

Activity 2.1 Promoting Curiosity

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Description

This activity illustrates how curiosity can be enhanced by the use of prompts to exercise the mind. These prompts are designed to explore dimensions of an issue which may not be evident upon initial review.

Learning Goals

- Practice using curiosity prompts to expand how we see an issue.
- Understand the value of reframing narratives of problems into narratives of possibility.

Instructions (60 minutes)

Set Up	<p>Prepare for the Activity</p> <p>Organize participants into pairs or small groups (3-5 ppl).</p> <p>Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.</p>	
Step One	<p>Introduce Curiosity Prompts</p> <p>Developing curiosity requires a mental workout similar to the physical workout that many people follow. The practice of being curious is a daily activity. The basic building blocks to becoming curious are to keep these 4 prompts in mind and use them in thinking about everyday encounters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if... • Think about... • Can we imagine... • Why is that true? 	10 min

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Jack Byrd (2023). Promoting Curiosity. In Hartman and Byrd (Eds), The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/activities/module-2>

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	<p>In small groups, try out these prompts on a familiar topic. This may be a topic relevant to your class or community.</p> <p>Provide an article or headline and then invite each group to use the first curiosity prompt to explore the topic. Each group should identify a recorder who will capture “What if…” statements.</p> <p>Encourage the groups not to discuss or critique contributions. Instead, the goal is to generate a broad list of “What if…” possibilities on the topic.</p> <p>Facilitator Tip: The list should be exploratory only. There should be no critical evaluation of any item on the list at this time. Be bold and imaginative. Try not to censor or self-censor responses.</p>	
Step Two	<p>Practice Curiosity Prompts</p> <p>Develop similar bulleted lists for the other three curiosity prompts. Again, suspend critical judgment. If time is limited, select only one or two curiosity prompts.</p>	20 min
Step Three	<p>Develop Curiosity Questions</p> <p>Once the lists are complete, ask participants to develop curiosity questions that combine similar items from each of the lists. The curiosity question would expand possibilities. It may begin with “Would it be possible to…” or “Wouldn’t it be amazing if…”</p> <p>Invite the groups to create at least three curiosity questions.</p> <p>Facilitator Tip: Don’t try to answer the curiosity questions. The idea is to open possibilities and not be tied down by anticipated responses.</p>	20 min
Step Four	<p>Debrief as a Full Group</p> <p>Reconvene as a large group and invite each small group to share one curiosity question. Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What common themes are emerging across our lists or curiosity questions? • Which curiosity prompt was most helpful in thinking about the issue in new ways? Why? • How important was working with others for this activity? Would you have had equal results if completed alone? How important are others in promoting curiosity? 	10 min

Reflection Journal

- Reflect on the following quote: “What I have is a malevolent curiosity. That’s what drives my need to write and what probably leads me to look at things a little askew. I do tend to take a different perspective from most people.” –David Bowie
- Where does curiosity come from? Are some people just naturally curious? What sort of experiences cultivate curiosity? What sort of individual traits encourage curiosity?
- How important are others in cultivating or encouraging curiosity? How might a group support curiosity? When or how does a group discourage curiosity?

Practice Journal

This week, practice using curiosity prompts in your daily routine. You may want to think about how you use it within your own internal dialogue and also how you can incorporate curiosity prompts in your group interactions. Reflect on what sort of impact, if any, these prompts had in your daily routines.

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Harnessing Curiosity](#): Valji, Ashvanti and Matthias Gruber. “Curiosity: we’re studying the brain to help you harness it.” *The Conversation*. The Conversation US, Inc., 13 Sep. 2019, theconversation.com/curiosity-were-studying-the-brain-to-help-you-harness-it-122351. Accessed 25 Aug. 2023.

Activity Cluster

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[4.6 Asking Questions to Promote Curiosity](#)