ROOKHOW
Quaker Meeting House and Bunkbarn

Depolarisation training

with Rebecca Brierley from St. Ethelburga's

Learn how to effectively build relationships across division and difference using our 5 step depolarisation framework.

How do we engage with family, friends, and colleagues that hold different views? How can we best respond in this moment of social polarisation?

As social and political divisions intensify across communities, many of us are asking how to stay grounded, connected, and effective when our communities or workplaces are divided. This one-day workshop invites you to explore the practice of what we call the Radical Centre; not a political middle ground, but a place of moral courage and curiosity. It is "radical" because choosing to listen, to build trust, and to stay in dialogue is countercultural in a climate of outrage and certainty. Drawing from our long-standing peacebuilding practices, this training offers a structured yet reflective pathway for those who wish to build social cohesion, nurture trust, and model a new kind of leadership for divided times.

What you can expect

The day is interactive and experiential, weaving together input, discussion, research, and small-group dialogue. You will experience practical tools that help individuals and groups move beyond polarisation and find shared ground, while also engaging with the deeper systemic dynamics that shape division in society. Our educational input will offer grounding by exploring David Goodhart's theory of the 'anywheres' and 'somewheres', More In Common's groundbreaking research on political tribes, echo chambers and epistemic bubbles, our LEAP-IN dialogue framework, research tools and profiles of reconciling leaders. Our interactive group exercises will provide the space to apply these ideas in real time in your own personal conflicts.

You will learn to:

- Create spaces that encourage honesty, empathy, and participation.
- Work with disagreement in a way that strengthens rather than fractures relationships.
- Develop reflective tools to manage your own reactions in moments of tension.
- Recognise how dialogue, activism, and reconciliation each have their place.
- Apply frameworks for analysing polarised situations and identifying shared values.
- Nurture a culture of listening and mutual respect in teams, communities, or networks.

Themes we'll explore together:

- The social and emotional forces that drive polarisation.
- Common leadership pitfalls and how to transform tension into insight.
- Echo chambers and epistemic bubbles: understanding closed information loops.
- Power, identity, and the dynamics of belonging.
- The art of listening and dialogue.
- Reconciliation as a civic skill.

Why attend

This workshop is both practical and visionary. You will leave not only with new skills, but with a renewed sense of hope in the possibility of dialogue. The Radical Centre invites us to resist binary thinking and to inhabit a deeper moral landscape — one where empathy and truth can coexist. For professionals working in communities, institutions, or movements, these capacities are no longer optional: they are essential for building trust, cohesion, and resilience in an age of fragmentation.

This is for:

This training is designed for facilitators, mediators, educators, faith leaders, organisational coaches, and anyone seeking to foster constructive dialogue across difference. It is suitable for both emerging and experienced practitioners who wish to deepen their practice with tools for depolarisation, group process, and conflict transformation.

Our Approach

Drawing on St Ethelburga's 30 years of peace-making experience, this day offers practical tools and reflective frameworks for holding conversations that cross divides. It combines inner work with interpersonal skill-building, helping you strengthen both your capacity and confidence to engage across difference. At St Ethelburga's, we combine peacebuilding, spirituality, and systems thinking to cultivate leadership fit for turbulent times. Our learning model balances inner development with outer practice — nurturing the presence, curiosity, and humility that enable authentic dialogue.

Rebecca Brierley

Community Reconciliation Programme Manager

St Ethelburga's

Bridging divides, loving Earth