

BUILDING BRIDGES Group at The Pinehills

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

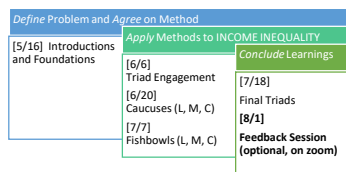
Session 6 August 1, 2022 – OPTIONAL Feedback Session

Arlene Samuel and Rick Frazier, Facilitators

BuildingBridgesPH@gmail.com

www.BuildingBridgesPH.com

Where are we? What was the plan?



[1] INTRODUCTIONS and FOUNDATIONS

Introduction to the Group
Overview of the Divide Problem
Foundation Principles and Methods
Rank three proposed issues
Triads Breakout – Baseline
Announce divisive issue
Expectations and preparations for the next session

[2] TRIAD ENGAGEMENTS

Schtick (Surprise)
Set Stage, Brief Check-in
Triads – Values and experiences
Group Report Out
Triads – On topic
Group Report Out
Expectations and preparations for the next session

[3] CAUCUS MEETINGS

Set Stage, Brief Check-in
3 Simultaneous Issue Teams
Caucuses (L,M,C)
-Full Spectrum Input sharing
-Summarize findings
-Prepare for Fishbowls
Group Report Out
Expectations and preparations for the next session

[4] FISHBOWLS

L, M, C – each caucus shares conclusions
Capture group learnings
Full Group Discussion
Expectations and preparations for the next session

[5] TRIAD ENGAGEMENTS

Triads – On divisive issue
Extensive Group Report Outs by each triad
Full Group discussion on all sessions takeaways
Recommendations on actions to take

Tonight's Agenda (6:30 – 8:00)

- Share and discuss survey results
- Review and solicit feedback on major underlying concepts and frameworks
- Review and solicit feedback each of the major session areas for effectiveness and efficiency
- Collect other suggestions for changes
- Wrap-up - share your one most significant take-a-way or learning

8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

3

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Survey Results - 1

- How **many** of the five **Building Bridges Group sessions** were you able to attend in person or on zoom (0 to 5)?
 - 5/5 – 53%
 - 4/5 – 33%
 - 3/5 – 13%
 - (0-1-2)/5 – 0%
- If you discontinued participation in the Building Bridges Group, what was your reason?
 - too much like work (written submissions & reviews)
 - travel
 - offended by fishbowl presentation

8/1/2022

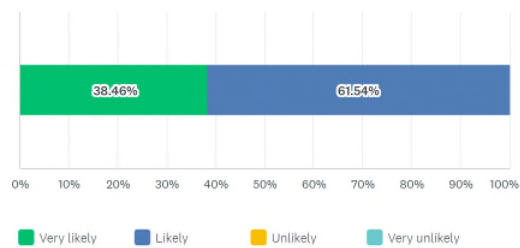
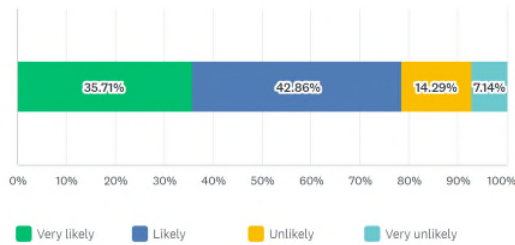
Session 6 - Feedback

4

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Survey Results - 2

- As we engage on new topics in future Building Bridges Groups, **how likely are you to participate again?**
- How **likely are you to recommend** joining future BB Groups to your **neighbors, friends, or family?**



8/1/2022

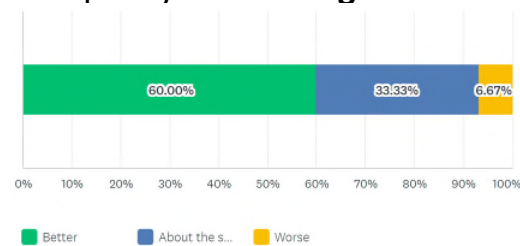
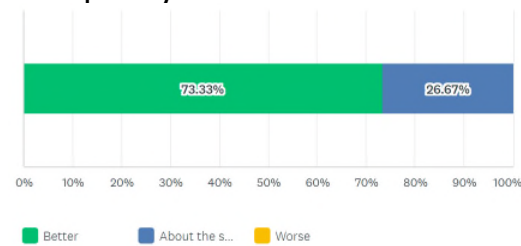
Session 6 - Feedback

5

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Survey Results - 3

- Did participating in the group help you better articulate your **personal** values, vision, and proposed actions on Income Inequality?
- Did participating in the group help you **better understand** the experiences, values, vision, and proposed actions on Income Inequality of **differing views?**



8/1/2022

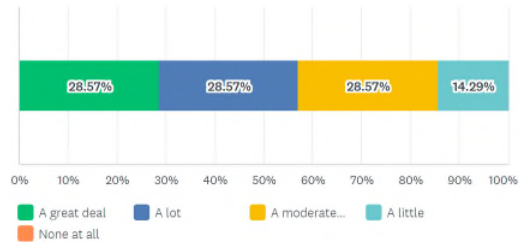
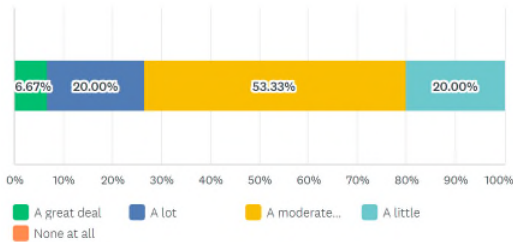
Session 6 - Feedback

6

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Survey Results - 4

- Did participating in the group help you find **common ground** (values, vision, and proposed actions) **across the political spectrum** on Income Inequality?
- Did participating in the group **help prepare you conduct civil dialog** when encountering major political differences with people?



8/1/2022

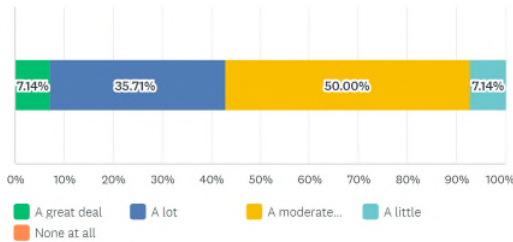
Session 6 - Feedback

7

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Survey Results - 5

- Did participating in the group help **better prepare** you to be a **uniter and de-polarizer** in your influence circles?
- **ADDITIONAL SURVEY COMMENTS?**



8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

8

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Did we promote BB *accurately* and *well*?

Building Bridges Group at the Pinehills

- **ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATE OF OUR COUNTRY?**
- **DO YOU LIKE TO DISCUSS AND MORE FULLY UNDERSTAND TODAY'S TOUGH ISSUES?**
- **DO YOU BELIEVE WE CAN ALL DO BETTER?**

Building Bridges is a productive way to discuss many of today's most divisive issues and to work toward being a positive and productive "influencer" by your uniting and depolarizing presence.

To make this experience valuable, the group has balance of perspectives with a similar number of dedicated participants from across the political spectrum – liberal, moderate, and conservative.

The Primary Goals of this Group include:

- *Enrich* both the depth and breadth of understanding of top divisive issues
- *Identify* and *build* common ground
- *Learn* ways to disagree without being disagreeable
- *Develop* skills to become a uniting and depolarizing presence in your daily life

Additional Details:

Major issues that threaten our democracy are going unresolved with ever-widening partisan division. This division is playing out badly among family, friends, neighbors, communities, organizations, cities, states, and the federal government. The purpose of the club is to enable participants to develop deeper full spectrum understanding of today's most divisive issues AND become better depolarizing influencers/uniters in their spheres of influence.

We encourage the participants to be serious, active, curious, listen well, open minded, available and have a sincere interest in a better community and country. We will meet in-person each month on the *first* and *third* Mondays 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in the **Stonebridge Recreation Room**. Zoom participation available, but not preferred.

Did we set-up and frame the Group *well*?

Why do the Group?

- Threatening issues go unresolved with worsening impact and wider partisan division – Democracy suffers
- Division plays out "real" badly in all circles
- Multiple organizations have developed methods to help remedy the situation, but these methods are sparsely known or seldom implemented
- Influence participants to become better informed uniters and depolarizers within their influence circles – family, friends, neighbors, communities, organizations, cities, states and the federal government

Did we accomplish these ?

How might you benefit?

- Enrich both the depth and breadth of understanding on our selected divisive issue
- Identify and build common ground on our selective divisive issue
- Learn ways to disagree without being disagreeable
- Develop skills to become a uniting and depolarizing presence in your daily life

Pure Disgust → Anger → Disagreement → Civil Dialogue

Do the principles and methods *work well*?

Review: Our Agreed Top Civil Discourse Principles

- Take winning off the table
- Seek to understand
- Honor the fact of multiple truths
- Embrace your discomfort and vulnerability
- Prioritize relationships over ideas

Introducing: Full Spectrum Conversations

- **Experiences** – share events and influences that shaped your personal values and beliefs on the issue
- **Values** – identify your defining values and beliefs, that frame the issue
- **Vision** – share your description of the desired outcomes to resolve the issue
- **Paths** – suggest possible alternative paths to attain your desired outcomes
- **Analysis** – assess the strengths and weaknesses of your proposed paths

SUGGESTED TOOL ... #1

Replace Contempt with Curiosity

In response to another person's comment

When you feel contempt ...

- identify it
- replace it with curiosity
- ask a non-inflammatory "why?" question

Repeat as necessary

SUGGESTED TOOL ... #2

Avoid DIVISIVE language and terminology

Why?

- Reinforces stereotypes
- Forces group think
- Makes accurate disagreement difficult to achieve
- Contributes to mutual incomprehension
- Uses language for virtue signaling and in-group bonding
- Replaces authentic expression with formulaic expression
- Communicates insensitivity to colored persons

Approaches to Conflict

Definition: It is when one group seeks to achieve its goals at least in part by preventing other groups from reaching theirs.

Three Approaches to conflict

- Submit** – ignore or make it your cause
- Manage** – Balance with civility, find common ground, develop capacity for negotiation, compromise, accommodate
- Transform** – Create what is valid and helpful on both sides, develop humility, believe in the equal dignity of every person

NORMAL RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

FEEL THREATENED	FEEL VULNERABLE	FEEL HUMILIATED	RESULT – FLEE OR FIGHT
BODY RESPONSE	MENTAL RESPONSE	EMOTIONAL RESPONSE	
• Increased heart rate/blood pressure	• "I can't do this"	• Shame	
• Increased blood sugar	• "I'm not good enough"	• Anger	
• Increased breathing rate	• "I'm not smart enough"	• Fear	
• Increased sweating	• "I'm not capable"	• Sadness	
• Increased blood pressure	• "I'm not worthy"	• Guilt	
• Increased muscle tension	• "I'm not qualified"	• Disappointment	

Take winning off the table

Seek to understand

Honor the fact of multiple "truths"

Embrace your discomfort and vulnerability

Prioritize relationships over ideas

8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

11

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Was the divide problem definition *needed* and *worthy*?

Are actual views on issues really widening?

YES! Very real, getting worse, & very "nuanced", Pew Research Data 1994-2021

Are divide trends getting worse? YES

- **A never-ending and overflowing list of dividing issues and crises**
- **Several other explosive biggies**
- **Dividing Accelerators Abound**
- **Very Limited Good News!**

Are we really that divided in the US? YES

- No major change by county 2016 to 2020 – Blues blue, reds red
- Blue hatred is moving from Trump (the person) to the "Jus" (yellow Americans)
- Rise of extremists at both ends of the political spectrum
- Desire to build communities, trusting relationships, and deep understanding is waning

What are the root causes?

David Blankenhorn's "Causes"	Current Polarization	Political Party Service	New Political Dismissal
Loss of God Fear	Clash of Greatness	Political Party Service	New Political Dismissal
Rise of Secularism	Clash of Greatness	New Rules for Political Parties and Congress	Spread of Misinformation
Declining Religious Diversity	Emerging Secularism	New Political Dismissal	Spread of Misinformation
Declining Religious Diversity	Emerging Secularism	New Political Dismissal	Spread of Misinformation

- **Jonathan Haidt Atlantic Article** – "Why the past 10 years of American life have been **uniquely stupid**"

- Needed?
- Depth?
- Issue selection method?

Select the Divisive Issue

- Divisive Issues from the Threat Palette
- **Social Safety Net (Human Infrastructure)**
- **Energy Policy**
- **Income Inequality**
- Please rank them (1, 2, 3) *now*
- Results by Rank Choice Voting *later*

8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

12

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

The Initial Introductory (not tied to income inequality) Triads (Session 1)

Triads Breakout – Meet Your Team

- Three per team (roughly L, M, C)
- Each participant shares their response to two questions (please give everyone equal time)
 - **Why are you here?**
 - **What/who are the primary *experiences* and *individuals* that have shaped or influenced your *values* and *beliefs*?**

- Needed?
- Impact?

Initial Income Inequality Triads (Session 2)

- Prefaced by Arlene and Rick Role play plus additional techniques
- Needed?
- Impact?
- Continuity of participants?

The Caucuses (Session 3)

Tonight's Caucus

Goals

- Gain a Thorough Understanding of the Issue for your position group
- Practice learned Bridge Building principles, methods, techniques/tools
- Develop a solid Issue position summary of common or frequently shared
 - Experiences and influencers
 - Defining values and beliefs
 - Vision & outcomes
 - Recommendable paths & initiatives to deliver vision
 - Assessment of pros and cons of each path/alternative

Activity

- Caucus Leader facilitates participative group discussion (90 min)
- Caucus members create a group position summary for all 5 position goals
- Commission preparation work for a stunning Fishbowl! 20 minute group presentation to be shared with the other two groups at the Fishbowl Session

- Needed?
- How well did they work?
- Suggestions to make them more effective?

Worksheet Questions (In Full)

- Summarize the three top **experiences** or **influencers** in your life, that impacted your key **values** and **beliefs**
- Summarize your top three key **values** and/or **beliefs**
- Per your values and beliefs, summarize your **vision** of what Income Equality should look like (**outcomes**)
- To realize that vision, list your top 3 to 5 specific **actions**, recommended **paths**, or **initiatives**, that need to take place to increase the likelihood of it's achievement
- For each of your recommended **paths/actions**, briefly list the major **pros** (pluses) and **cons** (minuses)

8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

15

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

The Fishbowls (Session 4)

Goals

- Gain a more thorough Issue Understanding (Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative)
- Practice learned Bridge Building principles, methods, techniques/tools
- Understand both the differences and commonality of (1) through (5) subtopics
- Prompt participants to develop their own view to bring to the Final Triad

- Needed?
- How well did they work?
- Suggestion to make them more effective?

Tonight's Agenda

- Share introduction and guidelines for the Fishbowl process
- Conduct sessions where each of the three Caucuses shares and discusses their Income Inequality messages as follows:
 - 20 Minute Overview (Present only, no dialogue)
 - Share **experiences** and **influencers** that shaped our personal **values** framing Income inequality
 - Share our personal **vision** of the desired **outcomes** for Income Inequality
 - Suggest possible alternative **paths** to attain your desired outcomes with brief **assessment** of pros and cons
 - 10 Minute Q and A (2q x 2 groups) per principles – for understanding only
- Discuss preparations for next session

8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

16

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.


The Final Triads (Session 5)

Final Triads on 7/18 (Monday)	
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solidify Issue Understanding • Practice learned Bridge Building principles, methods, techniques/tools • Identify Common Ground on Values, Outcomes, & Paths • Identify Possible Actions post Group • Capture all useful methods & principles
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form Triads with L, M, & C balance • Triads meet to share and identify Common Ground on Values, Outcomes, & Paths • Identify Possible Actions post Group • Full group meets for wrap-up

- How well did they work?
- Suggestions to make them more effective?

The *Final Triads* (60 minutes)

- Each participant briefly shares their views (5 mins each)
 - Experiences and Influencers
 - Values and Beliefs
 - Vision and Outcomes
 - Actions and Paths
 - Assessments
- Triad identifies all "common ground" (from bolded items above)
 - Capture them for sharing with the full group
- Triad identifies the top 1-2 areas of major disagreement
- Triad endeavors to conduct civil tri-olog to reconcile or find common agreement using all BB principles
 - Capture description of the engagement for sharing with the full group



8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

17

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.

Wrap-up

- Future of the Group
 - Continue?
 - Modify?
 - Name?
 - Recruiting?
- Share your one most significant take-a-way or learning from our sessions

8/1/2022

Session 6 - Feedback

18

Bridging the partisan divide through deep cross-partisan exploration of today's serious threats to US Democracy.