



We Talk, Even When We Disagree

SPARC's Approach to Engagement and Dialogue

SPARC chooses to participate in forums and events hosted by a range of individuals and organizations, even when we have different ideas and beliefs. We believe that progress does not come from isolation—it comes from engagement.

Research and lived experience show that extremism and dehumanization thrive when people stop talking to one another. This can lead to hateful and divisive rhetoric, verbal or physical attacks, and real harm. We believe change is built through human connection, curiosity, and the willingness to stay present in uncomfortable conversations. We engage as a pathway to positive change, not as tacit approval.

Showing up does not mean abandoning our principles. We carry our values with us wherever we go, and will share them openly in any room that we are in. If our principles make some people and organizations unwilling to welcome us, that is their choice. But when we are invited, we see value in being both heard and willing to listen.

We do not force people into painful situations. We recognize that due to lived experience, past trauma, and personal realities that some individuals will find exposure to certain ideas, conversations, or situations to be too painful. We respect this choice. We believe that discomfort is part of learning and change, but individuals should be able to decide when and how this discomfort contributes to learning and when it should be avoided.

Despite differences in approach, core beliefs in bettering the lives of animals is powerful common ground. In animal care and well-being work, a shared interest and focus on the lives of animals creates opportunities to move important work and initiatives forward. There is no way we will agree on all things all of the time, but if we can see areas we do have in common - such as deeper values and a commitment to animals - we can do more together than we would if we remain in our siloes.

We are committed to raising SPARC's reach without sacrificing our integrity. Tuning out ideas we disagree with does not make them disappear—especially when millions of people hold them. By engaging across differences, we gain insight into the systems, narratives, and counterforces shaping our work. Engagement is the only way to find opportunities for shared ground. Ideas are held by people and people can change. We are stronger, not weaker, when we choose dialogue rather than retreating into echo chambers of our ideas and beliefs.