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Example Format for Community Dialogue
Topic: Health Care

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In the "Good Talks 2024" series, we are working to design good conversations about politics in the run-up to the 2024 general election. The goal is a dialogue – not an adversarial debate, and not an unstructured discussion. Careful scaffolding and planning enables meaningful conversation across difference. This document captures some of our design choices to inspire your own.

Build a Foundation
- *Provide an article, podcast, or video for participants to review:* everyone comes with different backgrounds and experiences. At Middlebury, we are starting with short (~15 minute talks to introduce an issue. On 10/22, professor Jessica Holmes Phani Wunnava will offer an overview. We will **post the recording here**.
- *Small Group Introductions:* if you have more than 6-8 participants, breaking up into smaller groups will offer more opportunities for dialogue. Have people introduce themselves with a light question – **a suggested list is here**.
- *Discuss Guidelines for Engagement*: to remind folks that our habits of public dialogue are not always constructive, you can suggest some guidelines and then ask participants to add their own. Some ideas: (1) take turns, (2) don't interrupt, (3) assume goodwill, (4) listen to understand (not to persuade or respond), and (5) be present (no phones).

Provide Open Discussion Questions
A good question can transform dialogue, promoting curiosity and complexity and preventing personal attacks or debate. Below are the four questions we will use on October 22:

1. What has been your personal experience with the US health care system? If you could <u>preserve</u> one aspect about the US health care system, what would it be? If you could <u>change</u> one thing about our health care system, what would that be?
2. People come to this country from all over the world and gain access to high quality healthcare. But many Americans slip through the cracks. How might we reduce health inequities?
3. What role should the government play in providing Americans with health care? What role should the marketplace play?
4. Life expectancy has recently declined in the US, in part due to deaths of despair (e.g., gun violence, suicide, drugs). How might we reverse this troubling trend?
5. Drug prices are one of the biggest drivers of health care costs. How do we balance the need to keep drugs affordable with the need to incentivize drug innovation?

Reconvene as a Group
Invite participants to share any new insights, identify information that they still need, or suggest steps for engaging the community or civic leaders.

Additional Resources

Living Room Conversations, *Health Care Conversation Guide* (link).
The Commonwealth Fun, *International Health Care Systems Profiles,* June 5, 2020 (link).