

LET'S TALK

ABOUT

ABORTION,

INDIANA:

THE CONVERSATION GUIDE

**LET'S TALK
ABOUT
ABORTION**

How to have the conversations that lead to change for reproductive rights in Indiana.

Indiana currently has one of the strictest abortion bans in the country. But things don't have to stay that way.

In this guide, you'll find information about how to engage your family, friends, and fellow Hoosiers in conversations about the importance of abortion access for pregnant people and their families. You'll also find resources that show you how to continue working on this important issue, and—more critical than ever—how to incite others to vote in favor of abortion access and vital reproductive health care in Indiana.

Politicians, anti-abortion activists, and bad actors use misinformation and flat-out wrong facts and figures to twist the narrative about this very common, very safe medical procedure. Women's reproductive health care hasn't always been a political football, but it's the reality of where we are now.

That's where you come in. Most Hoosiers actually agree that politicians shouldn't interfere with health care and individual choice. And if we can get on the same page, and realize we actually have a lot more in common than we think, we can encourage our fellow Hoosiers to take action—and change the minds of those around us for the better.

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Change the story on misinformation.

Misinformation, disinformation, 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 care. Why? Because it's easier to gain power by dividing people than by bringing them together. It's easier to make sweeping generalizations and one-size-fits-all pronouncements than to listen to the complex and diverse lived experiences of real Hoosiers.

So, talking about abortion starts with knowing how to counter misinformation. And when we can get to the root of the misinformation, and identify the areas where we actually agree on things, we can start to build rapport and have a conversation instead of sweeping blanket statements on reproductive health.

01 

State the fact in a clear, relevant, memorable way.

02 

Call out the misinformation/disinformation.

03 

Show the fallacy at work—information that's being misinterpreted or misleading, etc.

04 

Restate the fact to replace the misinformation/disinformation.

An example myth: “Most Hoosiers agree that all forms of abortion should be illegal.”

- Contrary to popular belief, the majority of Indiana voters support abortion access.
- More specifically, Hoosiers see a strong connection between abortion and personal decision-making, and believe politicians should not interfere in personal health care decisions.
- Most Hoosiers are also deeply concerned that people experiencing pregnancy complications will not be able to access potentially life-saving care.
- Most Hoosier voters are also against someone else's religious beliefs influencing their decisions about abortion, especially politicians' beliefs.
- Voters also view every pregnancy as unique and different—so decisions about it should be left to individuals and their healthcare providers.

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

ADDITIONAL MYTHS

- 01** **FICTION:** Abortion is physically and mentally harmful to women.
TRUTH: **Abortions, like other reproductive health procedures, are safe.** They have significantly fewer poor outcomes than your average colonoscopy, for example. They're also much safer than carrying an unwanted pregnancy, which significantly increases the risk of serious complications, anxiety, and the chances a pregnant person will stay tethered to an abusive partner. On top of these risks, Indiana has the third worst maternal mortality rates in the United States, making it an especially unsafe place to give birth.
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- 02** **FICTION:** Too many women use abortion as birth control.
TRUTH: **The choice to have an abortion is a deeply personal medical decision, one that often happens after talking to trusted family members and physicians.** There are lots of reasons a person might get an abortion, and we can't judge another Hoosier's decision when we haven't walked in their shoes.
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- 03** **FICTION:** If it's outlawed, women will no longer receive abortions.
TRUTH: **Women sought abortions even when it was illegal, and they will if it's illegal again.** When governments make it harder to access abortion care, it disproportionately hurts people whose lives are already hard.
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- 04** **FICTION:** Pro-choice advocates want abortion to be legal up to the moment the baby is delivered.
TRUTH: **Abortions later in pregnancy are incredibly rare—less than 1% of all abortions.** They happen when something has gone terribly wrong. For almost 50 years, we had a standard that Americans had the right to abortion up to the point of viability for a fetus (around 24 weeks). With the option of abortion removed, medical decisions are being hindered and even undermined by politics. Exceptions aren't enough.
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- 05** **FICTION:** Prior to Indiana's ban on abortion, there were no restrictions on abortion.
TRUTH: **Most Hoosiers agree that every pregnancy is unique, which is why people must have the freedom to make their own decisions about what is best for them without political interference.** Prior to Indiana's near-total abortion ban, abortions were legal up to the point of viability—the point when a fetus can live outside the uterus. Only 13% of Hoosiers believe all abortions should be illegal in Indiana.
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- 06** **FICTION:** Women already have equal access to abortion.
TRUTH: **In the past decade, the Indiana legislature has enacted 55 abortion restrictions and bans. Politicians, not medical experts, design these regulations to be burdensome.** And these burdens disproportionately affect Hoosiers who are low-income, non-native speakers, low education, or live in rural areas.
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- 07** **FICTION:** Abortion is murder.
TRUTH: **Abortion is a matter of health care, not a criminal act.** Everyone should have the freedom to decide if and when to have children, and what's best for them and their families.
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- 08** **FICTION:** Abortion is never necessary to save a woman's life.
TRUTH: **There are absolutely times when it is medically necessary to have an abortion to save a pregnant person's life.** When the worst happens, everyone should be able to work with their physician and their family to make the decision that's right for them—without one-size-fits-all legislation interfering.
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- 09** **FICTION:** A fetus is a human being from the moment of conception.
TRUTH: **Abortion bans will end up killing pregnant people.** Without access to safe abortions, pregnant people will not have potentially life-saving reproductive health care for miscarriages, fetal abnormalities, and serious complications. Abortion bans will cause long-term harm to pregnant people by making it harder to access miscarriage care and by criminalizing health issues during pregnancy. Abortion isn't a right if it only exists when a pregnant person's life or health is in danger.

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 in Indiana. 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 walk in another person's shoes together. 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 people think and talk about abortion. So, here's how we go about having conversations that matter.

These are five parts to an effective conversation with someone:

- 01** Ask their opinion about abortion and listen nonjudgmentally.
- 02** Find common ground in their views and values.
- 03** Share a story that addresses those values.
- 04** Engage with their initial concerns and get them thinking.
- 05** Connect back to abortion access.



We know certain points make sense as a way to frame our conversations for Hoosiers of all walks of life. Here are a few of them:

- **“People should have the freedom to decide if and when to have children”** is a way to frame the ability to access abortion as well as all other forms of reproductive health care.
- **“Whether we personally agree with abortion or not, people must have the freedom to make their own decisions about what’s best for them and their families”** We should all be able to make decisions for ourselves, and the religious beliefs of politicians shouldn't limit our family planning or healthcare decisions.
- **“Every pregnancy is different, which is why people must have the freedom to make their own decisions about what is best for them.”** Keeping politics out of doctors' offices and out of personal medical decisions is something most Hoosiers agree with.
- **“Abortion bans take away our freedom to control our own lives with dignity.”** This isn't just about having a theoretical choice, we need to ensure real access to reproductive health care.
- **“We shouldn't stand by and let fundamental human rights be stripped from us.”** Encouraging your friends, loved ones, and neighbors to vote on the causes they believe in is a vital step in enacting real change.

Speaking up can change minds.

US

“I can’t believe abortion has been completely banned in Indiana. This will have serious consequences for pregnant people across the state. Can you believe legislation like this was able to pass despite the majority of Hoosiers agreeing politicians should not be involved in personal healthcare decisions?”

OUR NEIGHBOR

“I would never have an abortion myself, and I don’t know anyone who has. I guess there are reasons someone might choose to have one, I don’t want to *support* abortion.”

“Can you tell me a little about what has shaped your thoughts on abortion?”

“I think life is a gift and should be treated as sacred. I also believe in personal responsibility, which is why there shouldn’t be abortions on-demand. But bad things happen to good people, so I guess the option should be there for the worst cases, like rape.”

“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. A neighbor of mine, growing up went to

LET’S BREAK IT DOWN.

1. It’s actually pretty likely they do. Three in five Hoosiers know someone who has had an abortion, and one in four women in her lifetime will have an abortion.
 2. Many people have a conflicted opinion about abortion. They know life is messy, but have heard misinformation—maybe they grew up hearing scary things about sex out of wedlock and abortion. But we can open up a conversation.
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1. The first step is to ask a question and REALLY LISTEN. Hoosiers agree about more on abortion than you think. Listen for the values they express. You can build bridges with them.

“Can you tell me a little about what has shaped your thoughts on abortion?”

“I think life is a gift and should be treated as sacred. I also believe in personal responsibility, which is why there shouldn't be on-demand abortions. But bad things happen to good people, so I guess the option should be there for the worst cases, like rape.”

“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, and politicians shouldn't be involved in matters of personal choice. A neighbor of mine growing up went to college and got pregnant unintentionally. Her family was unsupportive and she didn't have anyone she trusted to talk to about contraception, so she didn't have access to the tools that would have been best for her. In the end, she made the best decision she could with the options she had, even though most people in her life didn't agree with her decision.

Have you or someone you know ever been in a situation where you knew what was best for you, even though it wasn't what other people thought you should do?”

“I grew up knowing that I was meant to be a mom. I married my husband, and we started a family and I loved it. But I also

LET'S BREAK IT DOWN.

1. We don't take the lives of people lightly, either, so we can build here.
2. Personal responsibility is a great place to connect, too. If we're responsible for our actions and our bodies, then we are in charge of them.
3. Life is messy, sometimes, even for people trying to do the right thing. This is a great value to connect on.
4. Again, here's a commonality—when the worst things happen, the decision should be up to a person and their family. No one-size-fits-all rule can encompass all of that.

1. Here, we're combining a few of our shared values.
2. Most Hoosiers agree that personal health care decisions should be made by a woman, her doctor, and family. Not dictated by the personal or religious beliefs of politicians.
3. This kind of conversation works whether it's your story or the story of a friend or family member. Just make sure it's okay to share someone else's story.
4. When you don't have access to all your options, you don't have the ability to make the choice that's best for you.
5. We're putting a personal face on the problem of unequal access to reproductive health care.
6. Now we ask a question that can walk them through a similar time in their life when they had to stand up for their values in the same way.



Have you or someone you know ever been in a situation where you knew what was best for you, even though it wasn't what other people thought you should do?"

"I grew up knowing that I was meant to be a mom. I married my husband, and we started a family, and I loved it. But I also started working part-time. My parents don't understand why I'd pay for childcare just to go to the office, and they've told me that more than once. But I get to use this whole other set of skills in a way that makes me really happy. Six years later, they still don't understand it, but it makes sense for me and my family."

"So, the freedom to decide for yourself what was right for you and your family is clearly important to you. And someone telling you what they think is right wouldn't stop you from doing what you know is best for you. I think we agree on a lot when it comes to reproductive health care: that we should all have the right to make our own decisions about our bodies, to have children, to not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.

With a near-total abortion ban in Indiana in place, people have lost the ability to make those choices for themselves. It is more important than ever for us to vote, so we can secure the ability for people to make their own choices without the interference of politicians."

LET'S BREAK IT DOWN.

1. Hearing what's "right" or "wrong" from others doesn't stop you from knowing what's right for you.
2. We can connect here on the importance of being able to choose for yourself.
3. This is the kind of demonstration of common values you should look for.

1. This is an example of summarizing the values we hold in common. We're focusing on "the freedom to decide" as a value we share.
2. We're relating her story to that of people seeking abortions, regardless of laws and judgment.
3. And connecting them back to abortion.
4. Call them to action. Nothing will change unless we fight for it.

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.

Where you can learn more and share more.

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

Right now, **Indiana has a near-total abortion ban**. But things don't have to stay that way. If you want to learn more about abortion and the state of reproductive rights in Indiana, visit letstalkabortionindiana.org. There you'll find information on how to bust common myths, what the people who provide reproductive care, support, and assistance have to say about the importance of abortion, and other ways to take action. It's a great resource to share with the people in your circle, and help call others to action.

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

If you want guidance on writing to your elected officials about your belief in abortion access for Hoosiers, visit aclu-in.org/en/act.



This guide was created for the Let's Talk About Abortion, Indiana campaign on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana.

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