

# POLITICS & FAMILY: agree to disagree



Politics can be hard to discuss. Often, the conversations turn into arguments or people getting upset because the other person doesn't agree. When we feel strongly about something, it's normal to want others to see our side of things.

Family gatherings are common during the holidays. And, sometimes politics or touchy subjects come up, even when we try to avoid them. How do you handle it when you're trying to keep the peace?

- **Find common ground.** Even if you disagree about something, there's probably areas where you both agree. For instance, you may have different opinions on gun control. But, you both agree you want your kids to be safe.
- **Don't attack.** Using insults or strong language can damage relationships. Remember that words have the power to harm others. State your point without hurting the other person or showing disrespect by calling them names.
- **Be prepared.** If you know that Uncle Tim always says something that offends you, be ready. Think about how you can take deep breaths before responding. Sometimes, it's better to walk away or change the subject, rather than argue.
- **Know that you probably won't change the other person's mind.** When we care about something, we want others to agree. We want them to support our views. But, it may be best to accept that no matter how good your argument is, the other person may not change their view.
- **Think about a positive goal.** Use disagreements to learn how others feel about something. Be open-minded and listen to their side.
- **Find other things to do.** Remember that family gatherings are supposed to bring people together. Plan a fun family game or activity. This can keep people away from having tense discussions.
- **Be okay with different views.** You can care about someone and have different views from them. Tell yourself it is okay to agree to disagree.
- **End the discussion when needed.** Sometimes, people keep arguing because they're trying to find a resolution. But, a resolution isn't always possible. Instead, tell the person you appreciate their views, but you think it's best to move on. Ask them about their personal interests or job. Share a funny story. Do something to break the tension and stop talking about the disagreement.

Source: American Psychological Association