

Activity 4.8 Expressing Beliefs with Confidence & Humility¹

Description

This activity is designed to help participants develop skills and strategies to better express their ideas in group settings with confidence but, also, humility. Participants will practice how to disagree or respond to disagreement productively and learn persistent but non-threatening discussion practices.

Learning Goals

- Consider what things hold us back from fully contributing to collaborative discussion.
- Consider unintentional practices that may hold others back from fully participating.
- Identify goals and strategies to more fully contribute in a way that balances self-contributions and contributions from others.

Practices (55 minutes)

Step One	<p>In small groups or pair shares, generate a list of possible reasons why people do not speak up in group settings (like in the classroom, workplace, or at social events or gatherings). Some examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shyness• A sense that your ideas may sound foolish• Being intimidated by others• Discouraged by the tone of the discussion <p>Be sure to prompt both individual/internal as well group/external factors.</p>	5 min
Step Two	<p>In the same group, brainstorm strategies for overcoming some of these obstacles, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about why you were invited to the discussion. When you realize that you have a perspective that others are interested in, that may help boost your confidence.• Prepare ideas you want to share in advance of the discussion. You may have information or data that others will find interesting.	10 min

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Jack Byrd (2023). Expressing Beliefs with Confidence and Humility. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-4-culturally-responsive-collaboration>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the discussion, take notes to keep tuned into the discussion. A good way to do this is to place the person's initials along with a brief recap of what the person said (i.e. JT: "need a rationale that anyone understands") 	
Step Three	<p><i>Discuss the set of questions below with your group.</i> Use this discussion to help craft 3 discussion goals for yourself. Take a few moments to write these down and then share them with the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, what insights do you want to share with others in collaborative discussions? What insights would you like to gain from others? What perceptions do you want to create in the minds of others about your contributions? What contributions do you want to make to the tone and effectiveness of the discussion? How do you want others to articulate about the ways you contributed to the conversation? 	25 min
Step Four	<p><i>Discussion Tricks</i></p> <p>Even with your goals in mind, it is hard sometimes to figure out how best to enter a discussion. Sometimes it is helpful to develop comfort with phrases designed to help you enter a discussion, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I would like to build on what (name) said" "I have information that may be helpful" "I have another perspective that may be helpful" "Let me share an idea and get your reaction" "Here is what I'm hearing" <p>These intros can help you lead into your comments in a way that makes them sound less like assertions and more like contributions to the discussion. Take a few moments to <i>generate additional phrases</i> within your group.</p> <p>If time permits, generate an additional list that addresses body language. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean-in Sit or stand with hands folded Eye-contact Nod or don't nod head 	10 min
Step Five	<p><i>Commit to intentional practice:</i></p> <p>Using an Index Card, write down the goals and Discussion Tricks you identified as most important. Keep this card with you and refer to it before engaging in future discussions. As you gain more experience, add additional goals and tricks to the card.</p>	5 min

Reflection Assignment

- As you reflect on this activity, what did you learn about strategies you can use to improve your confidence in expressing your beliefs?
- What strategies can you use to help others in the discussion become more comfortable in expressing their beliefs?

Practice Journal

This week, take notice of your discussion habits and the person you project during discussion. Comment on the following as they relate to expressing your beliefs:

- Strength of your voice
- The timing of your contributions
- Connecting your comments to the contributions from others
- Eye Contact
- Nervousness
- Comfort with the reaction of others in the discussion

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- Jack Byrd, “Sacrificing for Your Beliefs” (Forthcoming)
- [The Kindly Brontosaurus by Jessica Winter](#)