

Community Care During Lobby Meetings

At RESULTS, we are committed to creating a community where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to participate fully. Though rare, difficult interactions can occur during lobby meetings. This resource offers guidance for responding in ways that prioritize community care, safety, and effective advocacy. **Remember, your safety and well-being is paramount to any interaction you have with others.**

Before Your Lobby Meeting: Discuss as a Group

1. If a staff member or legislator makes a comment that feels harmful, exclusionary, or inappropriate, how would we like to respond as a group?
2. Are there topics, comments, or types of conversations that members of our group do not want to engage in? How will we support one another if those situations arise?
3. If someone in our group becomes uncomfortable and wants to leave the meeting, what is our plan for supporting them? Who will go with them? Will everyone go? Decide as a group what signal to use if someone wants to leave.

These conversations help set up expectations and ensure everyone's wellbeing comes first.

Navigating Difficult Moments in a Lobby Meeting

There is no single "right" response. Consider the comfort and safety of everyone in the room when deciding how to proceed. No one has to engage in a discussion that feels harmful, demeaning, or unsafe.

Option 1: Redirect the Conversation

Often the most effective response is to address the comment briefly and return to the purpose of the meeting. Redirecting is not avoiding the issue. It is a way of maintaining boundaries while keeping the meeting focused on your advocacy goals.

Examples:

- "I don't think that conversation is productive or appropriate for us to engage in. We'd be happy to continue discussing the Child Tax Credit."
- "We're not here to debate people's identities or worth. We'd like to return to talking about hunger and poverty."

Redirecting is not avoiding the issue. It is a way of maintaining boundaries while keeping the meeting focused on your advocacy goals.

Option 2: Thoughtfully Engage

Some groups may decide to briefly engage before redirecting the conversation. Before choosing to engage, ask yourself: *Will this conversation help advance understanding, or are we being pulled into a debate about someone's humanity, worth, identity, or right to belong?* If you choose to engage, name the impact of the comment and follow up with an open-ended question.

Examples:

- "The framing is harmful to *[XYZ community]*. Can you tell me more about what experiences have shaped that perspective?"
- "That comment reinforces *[harm/stereotype]*. Can you help me understand what concerns are driving that viewpoint?"

Option 3: End the Conversation

If a comment or interaction crosses a line and continuing the meeting no longer feels productive or safe, it is okay to leave. You might say:

- "I am not comfortable continuing to be part of this meeting if this is the language being used. I appreciate your time today. We will follow up with the office."

You may then provide your leave-behind materials and exit the meeting. Check in as a group afterward. Taking time to connect, listen, and ensure someone is okay is an important part of community care.

After the Meeting

After difficult interactions, take a few moments to debrief as a group: How is everyone feeling? What support or follow-up may be needed? What can we learn for future meetings?

The [RESULTS Call In, Call Out Guide](#) can help navigate difficult interactions. Please fill out the [Community Care Accountability Form](#) for additional support and guidance from RESULTS staff. Also, please note any difficult interactions with your members of Congress or their staff on your [lobby report form](#). Even if no follow-up is needed, this information helps RESULTS staff identify patterns, better support volunteers, and prepare groups for future meetings.