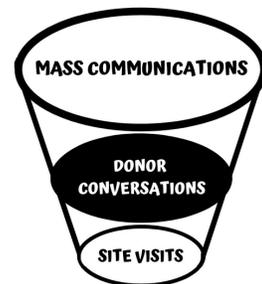


# CHECKLIST: EMPATHY IN CONVERSATIONS

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## ESTABLISHING A BASELINE

- Both parties have mutual respect for each other's time and expertise
- Both parties approach the conversation with open minds, assuming positive intent of the other
- You are honest with donors about the true need, successes, and challenges of the mission
- Donors are honest with you about their priorities and decision-making process

## PREPARING FOR THE CONVERSATION

- Have clarity on which issues to take a stand and which issues to remain neutral
- Prepare responses for common objections or insensitive remarks
- Get leadership's support on key issues, should disagreement between you and a donor arise
- Remind yourself that the purpose of any dialogue is to learn - not to agree or to convince. Set the bar for success at learning.

## MUTUAL LEARNING AND VALUE

- Approach the conversation with openness and genuine curiosity
- Question or challenge commonly held assumptions about the mission; whether or not your donor holds these assumptions personally
- Prompt the donor to consider their own identity and role in the mission beyond monetary giving
- Share insight about the complex systemic factors contributing to the mission

## DIFFUSING TENSION, RESISTANCE, AND INSENSITIVE REMARKS

- Probe deeper by asking clarifying questions
- Try to understand the beliefs and values that inform the comment, before attempting to refute or disagree
- Validate emotions and intentions when appropriate.
- Reframe the issue in a story that provides a new perspective
- Share an example from your own experience
- It's almost impossible to completely suspend judgement. If a judgmental thought arises, put it in your metaphorical back pocket to reflect on later

## REFLECTION

- Debrief the conversation with a colleague to gain new perspective and feedback
- Get emotional support after particularly difficult dialogues
- If you noticed internal judgements arise during the conversation, now is the time to examine them. Ask yourself: What does this judgement reveal about your own assumptions and values?

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