



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Civil Discourse Self-Assessment for Middle/High School Students

Definition: *Civil discourse is conversation about important but challenging issues that incorporates the values of caring, compassion, kindness; humility; integrity; mutual respect; and the ability to engage honestly with others' perspectives.*

Instructions: On each of the following pages, read each item and reflect on how often you use each skill. Underline the response that is best for you. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers; this is your self-evaluation. You can expect at least some of your answers to change over time.

CARING, COMPASSION, KINDNESS

We show caring, compassion, and kindness when we do something for the benefit (good) of someone else, without expecting anything in return. Here are some skills that reflect caring, compassion, and kindness. How often do you show these skills to others?

Instructions: Read each item and reflect on how often you use each skill. Underline the response that is best for you. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; this is your self-evaluation which you can expect to change over time.

1. I look for ways to help and cooperate with others.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

2. When someone is upset, scared, or angry, I try to think of how I would feel if it were me.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

3. I notice who is left out of discussions and invite them to join.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

4. I draw attention to other people's point of view if their ideas are being ignored in a discussion.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

5. I step in and stop someone who is insulting another person or saying hurtful things about their ideas.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

HONEST PERSPECTIVE TAKING

We engage in honest perspective taking when we are open to listening, thinking about, working to understand, and considering ideas, opinions, and values that might be different from our own. Here are some skills that reflect honest perspective taking. How often do you show these skills to others?

Instructions: Read each item and reflect on how often you use each skill. Underline the response that is best for you. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; this is your self-evaluation which you can expect to change over time.

1. I listen to other people and let them tell their story.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

2. I show that I understand there are multiple perspectives on many topics or issues.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

3. I talk to and work with people who are different from me.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

4. I know that opinions are different from facts.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

5. I tell others that I can agree to disagree when we cannot reach an agreement.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

HUMILITY

We show humility when we value the strengths, viewpoints, and wisdom of others. We work to be aware of our biases, are open to learning from others, and acknowledge that we all make mistakes. Here are some skills that reflect humility. How often do you show these skills to others?

Instructions: Read each item and reflect on how often you use each skill. Underline the response that is best for you. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; this is your self-evaluation which you can expect to change over time.

1. I work to identify my biases.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

2. I acknowledge my biases when talking with others.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

3. I continue talking to others whom I disagree with, even if it makes me uncomfortable.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

4. I accept “not knowing” as an incentive to learn more, not an indictment of my intelligence.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

5. I accept that my voice is one of many and that I must listen to others before we can come to an understanding.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

INTEGRITY

We show integrity when we are honest, true to our values, and demonstrate a high standard of trustworthiness. Here are some skills that reflect integrity. How often do you show these skills to others?

Instructions: Read each item and reflect on how often you use each skill. Underline the response that is best for you. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; this is your self-evaluation which you can expect to change over time.

1. I am honest and tell the truth.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

2. I use “I think” or “I feel” statements when I share my ideas.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

3. I give people credit for their ideas when I use them instead of calling their ideas my own.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

4. I take responsibility for what I have said or done, even when I’m not proud of it.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

5. If I say or do something that offends someone, I apologize and try to repair the harm.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

MUTUAL RESPECT

We show mutual respect when we give and receive feedback that is constructive, helpful, and considerate of others, and show high expectations for ourselves and the group. Here are some skills that reflect mutual respect. How often do you show these skills to others?

Instructions: Read each item and reflect on how often you use each skill. Underline the response that is best for you. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers; this is your self-evaluation which you can expect to change over time.

1. I praise others for their effort and improvement.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

2. In a discussion, I comment on other people's ideas rather than on their personal characteristics.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

3. I want others to do their best, and I recognize their accomplishments.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this

4. I assume that every person acts with good intentions, and I ask for clarification if it appears otherwise.

I rarely do this

I do this sometimes

I almost always do this