

Activity 1.8 Evaluating Your Discussion Style¹

Description

This activity is designed to help discussion participants to reflect on their own styles and needs during a discussion. It can also serve as pre-discussion preparation for instructors or community facilitators. The survey can help instructors/facilitators to better understand and support individual and/or group needs.

Learning Goals

- Develop deeper understanding of how we show up and present ourselves in discussions
- Develop greater awareness and empathy for different discussion styles and needs

Practice (55 minutes)

Step One	Gather information on discussion participants' discussion styles and needs using this digital Evaluating Your Discussion Style questionnaire . Tip: Sign in to a Google account to make a copy of the above google form (click Make a Copy). Once you have a copy of the form, you can modify it to fit your needs. Responses will be sent directly to you. Tip: If possible, have participants complete the survey prior to the group gathering or beginning of a certificate program. To review the questionnaire in advance, please click here to download the document .	Pre
Step Two	Review overall group trends or tendencies. No single person or response should be noted in front of the group. When reviewing as a group, responses should be considered anonymous. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do most people in this group self-identify? (introvert/extrovert/ambivert)• What are the ideal group sizes for this cohort?• What are some general discussion participation trends?• What are some common fears or points of anxiety?• How can we best support members in this group?	20 min

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Ritu Thomas (2023). Evaluating Your Discussion Style. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-1-introduction-to-collaborat>

Step Three	<i>Allow for quiet reflection and writing.</i> Ask participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What stands out most to you when reviewing our group responses?• What can you take away from this feedback?	5 min
Step Four	<i>In pairs or small groups (3-4 ppl),</i> ask participants to share the 3 most important things that they would like others to know about their discussion style. Note: They only need to share what they are comfortable sharing, they may not have 3 items. They can communicate this verbally or in writing. Tip: Adjust the group size according to the survey feedback. For example, if most participants prefer working in pairs then create groups of 2.	20 min
Step Five	<i>Debrief as a full group.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What surprised you most about the group survey feedback?• What similarities or differences stood out in your small groups?• Again, what can we do as a group to support different discussion styles?	10 min

Reflection Assignment

- How comfortable were you sharing your discussion style and needs with others?
- How effective were the discussions at helping you improve your awareness of your own and others' discussion styles?
- Did learning about these discussion styles and discussing how the group can be structured to support different styles help to create a sense of safety? Do you think you can bring your authentic self to discussions in this group?

Practice Journal

This week, think about how you might find out more about the personalities and communication styles of people you interact or collaborate with at your work, school, and/or community. Reflect on and share your own needs/style. Use this information to help create a more welcoming space for everyone to discuss.

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [The Message Box Exercise - article by Tanya Tarr](#)