

LEADING LOCAL: CIVILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE CIVIL DISCOURSE IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2022 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**THANK YOU
FOR JOINING US!**



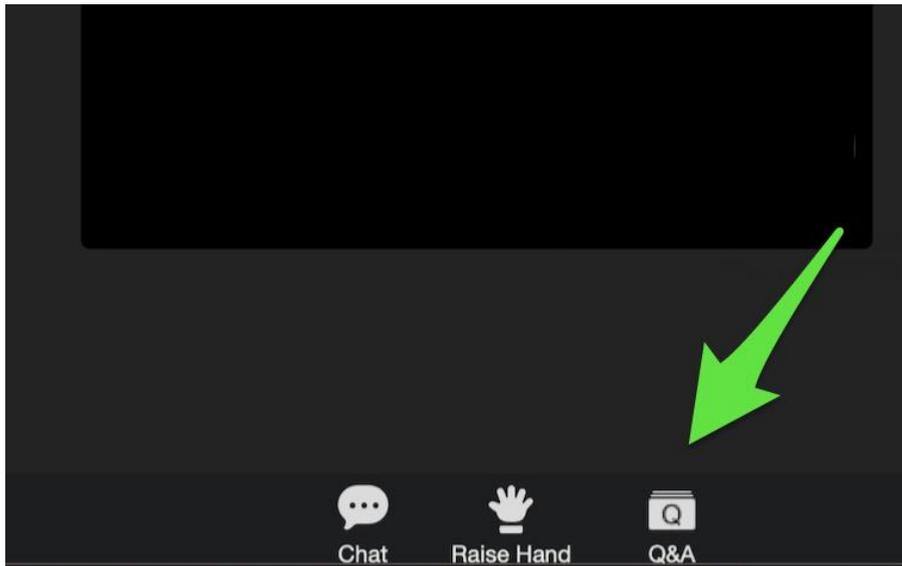
Host & Moderator

ERICA L. MANUEL
CEO & Executive Director
Institute for Local Government



TECH OVERVIEW & HOUSEKEEPING

- All webinar participants will be on **MUTE** for the duration of the event.
- Please **TYPE** any questions or comments into the **Q&A BOX** at any time during the session.



- A recording of the session will be available by next week.

ABOUT ILG & THIS LEADING LOCAL WEBINAR

NON-PROFIT, NON-PARTISAN AND HERE TO HELP

- The Institute for Local Government is the non-profit training and education affiliate of three statewide local government associations
- Together with our affiliates, we serve over 2,500 local agencies – cities, counties and special districts
- We provide practical and easy-to-use resources so local agencies can effectively implement policies on the ground



**California Special
Districts Association**
Districts Stronger Together

ILG'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Program Areas

Leadership & Governance

Civics Education & Workforce

Public Engagement

Sustainable & Resilient Communities



Services

Education & Training

Technical Assistance

Capacity Building

Convening

Our mission is to help local government leaders **navigate complexity, increase capacity & build trust** in their communities

In a recent survey, more than

54%

*of local governments are experiencing an increase in **incivility**, **divisiveness**, **misconduct** & bad behavior in public meetings.*

war in Ukraine

drought masks

insurrection

social media social unrest

pandemic crt

national political polarization edsj social

school shootings unrest

george floyd murder monkeypox economy

isolation police reform

zoom fatigue

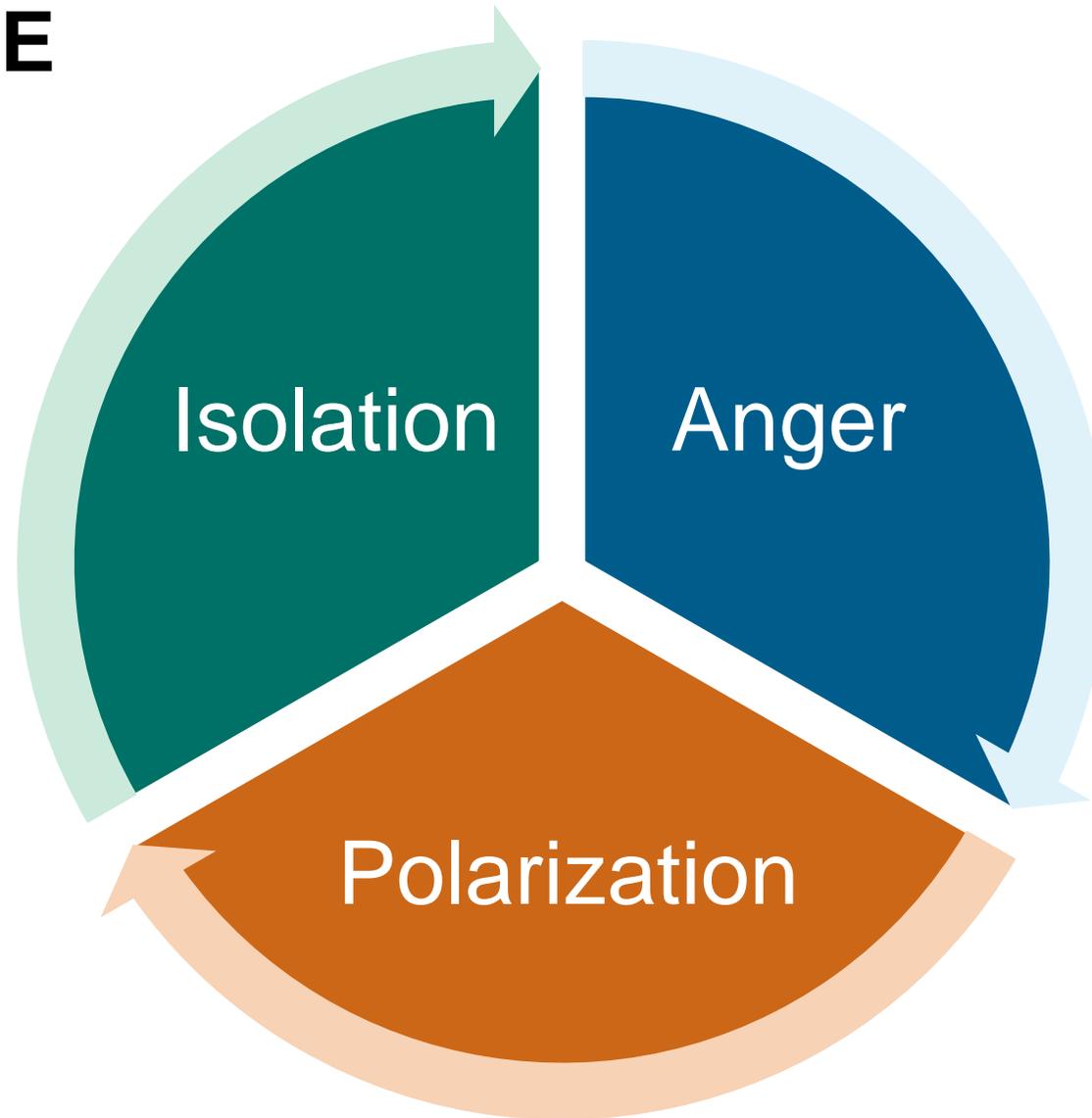
proud boyz

RECENT EVENTS HAVE AFFECTED HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE GOVERNMENT

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



VICIOUS CYCLE



“

Our anger is moral. Our rage is sacred.
Our anxiety contains wisdom.
Our hearts are telling us the truth.
If the truth makes others uncomfortable ... good.

Show me an alarm clock that makes a sweet sound and I'll
show you an alarm clock I can sleep through.

RALPH DE LA ROSA

Don't Tell Me to Relax:

Emotional Resilience in the Age of Rage, Feels, and Freak-Outs

”

LEADING WITH OUR VALUES



Trust

Collaboration

Service

Commitment

Equity

Inclusion

TOPICS WE'LL COVER

Leadership Principles & Operational Tactics

Interpersonal Strategies

Organizational Strategies

Governance Tools, Policies & Protocols

Meeting Design & Management Techniques

Additional Resources

Q&A

*Disclaimer: information presented in this webinar **does not** constitute official legal advice.*

TODAY'S PRESENTERS



Shirley Concolino
Retired City Clerk
City of Sacramento

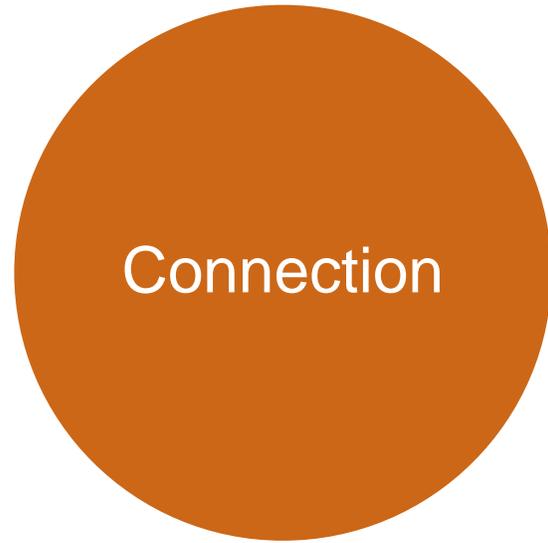
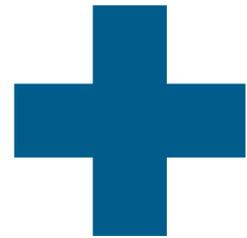


Amy Howorth
Former Mayor, Councilmember &
School Board Member
City of Manhattan Beach



Melissa Kuehne
Senior Program Manager
Institute for Local Government

INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES



IT'S UP TO US

Rebuild trust in
local
government

Model civil,
productive
engagement
with the public

Increase
connection and
trust within our
communities

Reinforce &
remind about
local gov't
impact on
everyday
people

“

“Civility is claiming and caring for one’s identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else’s in the process.”

THOMAS SPATHE & CASSANDRA DAHNKE
Founders, Institute for Civility in Government

”



HOW TO LEAD WITH CIVILITY IN MIND

Embrace diverse
points of view

Commit to civil
discourse

Practice active
listening

Disagree
respectfully

Separate the
'people' from the
'problem'; never
attack the people

Prioritize
relationships

Focus on
building trust

Strive to find
shared values &
common ground

“

Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right.

JANE GOODALL

”



UNDERSTANDING DIALOGUE VS. DEBATE

Dialogue = Collaborative: Working toward common understanding	Debate = Oppositional: Attempting to prove each other wrong
Goal: Finding common ground	Goal: Winning
Listen to understand, find meaning and find agreement	Listens to find flaws and to counter the arguments.
Expands and possibly changes points of view	Affirms your own point of view
Reveals assumptions for reevaluation	Defends assumptions as truth
Causes introspection	Causes critique
Assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution	Assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it
Remains open-ended	Implies a conclusion

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS FOR BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Be attentive

Ask clarifying questions

Let people know you are listening

Focus on interests, not positions

Identify options for mutual gain

Insist on using objective criteria

LISTEN TO ILG'S BRIDGING DIVIDES SERIES FOR SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

- Tone-Setting Skills
- Speaking Skills
- Listening Skills
- Depolarizing Within
- Managing Difficult Conversations

SKILLS TO BRIDGE THE DIVIDE

LEARN TECHNIQUES TO COMMUNICATE BETTER WITH THOSE YOU DISAGREE WITH SO YOU CAN BE HEARD, LISTEN TO TRULY HEAR, STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS & FIND COMMON GROUND.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

REGISTRATION IS FREE. SPACE IS LIMITED. RSVP REQUIRED.
Part of ILG's LEADING LOCAL Webinar Series

HOSTED BY:  IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:  Braver Angels

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ACTIVE LISTENING STRATEGIES

Techniques for honoring all points of view

Summarize (repeat key points). “I think you are raising three issues here.” “You have done some solid thinking here.”

Mirror (repeat speaker words verbatim, deescalating the tone, if needed)

Paraphrase (demonstrate that a speaker was heard/understood). “It sounds like you are saying..” “Let me see if I am understanding you” “Is this what you mean?”

Draw people out (learn about root causes). “Can you give me an example?” “Tell me more?” “What do you mean by...?”

Source: Sam Kaner *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*, 3d ed.

BODY LANGUAGE IS KEY

In person

- Have an open **posture**. Be relaxed, but don't slouch!
- Maintain good **eye contact**.
- Avoid **touching your face**.

On camera

- Set up your **camera** up correctly.
- Maintain eye contact with the speaker whenever possible. **Look into the camera**. On the group call, look around the participants.
- Use **friendly facial expressions**. Maintain a slight smile throughout. Raise your eyebrows to show engagement and avoid frowning.



Project
openness &
genuine interest

YOUR BEHAVIOR CAN SET THE TONE FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE

Be sure to

Respect and support **good governance and engagement** models that include members of the public in decision-making

Promote and encourage **public participation**

Value **public input** as part of the decision-making process

Show respect to staff, officials and the public; use affirming words & engaging body language

Be **informed** about issues being discussed and come with an **open mind**

Demonstrate appreciation for **varied opinions**

Behave in a civil manner and **act with decorum**

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO CIVILITY

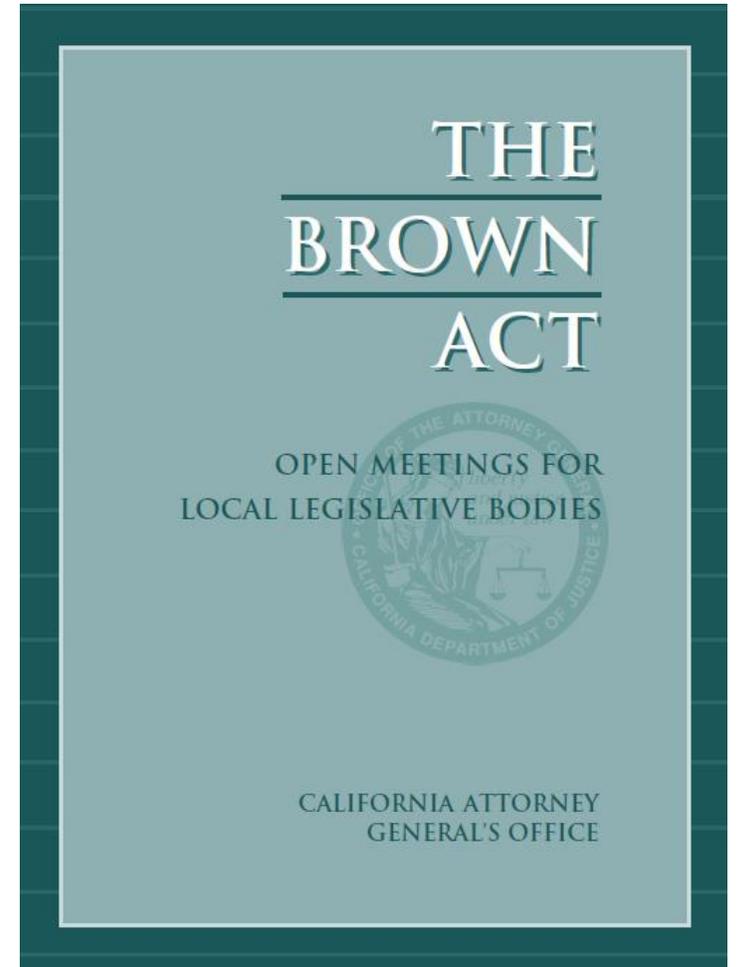
Open Meeting
Laws

Social Media
Considerations

When in doubt, consult your agency counsel!

PURPOSE OF THE BROWN ACT

- Provide public access to meetings of California local government agencies
- Promote transparency and public participation
- Open to the public
- See Bagley-Keene Act for State government agencies



DEFINING TERMS

Public
Meetings

VS.

Public
Workshops

VS.

Community
Event or
Activity

KEY MILESTONES & ACTIONS

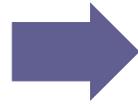
Preparation

Facilitation

Annually



Throughout the Year



Before Major Meetings or Issues



During the Meeting

- Adopt/review/revise policies
- Develop norms
- Goal setting
- Team building
- Orientations

- Apply norms
- Meeting facilitation training
- Understand community issues
- Build relationships with stakeholders

- Agenda placement
- Meeting design
- Scripting
- Enforcement Plan development

- Active Chairing & Facilitation
- Enforcement Plan Implementation

POLICIES TO CONSIDER

**Codes of
Conduct**

**Ethics
Codes**

**Civility
Policies**

**Group
Norms**

SAMPLE GROUP NORMS

- Work together, modeling teamwork and civility for our community
- Demonstrate honesty & integrity in every action
- Share information & avoid surprises
- Disagree agreeably & professionally
- Work for the common good, not personal interest
- Strive for win-win – work toward for consensus and seek common ground
- Honor “discussion” before “decisions” – reserve formal motions until initial discussions have taken place



TIPS TO PROMOTE CIVILITY IN PUBLIC BOARD OR COUNCIL MEETINGS

Establish process in advance

Manage expectations with the public by explaining opportunities to engage and the limitations of responses

Make sure your chair understands meeting process and options

Use scripts as appropriate

Take a break when things get heated. Ejection is a last resort

Explore public comment options

TIPS TO PROMOTE CIVILITY IN PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Be strategic about meeting design & facilitation

Establish facilitation & governance process in advance

Make sure staff and officials understand key roles & responsibilities

Rehearse and draft scripts for challenging topics & scenarios

Define conduct expectations and ground rules for all participants

Understand public comment options, timing, etc.

Remember to consider language access

GENERAL MEETING FACILITATION TIPS

DURING THE MEETING

- Manage expectations (e.g. explain process, meeting design and timelines)
- Outline conduct expectations (e.g. appropriate vs. inappropriate behavior, consequences, etc.)
- Formalize/codify ground rules for applause, heckling, etc.
- Publicly clarify roles and responsibilities of staff vs. electeds
- Assure people they will be allowed to speak; if appropriate, have staff available to meet offline with upset public member(s)
- Offer multiple formats for comment (written, verbal, etc.)
- Have a clearly defined and rehearsed/scripted plan for dealing with continued disruptive behavior up to and including removal if required.
- Take breaks as needed to reset
- **For Public Workshops:** Also consider using an outside facilitator

MANAGING PUBLIC COMMENT

Tips

Set **parameters** for how officials engage during public comment – understand in advance what you can and cannot say

Clearly define how public comment will be managed and state it at the beginning of the meeting

Publicly explain the **transparency** reasons for public comments, especially with regard to what can and cannot be responded to

Be **consistent** with commenter speaking times and applause, etc.

Allow groups to speak as one **using a designated speaker**

Diffuse angry speakers using active listening techniques

LISTENING TO PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD & COUNCIL MEETINGS

Tips

Listen for **substance** behind emotion.

Suspend your **assumptions**. Be aware of personal biases and preconceived notions.

Practice **curiosity**.

Put into **historical perspective** of racial, economic and social injustices.

Pay attention to **nonverbal** communication.

Reframe. Complaints can also reveal what otherwise remain hidden.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF ‘DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?’

- Any meeting **willfully interrupted** by a group or groups of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible, thus preventing the body from being able to conduct agency business.
- When considering clearing the room, an important point to bear in mind is that mere disruption, including heckling, booing and applauding is **NOT** enough to clear the room. **The meeting must be disrupted by such conduct, AND the disruption must be so pervasive that removal of those creating the disruption is insufficient to regain order.**

*City Attorneys Department, League of California Cities
David Fleishman, City Attorney, Pacific Grove*

CREATING YOUR ENFORCEMENT PLAN

Plan ahead

Make certain you understand the **legal considerations**

Coordinate with your **Attorney and Law Enforcement**

Clearly state **consequence** for non-compliance/enforcement

Communicate and discuss the plan with the entire elected body

Communicate the adopted plan with staff

Clearly **define the roles** of staff vs. electeds vs. chair

Understand the role of Law Enforcement and **how/when to engage them**

Develop scripts in advance

IMPLEMENTING YOUR ENFORCEMENT PLAN

Take action

Don't be afraid to engage when the time comes, but use a scripted plan

State and restate consequences for non-adherence to expected behavior

Ejection is last resort; refer disruptor to on-site staff if appropriate

Utilize Law Enforcement/Security to clear the room

Remove the Non-Compliant member of the public *(temporarily or remainder of the meeting)*

Take a break if needed

Adjourn if all else fails

Debrief with staff and law enforcement after the meeting

Consistency is Key!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



ILG CAN HELP WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE NEEDS

- ILG's **Leadership & Governance** pillar helps local government leaders develop leadership skills and increase public trust.
- We offer a wide range of **virtual and in-person trainings, facilitated discussions & workshops:**
 - Effective Leadership & Culture
 - Effective Councils & Boards
 - Personal & Organizational Ethics (AB 1234) & Anti-Harassment Training (AB 1661)
 - Good Governance
 - Roles & Responsibilities of Elected Officials vs. Staff
 - And more!



TWO UPCOMING WEBINARS YOU MAY ENJOY

LEADING LOCAL: DEPOLARIZING WITHIN

RECOGNIZE YOUR INNER POLARIZER & FOCUS ON AFFIRMING THE VALUE & HUMANITY OF THE OTHER SIDE, EVEN AMONG PEOPLE YOU DISAGREE WITH. LEARN & PRACTICE SKILLS TO INTERVENE IN POLARIZING CONVERSATIONS WITHOUT RISKING ACCUSATIONS OF DISLOYALTY OR NAIVETE.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2022
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

REGISTRATION IS FREE. SPACE IS LIMITED. RSVP REQUIRED.

Part of ILG's LEADING LOCAL Webinar Series

HOSTED BY:



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FREE TRAINING SERIES for LOCAL GOV'T LEADERS!

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE (CQ)

Move beyond cultural awareness and political correctness towards more meaningful understanding with people in your community. In this new virtual training series, you will learn how to relate to and work effectively with different groups of people and across cultures to advance equity and build trust.

SESSION 3:

MANAGING CONFLICT THROUGH THE LENS OF EQUITY

WED, JUNE 29 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Free to Attend. Space is Very Limited. Registration Required.

Hosted By:



In Partnership With:



Learn More & Register:

www.ca-ilg.org

RESOURCES

ILG L&G Resources:

- Sample Codes of Conduct & Civility Policies
- Good Governance Checklist
- Key Ethics Law Principles for Public Servants

ILG Public Engagement Resources:

- TIERS Public Engagement Framework and Training
- Preparing for Successful Public Meetings: Checklist for Before, During and After
- Increasing Outreach – Language Access, Partnering with CBOs, and more

Cal Cities Open and Public Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act

Cal Cities, CSAC, CSDA -- Peer Networks

JOIN OUR WIDESPREAD NETWORK OF LOCAL GOV'T LEADERS



58 Counties

482 Cities

2,500+ Special Districts

20,000+ Local Agency Leaders

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RECORDING AVAILABLE SOON



The recorded presentation and materials will be shared electronically with all attendees a few days after the webinar.

Thank you for joining us!



Shirley Concolino



Amy Howorth



Melissa Kuehne



Erica L. Manuel

info@ca-ilg.org