# ACLU North Carolina




## How to have the conversations that lead to change for reproductive rights in North Carolina.

There's a lot of incorrect information out there about abortion. Some of it is spread intentionally by politicians, anti-abortion activists, and bad actors to twist the narrative about this very common, very safe medical procedure. Reproductive health care shouldn't be a political issue, but it's the reality of where we are now.

That's where you come in. One on one conversations are one of the most important tools we have to combat misinformation on abortion. By speaking openly and honestly with your loved ones about abortion, you can open the door for better understanding of this issue.

In this guide, you'll find information about how to combat misinformation, how to engage your family, friends, and fellow North Carolinians in conversations about the importance of abortion access for pregnant people and their families, and resources to continue working on this important issue.





# Change the story on misinformation.

Misinformation, half-truths, and lies have been used over the last couple of decades to divide people and polarize the conversation about reproductive health care and abortion. Why? Because it's easier to gain power by dividing people than bringing them together. It's easier to make sweeping generalizations and report biased, inaccurate information than to listen to the complex and diverse lived experiences of real North Carolinians.

So, talking about abortion starts with knowing how to counter misinformation. For example, there's a process that has been used to combat vaccine misinformation. It depends on trusted authorities sharing the facts with the people around them.

**If we can spread the truth in a clear and memorable way, we can help stop the spread of misinformation, while also making the truth about abortion more widespread.**

1. **State the fact in a clear, relevant, and memorable way.**
2. **Call out the misinformation.**
3. **Show the manipulative motivation behind the false information.**
4. **Restate the fact to replace the misinformation.**

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# The way we talk about abortion can make a big difference.

A lot of barriers have been erected to prevent people from talking about abortion, particularly in the South. People are made to feel it's impolite or too political, too full of partisan talking points, too divisive. But the truth is that talking about abortion is the only way to change all this.

Our goal is to build rapport, share connections, and understand each other's perspectives. This method of deeper, nonjudgmental conversations geared toward sharing values-based, tailored stories with people of various viewpoints is called "deep canvassing." It's been shown to be effective in moving the needle even for people who start out totally opposed. It isn't magic, and it doesn't work every time, or even immediately, but these conversations can change the way we think and talk about abortion. So here's how we go about having conversations that matter.

1. **Ask their opinion about abortion and listen without judgment.**
2. **Find the common ground in their views and values.**
3. **Share a story that addresses those values.**
4. **Engage with their initial concerns and get them thinking.**
5. **Connect back to abortion access.**

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# Find common ground in your values.

Here are some of the common concerns given by people who question abortion rights. Instead of arguing, try and identify some common ground and work from there.

VALUE: I believe in the sanctity of life.

**RESPONSE: You and I both agree that bringing a life into this world is not something to take lightly, which is why it's so important that each of us has the freedom to decide if and when to have children.**

VALUE: Abortion goes against my religion.

**RESPONSE: Our religious beliefs can be so important to us. I respect other people's rights to practice their own religions, because I want them to respect mine. I know people of other religions might feel differently about abortion than I do, and I shouldn't try to change their religious beliefs.**

VALUE: I believe in personal responsibility. If you choose to have sex, you should be prepared for the consequences.

**RESPONSE: Responsibility is important, and having a child is a big decision. Carrying a pregnancy to term can have a number of consequences, like health complications, economic hardship, or staying with an abusive partner. Maybe for some people, making the responsible choice means choosing not to raise a child they're not prepared for.**

VALUE: I would never have an abortion, so I don't support it.

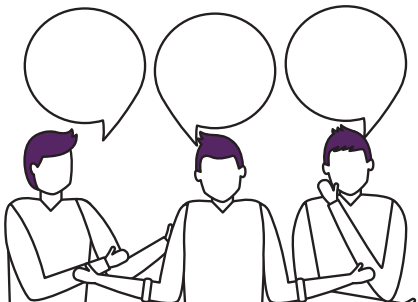
**RESPONSE: Whether we personally agree with abortion or not, everyone should be able to make their own decisions about their bodies and their futures. I wouldn't want someone else making my medical decisions for me.**

VALUE: I've heard abortion is dangerous and I think it needs to be regulated.
**RESPONSE: Abortion is extremely safe, and is already regulated by all the same standards as any other type of health care. If people are forced to go outside the medical system to get an abortion, it may be more dangerous.**

VALUE: I don't have a strong opinion on abortion, but the people in my community are against it, and I don't want to rock the boat.
**RESPONSE: One in five women will have an abortion in her lifetime. With numbers like that, it's very likely you know and love someone who has had an abortion. Shame and stigma prevent people from talking about their experiences, but polling shows that most people support abortion rights. Your community may not be as rigid as you think.**

VALUE: Abortion should only be available in the most dire of circumstances. Women shouldn't rely on abortion as birth control.
**RESPONSE: We both agree that sometimes people are in circumstances that are outside of their control and need support. Abortion bans usually have the most impact on people who are already struggling to make ends meet and have limited access to birth control and health care. Abortion can be life-saving health care.**

**When we really listen to our neighbors' values, giving them a way to think about abortion and reproductive justice in a way that connects to them, and telling stories that put a human face to it, we can change minds.**



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# Lead from within.

Sharing your experiences and values can help someone personalize the issue instead of thinking about it in the abstract. Before you have these conversations with others, take a moment to consider how to tell your own story. Here are some questions to get you started:

- Have you had an abortion yourself? Or wanted an abortion and were denied one?
- Do you know someone who has had an abortion? Was their experience positive or negative? Were you there to support them?
- Have you been a clinic escort? Have you heard other people's abortion stories?
- Have you ever had a pregnancy scare? How did you feel?
- How has your identity or culture shaped your view of abortion?
- What messages did you hear about abortion growing up, in your family, in the media, or in your community?
- How has access to sexual and reproductive health care impacted your life?
- Would your life be different if your ability to make your own decisions about your body had been different?

When someone shares their beliefs and experiences with you, listen non-judgmentally. Maybe one of your own experiences could help identify places where your values overlap.

# Where you can learn more.

**Trusted friends, family, and community members are the people who will change abortion stigma. It takes more than one conversation to change a person's mind, but a real-life, two-way conversation is the best place to start.**

If you want to learn more about abortion and the state of reproductive rights in North Carolina, visit acluofnc.org/abortion. There, you'll find information on how to access abortion in our current legal climate, how to support reproductive rights in North Carolina, and more. It's a great resource to share with the people in your circle.

There is strength in community. We have a responsibility to our fellow North Carolinians to fight for our abortion rights. Together, we can take steps to protect access to abortion for all.

If you need up-to-date information on the laws and restrictions on abortion, visit abortionfinder.org.

This guide was created by the ACLU of North Carolina using materials from the ACLU of Indiana. You can read more about Indiana's project at letstalkaboutabortionindiana.org.




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