

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: WellesleyCivilDiscourse@gmail.com

**Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative is Recruiting Dialogue Facilitators
Take Part in a Training Introduction on November 15**

October 23, 2023 (Wellesley, MA) – Help foster meaningful conversations in our community. The Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative (WCDI), a volunteer group that brings people together to talk about important issues facing our Town, is expanding its team of trained facilitators. On Wednesday, November 15, WCDI will host an Introduction to Dialogue Facilitation and is seeking people from the community to attend and learn more about this process.

Sign up and indicate your interest in the WCDI training by [completing this Google form](#).

Started in 2020 during the global COVID pandemic, WCDI aims to strengthen community connections by creating constructive conversations about difficult and sometimes divisive topics through carefully planned dialogues with trained community facilitators. During the past two-and-a-half years, WCDI has hosted a community conversation webinar and four separate dialogues, all free to our community. These discussions differ from other daily conversations in that they are intended to build relationships and increase understanding rather than reach agreement or consensus.

“Fostering a sense of belonging leads to a healthier community – something we’re continually working toward in Wellesley. Through this initiative we are creating connectedness by bringing people together to talk and build understanding, even when they may not agree with each other,” said Lise Olney, WCDI planning team member and member of the Select Board.

All volunteer facilitators are trained in [Reflective Structured Dialogue](#), an innovative process that follows a specific format that is intended to create an atmosphere of respect and trust among participants. The method was developed by [Essential Partners of Cambridge, MA](#), which has provided guidance and expertise since the inception of this initiative.

Two Part Training - November 15 & November 30

On Wednesday, November 15 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. interested community members and Town of Wellesley staff are invited to an Introduction to Dialogue Facilitation with WCDI. There is no cost for this training introduction which is made possible by funds granted from the R.W. Babson Fund by the Wellesley Select Board. Refreshments will be provided starting at 6:30 p.m. and the training begins promptly at 7 p.m.

The introduction will include:

- What dialogue is and how it differs from daily conversation
- A brief background on our initiative
- An abbreviated practice dialogue
- The role of a facilitator and the requested commitment

The training will take place in Wellesley, and once signed up, you will receive the exact location. Space is limited; registration will close on November 10 (or before if capacity is reached).

Following the November 15 introduction, WCDI hopes to have 20 people – 10 members of the community and 10 Town staff members – who are ready to join a full-day, in-person training on Thursday, November 30 in Wellesley.

To learn more about WCDI and its work, visit [Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative](#) on the Town of Wellesley website, or contact WCDI directly at WellesleyCivilDiscourse@gmail.com

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