GOTV CONVERSATIONS

Objectives:

* Internalize and be able to apply the framework for effective GOTV conversations when talking to sporadic voters at the doors or on the phone
* Examine key best practices and describe why these are effective in preparing voters to GOTV
* Feel excited to apply this to the work you’re doing in connecting with voters in your community

Session plan:

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| **Time**  | **Activity**  |
|  | **Introduction*** **Why do we have turnout conversations?**
	+ When more people support the issues that we care about vote, we win!
		- Many people don’t know basic fundamentals of voting -- such as, where their polling location is, or who the candidates are -- especially in the midterms!
* **Why does it work?**
	+ We have turnout conversations to create social pressure and accountability to vote
	+ We want to create a norm around voting during the conversation
	+ Accountability, and commitment, to vote on the part of a voter increases the likelihood that they will vote (as evidenced by the previous example)

**Key Concept 1: Universe to focus on*** There are many different types of people we can talk to: this model breaks down who we’re talking to for GOTV convos
* **Present turnout universes:**
	+ *Support*
		- Low: No chance they’ll support!
		- Medium: Undecided
		- High: They’re on your team!
	+ *Turnout*
		- Low: You’d have to drag them to the polls!
		- Medium: They might turnout. They voted 5 years ago!
		- High: They always turnout, come hell or high water
* **Our GOTV audience**: *High support and Medium/low turnout*
	+ *Sporadic voter*
		- For purposes of this training, we’ll be talking about what we call sporadic voters. These are voters that may have only voted in 0-3 or the past 5 elections, or only vote for president, etc…
		- On our list of people to talk to, we don’t want to spend time on people who support us AND have a high propensity to vote—these folks don’t need us to talk to them!
		- Additionally, these conversations are different from persuasion conversations.
* **EXAMPLE**
	+ Illustrates a couple of things:
		- *One*: In person conversations, i.e. through door-to-door canvassing are more effective than phone calls (although phone calls still matter!)
		- *Two*: that a combination of door knocks and phone calls can lead a sporadic voter to have an increased likelihood to turnout by 5.1%
		- *Three*: that the less sporadic a voter is, the more ineffective the impact of a GOTV conversation is
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|  | **Key Concept 2: Elements of GOTV Conversation*** **Get a commitment to vote**
	+ Voters who verbally commit to vote or sign a commitment to vote are more likely to turnout than those don’t intentionally do so
* **Make a plan to vote**
	+ The goal during these conversations is to cut past the “fast thinking” a voter will have in this conversation
	+ Move past yes/no questions
	+ Literature, a reminder, or asking, “Are you going to vote?” ***IS NOT ENOUGH and is not effective***
	+ People will say “yes I will vote,” without thinking about a plan to intentionally do so—so we need to continue to push voters to move beyond the initial response and make a plan

*\*Note\*-* If nothing else, you should walk away from this training understanding that GOTV conversations are a skill! They might be tougher than simply giving someone a piece of paper, might feel a little uncomfortable—but they are more effective. |
|  | **Key Concept 3: GOTV CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK*** A couple of notes before we dive in:
	+ 1) voter registration deadlines, poll times, polling locations, etc… all of this is specific to your state and local community. Check-out your state’s Secretary of State office or consult with your local campaign to find this information
	+ 2) This is a framework—you should always depend on the guidance and scripts of your local campaigns
* **Step 1: Confirm their support for your cause and remind them of key voting deadlines**
	+ The first step is simply to confirm their support for your candidate or cause. You’ll probably be pleasantly surprised to find how good your local campaign’s data team is!
		- If they’re a supporter—continue with a GOTV conversation
		- If they’re not a supporter—simply say thank you and move on!
		- If they’re undecided—you may want to have a persuasive conversation, but you may want to move more quickly to be able to talk to more people. You should follow the guidance from your local campaign.
* **Step 2: Make a plan with the voter!**
	+ This is where you, the canvasser or caller, are cutting past *“fast thinking”* and past “yes/no” questions
	+ Even if someone says, “yes, I’ll vote,” or “I know where to go,” you should continue to ask prompt questions that get a voter to think about when/how/where they’ll vote
	+ Examples:
		- *What day will you vote?*
		- *How are you getting to your polling place?*
		- *What time of day will you vote?*
		- *Are you going with someone?*
	+ It can feel awkward! But it’s very important because it can increase a person’s turnout by a lot!
* **Step 3: Get a commitment from the voter and ask them to verbalize their reasons**
	+ Use a commit-to-vote card for a written commitment. If you don’t have a way to collect a written commitment, get a verbal commitment to vote!
	+ Ask the voter to verbalize their reasons—this helps, again, to cut past “fast thinking.”
	+ Voters who self-rationalize their decision are more likely to vote than those who do not.
* **Step 4: Don’t focus on issues or candidates, focus on voting**
	+ This seems counterintuitive—but your goal is to increase turnout, not to persuade someone.
	+ Studies have found that when issues and candidates are brought into these conversations, **voters view the conversation not as a reminder to vote, but rather as an attempt to get them to vote in a certain way.**
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|  | PRACTICE * **Video example**
	+ *GOTV example -- common pitfalls video and perfect video*
		- Best tips and practices checklist
* **Scenario one- Partners (5 minutes)**
	+ *Partner 1 plays the voter*
		- Get into character!
	+ *Partner 2 plays the canvasser*
* **Scenario two- partners switch off! (5 minutes)**
	+ *Partner 1 plays the voter*
		- Get into character!
	+ *Partner 2 plays the canvasser*

(Best practice -- add veterans with new canvassers)* **Report-back**
	+ Analyze how you did against the best practices checklist -- what was good? What did you forget to do?
	+ What was challenging?
	+ Who had a partner that did a really great job?
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|  | CLOSING * Synthesis
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2 applications from Brandyn:

* How many of you live in a neighborhood where you are ideologically aligned with your neighborhood? Town? Congressional district?
	+ Reinforces ways of talking that are alienating to people
* How many of you think we can win the house without talking to people that we are not aligned with? How many of you have posted something on facebook that has led to a conversation where someone has changed their mind?
	+ Calling out cognitive dissonance
	+ Asking them why they came today -- most people start at the level that is not at the level of values -- looking for an emotionally resonant experience; real lived experience with emotional weight
		- Why -- leading into critical incident piece

Then depends on your audience and who you talk to -- connect on something and then build up to policy discussions -- applies to canvassing and with personal relationships, also with volunteer recruitment

* + - Personal story
		- 1:1s
		- Deep canvassing