

CML

# EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

**Civility Starts Here:**  
**Fostering Civil Communities**  
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*and communications manager*



# Understanding civility

- Articulate why civility is important
- Recognize municipal official/staff role
- Develop strategies to foster civility



# Why is civility important to local government?



# Civility supports effective governance by

- Fostering trust
- Enhancing collaboration
- Promoting respectful dialogue
- Facilitating problem-solving
- Encouraging civic engagement
- Reflecting community values
- Promoting inclusivity



# What does “civility” mean?



# CML's initiative defines civility as:

The steadfast practice of respect, even in disagreement, that fosters constructive dialogue and connection, recognizing the inherent dignity of every person.



# Civility does not mean:

- Agreement
- Censorship
- Passivity
- Avoiding tough conversations
- Ignoring injustice
- Conformity
- Superficial niceness



# What is my role?

- Individual
- Board or Council
- City or Town





# What does civility look like?



# *Civility Starts Here* guiding principles

- Listen as intently as you speak
- Focus on issues, not individuals
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Get curious instead of furious
- Acknowledge knowledge
- Own your intentions and your impact
- Seek common ground
- Be a role model



# Listen as intently as you speak

- Practice *Active Listening*
- Do not listen with the intent to reply, but with the intent to understand
- Consider briefly summarizing what you heard



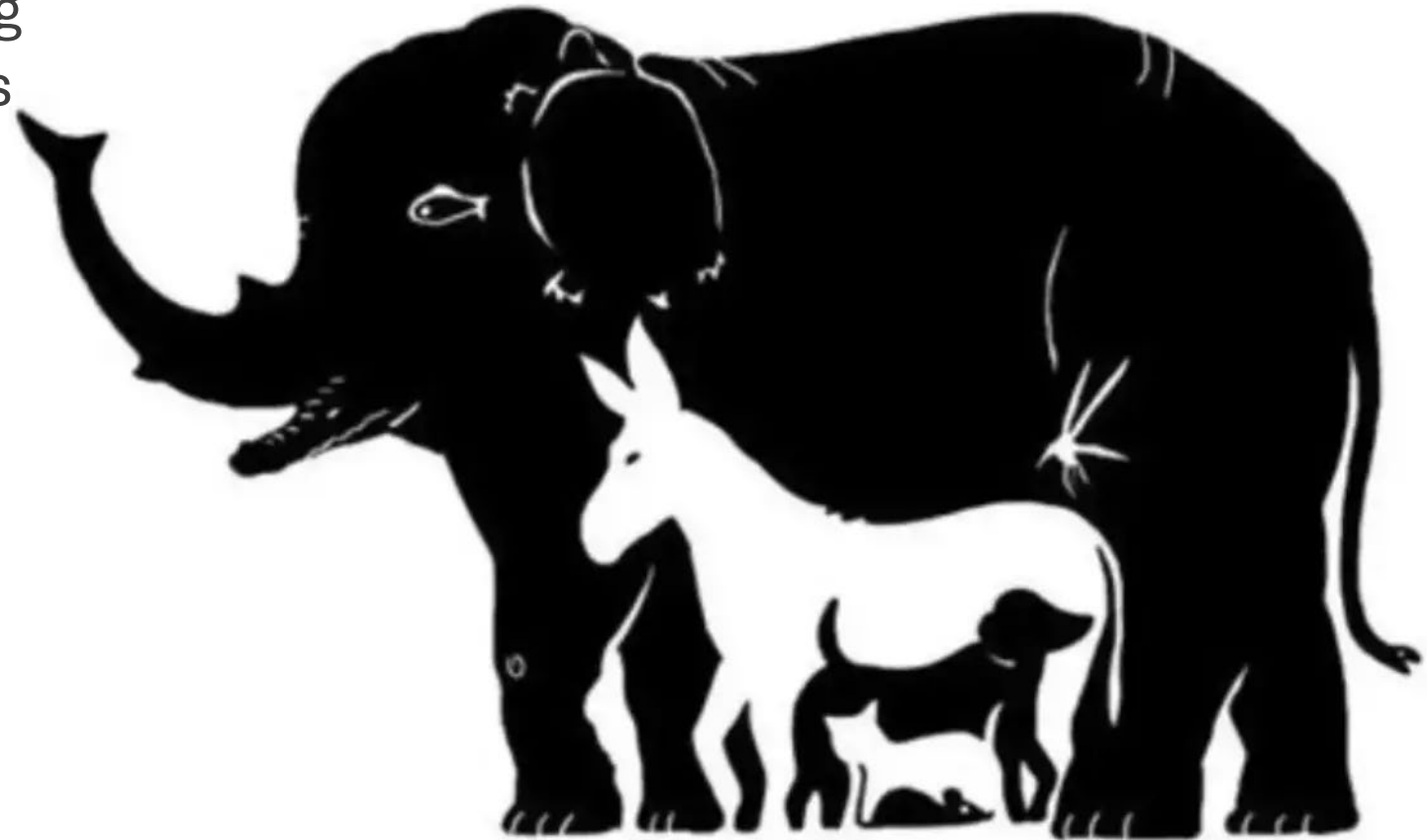
# Focus on the issues, not the individual

- Dig into the substance of the problem
- Disagree with the idea, not the person
- Acknowledge differing perspectives

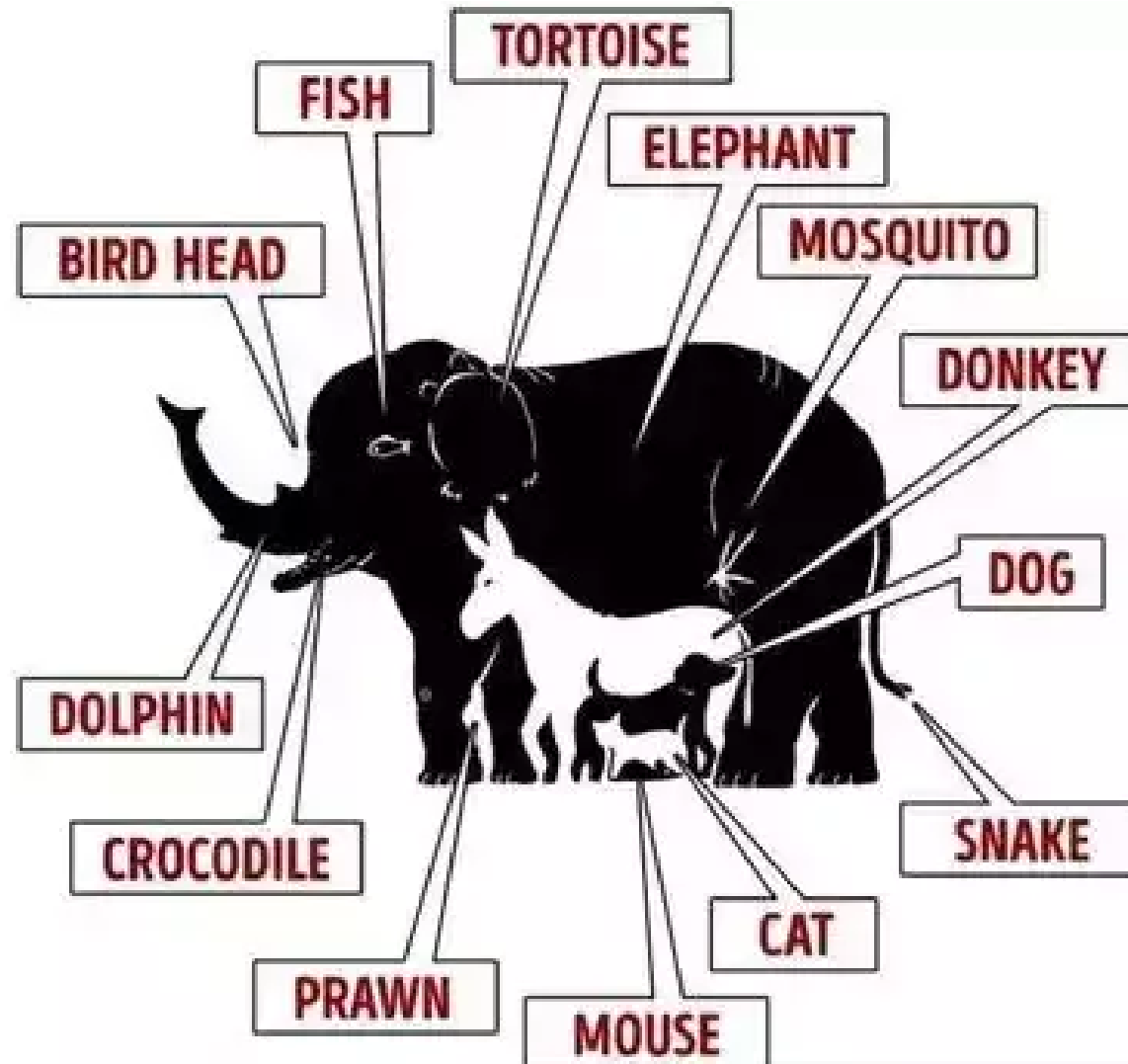


# Distinguish between fact and opinion

- Seek clarity on both while being considerate of other's thoughts and values
- It's ok to agree to disagree
- Be sure you understand the fundamental points of differences



# 13 different animals

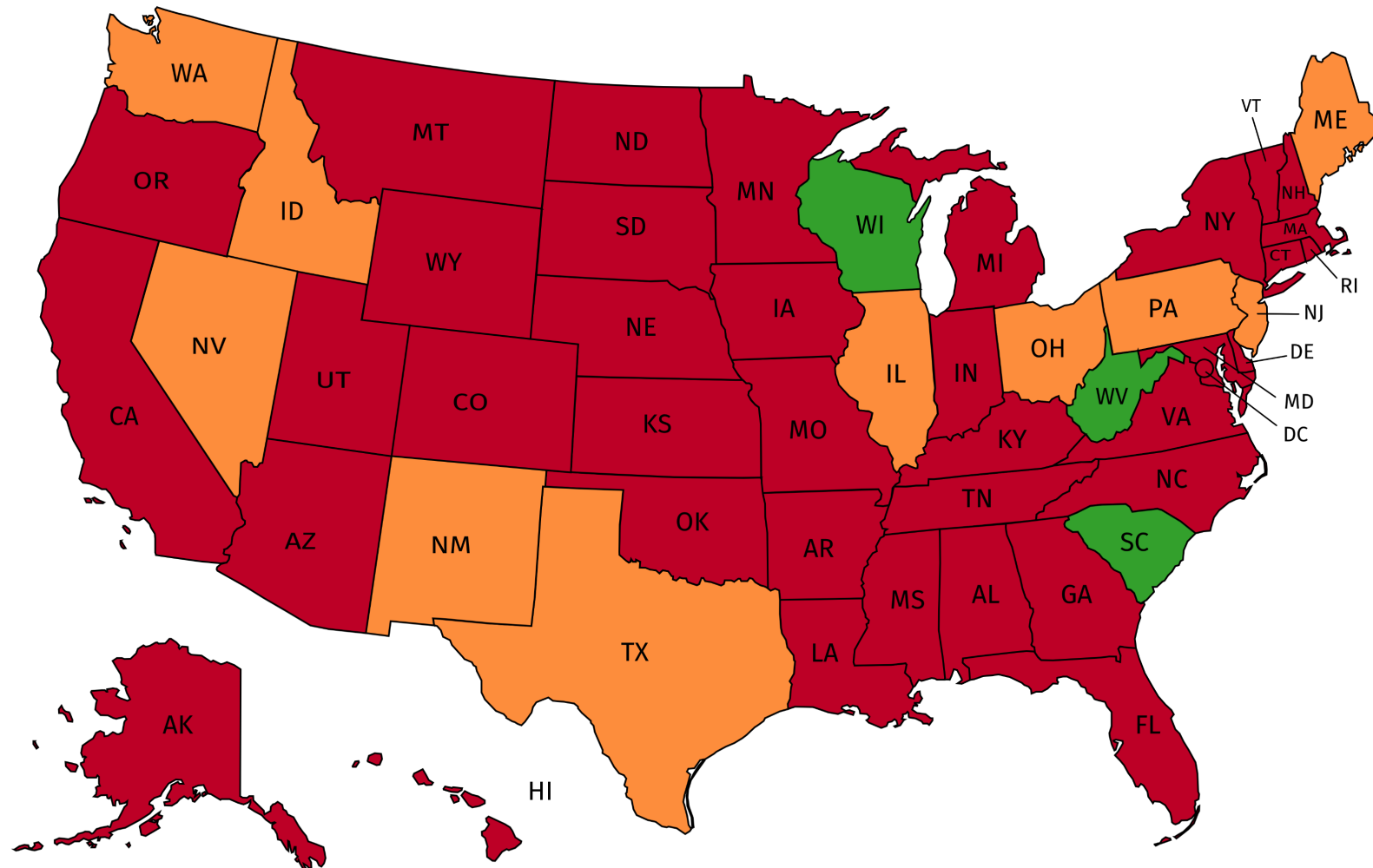


# Get curious instead of furious

- Manage your emotions in the moment
- Ask questions with the intent to learn
- Answer questions with respect

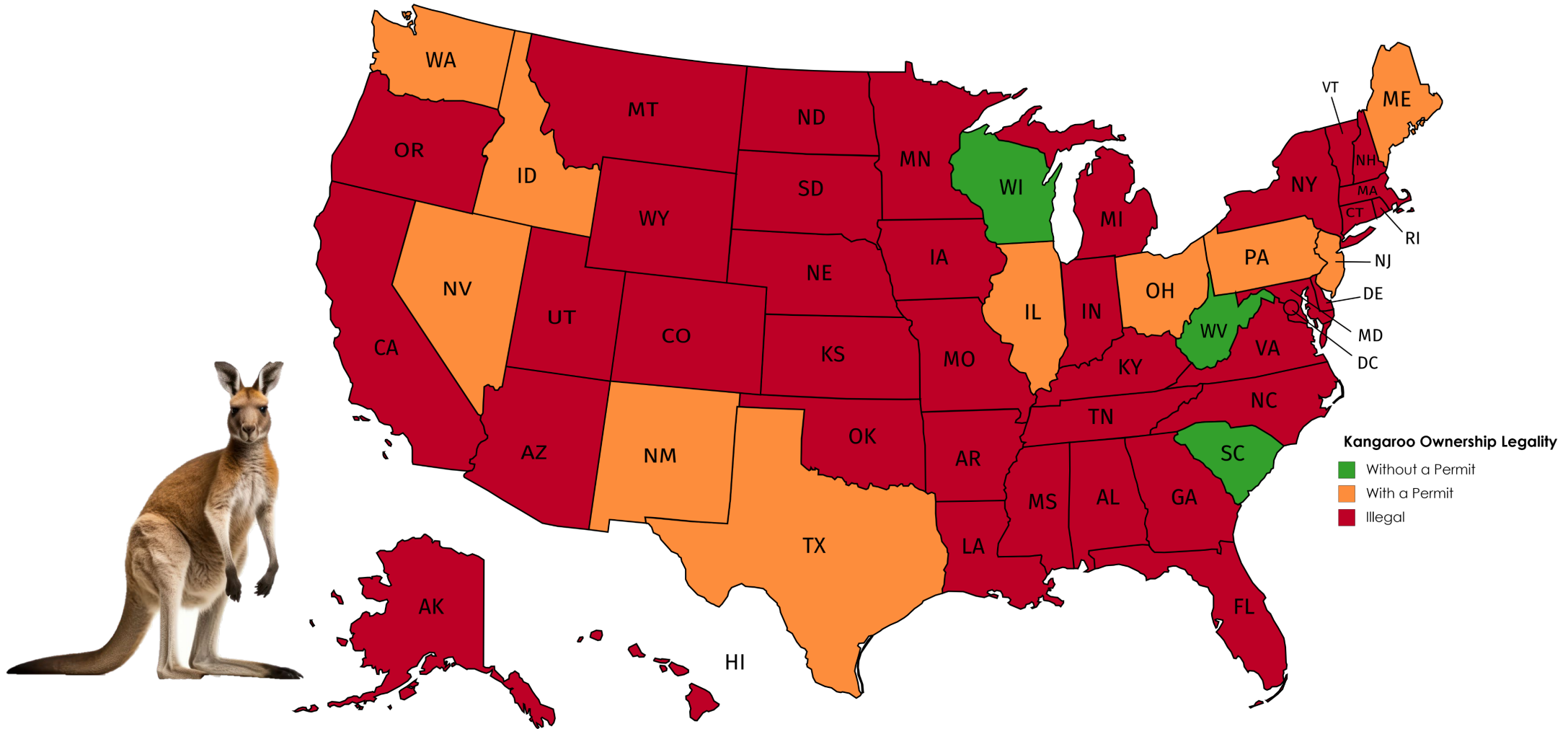


# What do you think this map represents?





# States where you can own a kangaroo



# Acknowledge knowledge

- When someone makes a logical or interesting point, recognize it
- Embrace a continuous learning mindset
- Stay open to new ideas and facts



# Own your intentions and your impact

- Recognize words and behaviors may not reflect our intent
- Value and prioritize honesty and good will



# Seek common ground

- Build bridges by prioritizing shared goals and values
- Find commonalities and shared understanding
- Be resolution-oriented in problem-solving



# Be a role model

- You can only control your actions and words
- Encourage others to practice civility
- Challenge disrespectful behavior courteously



# How can we foster civility?

## Develop supportive strategies:

- Skill-building is essential
- Strive to be ahead of and avoid potential discord
- Practice active listening
- De-escalate conversations in real time





# Finding Common Ground Activity

**Scenario:** One participant takes the role of a municipal staff member or elected official, while the other acts as a community member who is upset, urging them to reconsider a decision they feel is wrong and should be stopped immediately.

- **Listen** as intently as they would speak
- **Focus on the issue**, not the person
- **Get curious** and ask a question to better understand their perspective
- **Acknowledge** if they make a valid point
- **Suggest** one positive step forward

# Don't forget, self-care is essential

- Uphold boundaries
- Avoid internalizing negativity
- Celebrate successes
- Build a support system
- Improve conflict management
- Prioritize self care





# Putting ideas into action

- Take the *Civility Pledge*
- Pass a *Civility Resolution*
- Dive into Additional Resources

