

IUPUI Common Theme Project

The Common Theme Project promotes campus unity, conversation and collaboration on timely issues that connect IUPUI to central Indiana and the world.

The Common Theme features a book central to a Theme, supported by related books, programs, and speakers

Themes change every two years, under the direction of a Faculty Fellow and Steering Committee

IUPUI Common Theme Project

Our Previous Common Themes:

- **Common Theme 2009–2011: “Consuming Well for the Wealth of Communities, from IUPUI to the World.”**

Faculty Fellow: David Craig

- **Common Theme 2011-2013: “Change Your World: The Power of New Ideas.”**

Faculty Fellow: Kathleen Hanna

IUPUI Common Theme Project

2013-2015 Common Theme Faculty Fellow:

**Khadija Khaja, Associate Professor,
School of Social Work
kkhaja@iupui.edu**

2013-2015 Common Theme:

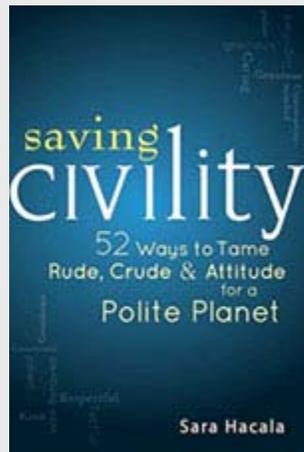
**“Find Your Voice, Hear My Voice
Creating Civil Conversation”**





**Find Your
Voice:
Hear My
Voice**

2013-2015



Saving Civility: 52 Ways to Tame Rude, Crude & Attitude for a Polite Planet by Sara Hacala

**Campus Presentation: Wednesday,
November 13, 2013, 1:30 Campus Center**



**Staff Workshop Thursday, November 14,
2013, 1:00 Campus Center**

Discovering Common Ground Through Civil Discourse: A Focus Group Study



Khadija Khaja, Ph.D.

Common Theme Fellow, Associate Professor, School of Social Work

Daniel B. Griffith, J.D., SPHR

Director of the Office for Intergroup Dialogue and Civil Community

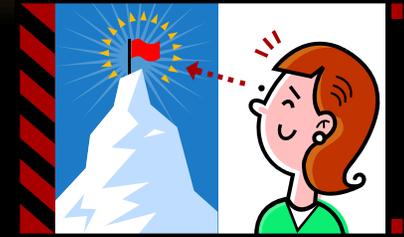
Kathy Grove, J.D. ,

Director of the Office for Women

Ian McIntosh, Ph.D.,

Director of International Partnerships

Purpose



- ❧ Foster more engaged conversations
- ❧ Promote understanding, respect & awareness
- ❧ Address polarizing & divisive viewpoints in teaching and learning climates

Literature Review



- ❧ Hacala defines civility (2011) as working together with “greater respect, awareness, understanding and acceptance of one another” (p. 5).
- ❧ Concern that many discussions “breed mistrust” or “polarize the discussion” of diverse and contemporary issues (Rodin & Steinberg, 2003, p.1; Weeks, 2011).

Literature Review



Forni (2011) reports:

“communicating is only as good as what is being communicated” (p.4).

“...much to the frustration of the best brains among us, work is increasingly for *doing*, not thinking” (p.13-14).

Literature Review



☞ Concern about “ongoing assault against honest debate in America” (Williams, 2011, p.3).

Millennial students:

☞ 1st generation to adapt so quickly to online social networks & learning environments.

☞ 1st to carry immediate portable communication devices.

☞ Send & receive 2,899 text messages monthly (Weeks, 2011).

Method



Focus groups (33) on IUPUI campus & dorms,
purposive sample

Participant Total: 193

Staff: 62

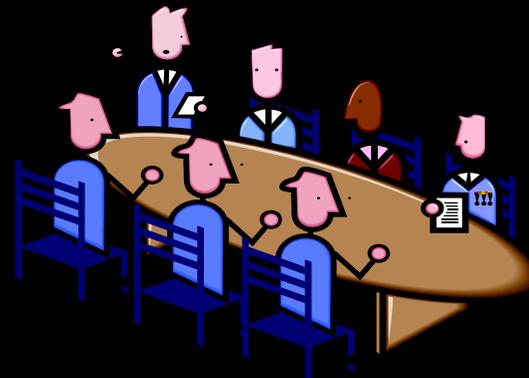
Faculty: 22

students: 98

Lecturers: 3

Community: 3

Other: 5



Questions



-
- ❧
- ❧ What led you to attend the focus groups?
 - ❧ How would you define civil discourse?
 - ❧ When does civil discourse breakdown?
 - ❧ Why does it breakdown?
 - ❧ Your recommendations?

Came to Focus Group Because?

❧ Intrigued & curious

❧ Worry about polarized discourse on social & political issues

❧ See growing global diversity on campus

❧ Topic of civility was timely

Came to Focus Group Because?



☞ Experienced stigmatization & stereotyping if holding a minority view

☞ Seen societal backlash to some international students



☞ Like to support focus group research

Came to Focus Group Because?



☞ Want to support IUPUI to maintain its unique & diverse voice within the bigger system



☞ Wanted to meet others

☞ Common Theme projects build better campus community

Define Civil Discourse As?



❧ Frame passion
constructively

❧ Language is
equitable

❧ Respectful dialogue

❧ Feel safe to express
viewpoint

❧ Relationship
building

❧ Appreciate
difference

When Does Does Civil Discourse Breakdown?



∞ Burnout Mode

∞ Exclusion of voices

∞ Media

∞ Don't deal with
difficult personalities

∞ Language barriers

∞ Technology
anonymity

∞ Hot button issues

∞ Cultural shift

∞ Group think

Why Does Civil Discourse Breakdown?



❧ Backlash towards
diversity

❧ Lack of
transparency

❧ Poor facilitation

❧ Punitive course
evaluations

❧ Unwillingness to
heal/forgive

❧ Lack of resources

Recommendations



- ❧ Share findings at FC and SC, post results on CT site
- ❧ Implement more instructional presentations on how to communicate about difficult subjects
- ❧ Provide list of resources of books, films, websites
- ❧ Partner with varied offices, departments, student organizations, dorms, & community in holding events dealing with civil discourse (need more resources for this to succeed)

Recommendations



- ☞ Include rural voice in events
- ☞ We need to interact more, getting too busy, relationships key to getting along
- ☞ Staff, faculty, admin, & students, should sit together more at events
- ☞ Develop civil discourse pledge like the ChuckStrong foundation
- ☞ Develop additional workshops on forgiveness & healing, listening, & conflict resolution strategies

Recommendations



- ❧ Other suggested having more dialogues at IUPUI on topics such as:
 - ❧ Who defines what is politically correct? Who defines hate speech? Where do we draw the line?
 - ❧ Is it possible to address self-censorship rather than institutional censorship?
 - ❧ Have conduct codes at universities made it unsafe to express minority views?
 - ❧ What about legitimate value differences?