

Think of a controversial issue...and jot down as many key ideas as you can.

People

- Who are the groups involved? Who do they represent?
- Are they organized? If so, how?
- What is their power base?
- Are the groups capable of working together?
- What are the historical relationships among the groups?

Substance

- How did this controversy arise?
- How does each group describe the major issue? Are there other issues? If so, how are they described?
- Can any negative issues be reframed differently?
- Are the issues negotiable?
- Have clear positions been taken?
- Are there any common interests?
- What necessary information is available and what information is still needed?
- What are the values involved?

Possible Strategies

- If possible, would consensus serve all interests in this controversy?
- What external constraints or other influences that must be dealt with?
- What are the past experiences (if any) of these groups working together?
- What is the timeline for necessary resolution?
- Will the public and/or media be likely to be involved? Should they be informed?
- Will an outside facilitator be needed? Are there sufficient funds to pay for this resource?