Activity 1.3 Anticipating Conflict and Forming Group Guidelines [1]

Description

This activity empowers group members to anticipate potential conflict in group discussions and create guidelines that will address these concerns and bring out the best characteristics of the group.

Learning Goals

- Anticipate group dynamics with a specific focus on potential group conflict.
- Work together as a group to establish guiding principles.

Practice (55 minutes)

Step One	If the group completed [Activity 1.1 What is Collaborative Learning](#), then use the lists of positive and negative attributes as a starting point for this activity. Or, have the group generate a list of both positive and negative attributes of a collaborative experience. Record this list.	**10 min**
Step Two	**In pairs or small groups**, *discuss which of these negative attributes give us most concern.* Which are most likely to occur in our discussions? What's missing from this list?	**10 min**
Step Three	*Repeat Step Two but discuss positive attributes.* Which attributes would make for the most ideal discussion environment? What would you add to this list?	**10 min**
Step Four	**Regroup** as a whole and discuss key positive and negative attributes. *Discuss how these might be captured in 4-5 guiding principles*. Record responses and share out the final list. For example: 1. Make room for everyone to be heard. Listen to understand. 2. Bring your positive attitude and energy. Have fun! 3. Be respectful of different opinions. We are not always going	**10 min**

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[1] **Citation for this activity:** Shannon Hartman (2023). Anticipating Conflict and Forming Group Guidelines. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit.* Retrieved from https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-1-introduction-to-collaborat

	to agree and that is a good thing (unless your values or opinions dehumanize me). 4. Care for the people in the room. Practice social sensitivity: be empathetic, be supportive, pick up on cues and body language.	
Step Five	**Debrief** as a group. ● How often should we revisit this list? ● What should be our process if someone violates our stated principles? ● When are guidelines limiting and/or unproductive? ● How might we adjust in anticipation to these concerns?	**15 min**

Reflection Assignment

● How important are guiding principles for group discussion? Can you think of a time when you wished principles were described upfront? How would the discussion have been different? How important is it to manage expectations in discussions? When is it a bad thing or too constricting?
● What are some more radical guiding principles that you would like to see implemented if only as an experiment?

Practice Journal

This week, use these guiding principles in another group discussion or encounter (work, home, school, etc.). Did you notice your discussion behavior change? Does it matter if others are unaware of the principles guiding your participation? Did others notice a change in your behavior? How or where else might you incorporate these or other principles?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

● Forthcoming