

Civility has become an important issue that affects many people's everyday life. In a poll done by the American Bar Association they found that, “The vast majority of Americans believe society is less civil than it was a decade ago, and they blame social media and public officials for that decline” (Sloan, par. 1). Yet, while civility is considered to be on the decline there are many strategies used by local governments and town officials that can be put in place to maintain civility. These strategies include using social media to promote transparency, working towards common goals for the betterment of the community, and teaching civility to youth.

Every year more and more people use social media, in fact “5.17 billion people use social media as of 2024” (Shewale, par. 1). Social media is used by the vast majority of Americans in many different ways. Many use it as a way to hide behind their screens and sling mud towards issues and people they feel strongly against. This has created a disconnect in a society that needs to be connected. There are numerous ways to turn social media around and make it into a place where people and local governments can positively connect. Local government-based organizations can use social media to share agendas and issues being discussed, used as an unbiased resource to provide links to explain parts of governments and how they work, and create a place for citizens to reach out with concerns. This can create a more positive relationship between citizens and local governments. By connecting people with local government issues, it will help people understand what is happening in their community and will help governments understand what is important to and affecting people. The change of mutual understanding and respect of social media can bring a change from animosity and incivility to respect and teamwork.

Local governments and citizens can work towards common goals to also promote civility. According to Next100 when looking at what is causing the disconnect between the government

and youth it found that, “Many young adults surveyed believed the government would be more trustworthy if it actually reflected their communities” (Araiza, et al., par. 21). First, to be civil with each other, people must begin to trust their local governments. To do this, town officials and citizens should find ways to work towards common goals that positively impact their community. This could be something as small as creating garden beds for nursing home residents, arranging a town wide clean up, or having members of the local governments volunteer at food banks. By doing this, it can help the community get to know the local government and the people that work in it, along with getting the local government more involved in the health and wellbeing of its citizens. It can help bring back the trust of citizens in the local government and create more civility between the local government and its people. Open communications and dialogue can start to grow from this simple collaboration. This can also be used to create a spotlight onto issues that the community feels are being neglected by the local government.

Being taught civility at an early age by local governments is extremely important. Civility is something that should be taught to youth in schools. This will allow the youth to understand how not only the local government works, but also how to work with their local government. This will be taught valuable life skills and how to express civil communication. Without being taught civility many kids might grow up without the advantage of understanding other people’s views or being empathic. Without this ability to understand and put themselves in other people's position they may feel contempt or that they do not need to compromise on important issues such as those in everyday life. It teaches youth valuable life skills that can be used in clubs such as 4-H, FFA, or in their future jobs. Robert's Rules of Order Should be an example taught to youth. A learning situation of Robert's Rules of Order activity that would be beneficial to youth is

“making a motion potion.” This activity is where different kinds of foods or snacks will be brought to the group. What items will be added to the snack bowl? The youth will have to make a motion to add it into the mix. Then using Robert's Rules that they learned about, they will have to discuss if they want to add the food item into the snack bowl to eat. It gives them the chance to use what they learn to have a civil discussion, implementing their opinions on why something like chocolate or tuna fish should or should not be added to the snack bowl. Motions will be made, and discussions will be had, voting and compromising will be learned. This provides a safe place for people to put themselves into other people’s shoes if there is a controversial food item brought to the table. If something like peanuts are brought to the table and only half the number of people like peanuts and the other half hate them, it allows the children to learn that you can make compromises on issues and have a civil discussion. Instead of having peanuts in the mix they can have the peanuts on the side for those who want to add them in later. This is a way that can teach youth valuable life skills and open communication that will promote them to be more civil with people and local government issues that they might not agree with later in life.

Civility is an important issue that needs improvement, as it greatly affects people and local governments. Using positive strategies to help promote civility in the realm of social media, working towards common goals, and teaching youth civility, can be a game changer. The local governments will be able to maintain civility in collaboration with citizens. It will help create better relationships between governments and citizens along with teaching a new generation how to compromise and work with others that have different views.

Bibliography

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