**Agree/Disagree Debate Instructions**

**Goal:** Help participants express their opinions persuasively and respond constructively to the opinions of others

**Exercise Genre:** Debate

**Materials:** Three large labels (sentence strips work)

* + Label 1: Agree
  + Label 2: Not Sure/Neutral
  + Label 3: Disagree

**Instructions:**

1. Arrange seating in a straight line or horseshoe.
2. Place the “agree” and “disagree” labels at opposite ends of the seating arrangement, where they can be seen by everyone (on the floor may work).
3. Place the “not sure/neutral” label in the center of the seating arrangement.
4. Tell participants that you are going to read a number of statements and that they will respond to each statement.
5. If they agree with the statement, they are to move quickly to the area where the “agree” label is posted.
6. If they disagree with the statement, they are to move quickly to the area where the “disagree” label is posted.
7. If they are not sure or if they are neutral on the statement, they are to move quickly to the area where that sign is posted.
8. Let them know that they will be given a few minutes to frame a persuasive statement to explain why they chose their position. The statements can be created alone or in partnership with one or more other people in the group. Explain that statements should be framed to address the issue and not another speaker.
9. Let them know that everyone will not get a chance to speak on every statement, because you will alternate between the three positions fairly. But, tell them that you will attempt to make sure that everyone will get to speak during the exercise, so they should make their strongest and most persuasive arguments.
10. Tell participants that if someone in another group inspires them to change their position, they should move swiftly to stand with the people whose opinions they now share.
11. Remind participants that they are debating the issue not the other participants, so they should not refer to other people in the group by name, signs, descriptions, etc. They may say things like: I disagree with the statement that all green bags are recyclable; or, I agree that pasta is carbohydrate heavy. They may not say: I disagree with John when he said that all green bags are recyclable; or I agree with Martha that pasta is carbohydrate heavy.
12. Have participants thank each other after each mini-debate with finger snapping.