!, endeavoring at all times to promote and model the principles of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

In conducting our work, we expect that all participants will act in a respectful manner consistent with these principles.

The City of Urbandale

Urbandale is a national leader in CHARACTER COUNTS!, and as a candidate for office I will strive to conduct myself in my campaign with the principles of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

And, if elected, I will strive to serve with the same principles in mind.

Candidate Pledge

Elected officials are visible leaders in a community, with ongoing opportunities to be role models of good character and civility. As a candidate for public office – and as a public servant, if elected – I acknowledge this obligation and will strive, both personally and through my campaign, to uphold the principles of this pledge by:

Candidate Pledge

- Exhibiting **trustworthiness** by being honest. I will not deceive or mislead. I will act with integrity and follow through by doing what I say I will do.
- Modeling **respect** by being courteous and recognizing people's differences and opinions. I will respond appropriately to anger, insults and misrepresentations directed towards me and in disagreements with others.
- Demonstrating **responsibility** by exercising self-discipline and assuming accountability.
- Illustrating **fairness** by being open-minded and listening to others.
- Embracing **caring** by acting with kindness, compassion, and gratitude.
- Practicing good **citizenship** by being a good model of civic engagement, staying informed on community issues, and making decisions that I believe to be in the best interest of the community and our citizens.

West Virginia Oath for Lawyers

“I do solemnly swear or affirm that: I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of West Virginia; that I will honestly demean myself in the practice of law; **that I will conduct myself with integrity, dignity and civility and show respect toward judges, court staff, clients, fellow professionals and all other persons;** and to the best of my ability, execute my office of attorney-at-law; so help me God.”

Polarization Research Lab

Civility Pledge

I pledge to choose civility when campaigning and while serving in office. To be a role model for my community I will:

- focus on issues
- prioritize civil and rational debate
- not engage in name calling or make personal attacks on other candidates and their families
- avoid negative ads whenever possible

Leading With Civility Strategies

Carefrontation

**For positive and
productive outcomes
address issues with
courage and
compassion**

PREPARE TO COMMUNICATE CHECKLIST

1. Know **who** you are communicating with and **how** best to respect and connect with them.

who?

how?

2. Determine **what** outcomes you want to achieve—and avoid.

what?

3. Consider **when** and **where** will be the most favorable context for the communication.

where?

when?

CARE-FRONTATION FUNDAMENTALS

*For positive, productive relationships in the quest for excellence,
show **courage and compassion**:*

Attack the problem, not the person:

Name the problem and what needs to be done differently or better. Care more to **get it right** than to **be right**.

When in doubt, do it:

Speak up sooner and more consistently—conflicts delayed and deferred turn little things into big things.

Use “I”-statements:

Honestly and respectfully express your thoughts and feelings, focus on solutions, and show personal responsibility (e.g., *“I think we need ...; I propose we ...”*).

Avoid “You”-statements:

Avoid blame, insult, and attacks, which tend to disrespect, divide, and distract, or shift responsibility (e.g., *“You caused this ...; You never do your part ...”*).

Seek win-win:

Balance **your** needs and best interests (*“I want ...”*) and **their** needs and best interests (*“You want ...”*).

Own mistakes and missteps:

It won’t always be smooth and perfect, so be ready to apologize, make up, and move on.

Adapted from David Augsburg, *Caring Enough to Confront*.

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Leading With Civility Strategies

Self Awareness

**Self awareness
through reflection
about individual
actions**

LEADER-TO-DETRACTOR RUBRIC

Leader

Demonstrates personal commitment and mastery, and encourages others by word and deed to do the same.

- » Demonstrates teamwork, initiative, and willingness to work with others.
- » Demonstrates the ability to organize and lead group toward stated goals, but also does his/her part in the actual group tasks.
- » Encourages teamwork and leadership in others.

Participant

Carries out personal responsibilities in an adequate way, but does not demonstrate collective responsibility for shared goals or collective good.

- » Demonstrates adequate teamwork and willingness to work with others.
- » Rarely, if ever, demonstrates the ability to organize and lead group toward stated goals.
- » Assumes adequate responsibility for group tasks — not leading others, but not detracting either.

Detractor

Doesn't meet the standards personally and prevents others from meeting the standards.

- » Demonstrates poor teamwork and inability to work with others.
- » Demonstrates inability to organize and lead group toward stated goals.
- » Assumes no responsibility for group tasks, and detracts from the group's ability to function adequately.

Adapted from Jeffrey Beedy.

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Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → *Performance*

CLARITY

clear specific
expectations for context,
resources, abilities

HABIT

intentional, intensive,
focused practice,
real-world simulation

Performance

MINDSET

mental preparation,
emotional toughness,
focus, resilience

ACCOUNTABILITY

support, challenge,
reflection for
growth

Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → Performance

CLARITY

10,000
Steps

HABIT

Park Far Away
Take Stairs

Exercise More

MINDSET

Opportunity for Steps
Healthy

ACCOUNTABILITY

Daily Step Check
Friends

Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → *Performance*

CLARITY

HABIT

Civility

MINDSET

ACCOUNTABILITY

Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → *Performance*

CLARITY

HABIT

How to engage in difficult or
challenging conversations

MINDSET

ACCOUNTABILITY

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Dewitt Jones

Dewitt Jones Insights

Do you have the right lens on?

- What's your perspective or angle?
- Find the extraordinary viewpoint to the problem.

Are you in the place of the most potential?

-What's the one thing we could do better or differently right now?

Don't worry about making mistakes.

- There's more than one right answer; find the next right answer.

How many times a week is it up to you?

- See the extraordinary in the ordinary.
- Are you ready to embrace this and respond?

Visit Us Online

CharacterCountsInIowa.org

