

## ASKING INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE DELIBERATION

One of the most important roles of a moderator is to ask thought-provoking questions, ones that encourage people to think *deeply* about their own opinions and the impacts their ideas might have on others. To encourage this deliberative mindset, moderators ask questions that encourage participants to weigh different points of view, to consider potential trade-offs, and to examine intended and unintended consequences of a wide range of actions.

### Questions that connect the public issue to the lives and concerns of people

- Could you illustrate how this issue is touching the lives of most of us in the community?
- What makes this issue relevant to you?
- What evidence do you see that this is something that is important to all of us?

### Questions that ask participants to weigh the costs and consequences of a range of approaches to addressing the problem

- What might be the effects of your approach on others?
- Could you identify those things that are important to us that seem to be in tension with each other?
- What seems to be most important to those who are attracted to this approach?
- What are the concerns of those who have negative views about this approach?

### Questions to ensure a balanced examination of all potential impacts

- What would be the consequences of moving in the direction you are suggesting?
- What would be an argument against the approach you like best?
- Is there a downside to this course of action?
- Can anyone think of something constructive that might come from this approach, which is receiving so much criticism?

**Questions that ask participants to weigh the costs they are willing to accept in order to achieve the results they want**

- Would you give up \_\_\_\_\_ in order to achieve \_\_\_\_\_?
- What costs are at stake and can we live with them?
- What do you see as the tension among the approaches?
- What are the gray areas? Where is there ambiguity?
- Why is this issue so difficult to decide?

**Questions that encourage the participant to make a connection between the actions they advocate and what is important to them**

- Would you be willing to have that action apply to everyone?
- What is most valuable to you or to those who support that action?
- If we did what you have suggested, could you explain how that might impact your life?

**Questions that give the participants an opportunity to reflect on what they have heard, to summarize differences, and to acknowledge areas of common ground**

- How has this discussion impacted your thinking?
- What seemed important to all of us?
- What are we willing and unwilling to do as individuals, as a community, or as a nation in order to address this problem?
- Have we developed areas of common ground to support certain actions?
- What else do we need to consider? Who else needs to be involved?