

Exploring the differences between Dialogue, Discussion and Debate

In DISCUSSION	In DEBATE	In DIALOGUE
<i>we try to...</i>	<i>we try to...</i>	<i>we try to...</i>
Give ideas and information	Be the one who is “right”	Broaden our own viewpoint
Look for answers and solutions	Look for weaknesses in the other’s statements	Look for shared meaning
Convince others to agree with us	Defend our opinion	Allow for and invite differences of opinion and experience
Achieve preset goals	Judge other viewpoints as inferior, invalid or distorted	Accept apparent contradictions and lack of clarity
Acknowledge feelings, then discount them as inappropriate/irrelevant	Deny other’s feelings	Explore thoughts and feelings
Listen for places of disagreement	Listen with a goal to argue against the other	Listen without judgment and with a view to understand
Avoid feelings	Discount the validity of feelings	Validate other’s experiences and feelings
Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference	Focus on conflict and difference as advantage	Be able to understand where others have different point of view from one's own
Retain relationships	Disregard relationships	Build relationships
Avoid silence	Use silence to gain advantage	Honor silence

Huang-Nissen, S. (1999). *Dialogue Groups, a practical guide to facilitate diversity conversations*. Blue Hill, ME: Medicine Bear Publishing. Adapted by Tanya Kachwaha, 2002. Modified by Darlene Nichols, 2013, 2017.