**Preparation for Tough Topics Session**

These sessions are designed to help you develop your skills of active listening to arguments relating to difficult and controversial topics, without allowing any personal feelings to affect your ability to understand the arguments and view them objectively.   You will not be permitted to ask either of the speakers "loaded" questions or questions designed to score points.    You     will be limited to asking questions the purpose of which is to understand an argument or elicit further relevant fact.  At the end of the presentations, you will work with the facilitator to prepare a fair and neutral summary of the competing arguments.

Before the session, you should do the following by way of preparation:

1.  Identify your own personal opinions about the topic.  Why do you hold those opinions?  How strongly do you hold them?

2.  What are the main arguments against your opinion?  What is your view of people who hold those views?

3.  What obstacles can you identify to your being able to undertake the task required by the session?"