

Activity 4.8 Expressing Beliefs with Confidence & Humility

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Description

This activity helps participants develop strategies for better expressing their ideas in group settings with confidence but, also, humility. Participants will practice how to respond to disagreement productively and learn persistent but non-threatening discussion practices.

Learning Goals

- Consider unintentional practices that hold us back from fully participating in discussions.
- Identify strategies to more fully contribute in a way that balances self-contributions and contributions from others.

Instructions (50 minutes)

Set Up	Prepare for the Activity Organize participants into pairs or small groups (3-4 ppl). Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.	
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¹ **Citation for this activity:** Jack Byrd (2023). Expressing Beliefs with Confidence & Humility. In Hartman and Byrd (Eds), The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/activities/module-4>

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<p>Step One</p>	<p>Generate a List of Obstacles</p> <p>In small groups or pair shares, invite participants to 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).</p> <p>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>	<p>5 min</p>
<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Brainstorm Strategies</p> <p>In the same group, invite participants to identify their top 10 obstacles and generate possible strategies for overcoming 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. ● 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") 	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Step Three</p>	<p>Individually Craft Discussion Goals and Share</p> <p>Using the previous discussion as a springboard, invite participants to individually reflect on 1-3 discussion goals that they would like to set for themselves. Ask them to take a few moments to write these down and then share them with the group.</p> <p>Possible prompts for 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? <p>Participants are invited to revise their goals after the deeper discussion.</p>	<p>20 min</p>

<p>Step Four</p>	<p>Generate Discussion Phrases as a Full Group</p> <p>Come back together as a full group and share that 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” ● “May I share an idea? I’d love to hear your reaction” ● “Here is what I’m hearing” <p>These phrases offer non-threatening entry points into most discussions.</p> <p>Take a few moments and ask participants to generate additional phrases with the full group. Record on a board or flipchart.</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 	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Step Five</p>	<p>Debrief as a Full Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What were some obstacles and strategies your group generated? ● Where do we see commonality? ● Take a look at your personal goals. How might you revise or change these goals after this activity? ● What can you all do to commit to your discussion goals? How can you support one another? 	<p>5 min</p>

Reflection Journal

- 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: the strength of your voice, the timing of your contributions, connecting your comments to the contributions from others, eye contact, nervousness, and your comfort with the reaction of others in the discussion.

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [The Kindly Brontosaurus](#): Winter, Jessica. “The Kindly Brontosaurus.” *Slate*, The Slate Group LLC, 14 Aug. 2013, slate.com/human-interest/2013/08/the-kindly-brontosaurus-the-amazing-prehistoric-posture-that-will-get-you-whatever-you-want.html. Accessed 8 Sep. 2023.
- [Uncertainty as Strength](#): Duke, Annie. “Why Being Uncertain is a Hidden Strength.” *Big Think*, Freethink Media, Inc., 9 Oct., 2023, bigthink.com/the-well/the-power-of-saying-i-dont-know/?.

Activity Cluster

4.8 Expressing Beliefs with
Confidence & Humility

[4.6 Asking Questions to
Promote Curiosity](#)