



Bridging Divides Initiative

De-escalation Guides, Training, and Resources to Address Political Violence

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The Bridging Divides Initiative (BDI) is a non-partisan research initiative that tracks and mitigates political violence in the United States.



We produce **action oriented, responsive research** where it can fill existing gaps or empower local leaders.



We **enable cross sector collaboration**, so individuals and organizations will be better prepared to mitigate risk and respond to crisis when it does arise.



We help **drive the policy and community response**, helping leaders at all levels advance a whole of society response, both to short-term mitigation and long-term root causes.

Why de-escalation or related approaches to address political or electoral violence?

- One part of a strategic approach
 - Keep people safe
 - Undermine anti-democratic strategies that rely on violence to succeed
- Translates beyond the electoral context
- Builds on existing expertise, sectors, and relationships
- Protecting civic space can create collaboration towards a shared goal

Building a toolkit, Part 1: Basic Rules of Thumb

One-page Resources Designed for Your Role

Elected Officials

This guide supports elected leaders to recognize and de-escalate conflicts in preparation for potentially contentious public meetings.

[Read Now](#)

Community Members and Volunteers

This guide supports volunteers and community members to consider strategies to prepare, recognize, and de-escalate conflicts, in preparation for potentially contentious meetings.

[Read Now](#)

Poll Workers

This guide supports poll workers in the key role they play in preventing, mitigating, and de-escalating potential tensions during the voting process.

Law Enforcement

This guide was developed as a resource for volunteers and elected leaders looking to engage law enforcement on the role they may play helping to de-escalate tensions at public meetings.

[Read Now](#)

The de-escalation guides were
created in collaboration with



Guidance for Local Officials

Guidelines for De-Escalation and Communication Around Contentious Meetings for Local Elected Officials



Overview

Key Principles

1. Planning ahead makes your job easier in the moment
2. Emphasize positive, shared values and expectations
3. Be prepared to enforce the rules consistently and fairly, follow up after

De-Escalation Toolkit

1. Draw on CLARA to stay calm in the moment (Center, Listen, Acknowledge/Affirm, Respond, Add)
2. Appeal to shared values and/or trusted voices in the room
3. Rehumanize, Defuse, and Create Space

Safety and Security Toolkit

1. Monitor any specific threats before, during, and after the meeting
2. Consider ways to keep groups physically separate within the meeting space
3. Clearly post community agreements, including process for public comment
4. Familiarize yourself with state laws on open carry and self-described militias
5. Debrief after the event, including specifically on the security situation

Key Principles



Building a toolkit, Part 2: Building on Existing Training and Expertise



Directory of Trainings Designed for Your State

The state-by-state directory provides information on organizations regularly providing de-escalation bystander intervention, and conflict resolution trainings, in addition to organizations providing virtual or nation-wide trainings.

- | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Arizona | California | Colorado | Florida | Georgia |
| Idaho | Illinois | Iowa | Indiana | Kansas |
| Maine | Massachusetts | Maryland | Michigan | Minnesota |
| Mississippi | Missouri | Montana | Nebraska | Nevada |
| New Hampshire | New Jersey | New York | North Carolina | Ohio |
| Oklahoma | Oregon | Pennsylvania | South Carolina | South Dakota |
| Tennessee | Texas | Utah | Virginia | Washington |
| Wisconsin | USA | | | |

DE-ESCALATION & ACTIVE BYSTANDER TRAINING DIRECTORY: CALIFORNIA



What is conflict de-escalation and bystander training?

These trainings vary in their methods, but all have the aim of empowering individuals, including bystanders, to prevent the escalation of conflict.

More information on how to use this resource is below.

TRAININGS IN CALIFORNIA



DE-ESCALATION & ACTIVE BYSTANDER TRAINING DIRECTORY: MICHIGAN



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TRAININGS IN MICHIGAN



Other Resources: BDI Analysis and Research to Build Situational Awareness



- Requests for information or briefings, including:
 - Public data on actors/behaviors, include past unlawful paramilitary activity
 - Emerging issues driving offline mobilization and counter-mobilization
 - Monitoring of planned or expected activity of concern (in partnership with online and offline data partners)
- Public reports on emerging issues (BDI [issue briefs](#))
- Interactive maps covering political violence events and demonstration and counter-mobilization activity, among other data
- Materials on de-escalation (as you saw today!)

Questions

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