# Factory floor Promoting dialogue and engagement

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**Handout**

**22 questions to complicate the narrative**

Journalist Amanda Ripley and the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) promote an approach to conducting interviews on polarizing issues whose roots lie in conflict mediation. Called **“Complicating the Narrative”**, it aims to introduce more complexity into conversations and help journalists get at the deeper reasons people feel the way they do. SJN has put together a list of 22 questions that can help reporters get beyond the usual talking points and defensive positions common in interviews on hot-button topics.

**Amplify contradictions and widen the lens**

* What is dividing us on this issue?
* How do you decide which information to trust?
* What is oversimplified about this issue?
* Where do you feel torn?
* Is there any part of the (other side’s) position that makes sense to you?

**Understand people’s motivations**

* Why is this important to you?
* Which experiences have shaped your views?
* What do you want the other side to understand about you?
* What do you want to understand about the other side?
* How has this conflict affected your life?
* What would change in your life if more people agreed with your stance?
* What would it be like if people didn’t agree with your stance?

**Listen more and better**

* Tell me more about that.
* How do you feel, telling this story?
* Where does that (feeling, emotion, position, distrust, paranoia) come from?
* Can I interrupt you? I want to make sure I have everything right.
* What’s the question nobody is asking?

**Expose people to the other tribe and counter confirmation bias**

* What do you think the other group thinks of you?
* What do you think the other side wants?
* What do you already know, and want to understand, about the position on the other side?
* Help me make sense of this. Because a lot of other people are saying ‘X’…
* Is there anything about how the media portrays you or people with your views that feels inaccurate?

*Source: Solutions Journalism Network*