

Activity 3.2 Critical Feeling in Discussions

Submitted by Jack Byrd, Jr.¹

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Description

Being aware of the emotional charge of a discussion is important. This involves being aware of personal emotional reactions as well as the reactions of others. This activity helps participants to reflect on their own emotional reactions while also asking questions to better understand the emotions of others.

Learning Goals

- Develop deeper awareness of how feelings are aroused and redirected within discussions.
- Become less susceptible to emotional manipulation while also deepening empathy.

Instructions (55 minutes)

<p>Set Up</p>	<p>Prepare for the Activity</p> <p>Create a slide deck with approximately 10 photos that are likely to evoke an emotional response. These photos can be specific to the group or focused on current events. See Sample Slide Deck by Jessica Friedrichs.</p> <p>Organize participants into small groups (3-6 ppl).</p> <p>Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.</p>	
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¹ **Citation for this activity:** Jack Byrd (2023). Critical Feeling in Discussions. In Hartman and Byrd (Eds), The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/activities/module-3>

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<p>Step One</p>	<p>Showcase Photos</p> <p>Show photos or slides one at a time. After each photo, ask participants to reflect on what level of emotional reaction they have to each image.</p> <p>They can do this by silently jotting down notes or they can share their reactions by holding up pieces of colored paper: red (strong), orange (moderate), or yellow (weak).</p>	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Dive Deeper into Emotional Reflection</p> <p>In small groups or pairs, encourage participants to dive deeper. Beyond the level of emotion, what specific emotions were aroused by the images?</p> <p>Encourage participants to explain their emotional responses and some context for the response. Focus on 3-4 images.</p> <p>Facilitator Tip: If additional support is needed, share the Emotion Wheel (included in the slide deck) to help identify and name emotional responses.</p>	<p>15 min</p>
<p>Step Three</p>	<p>Practice in Full Group Discussion</p> <p>Come back together as a full group and introduce a relevant discussion prompt.</p> <p>Allow the discussion to unfold as normal but instruct participants to use their colored pieces of paper to indicate how their emotions are registering during the discussion.</p> <p>Pause the discussion at crucial points (when many participants are holding red cards, for example) to pause and discuss why emotions are changing in the group discussion.</p>	<p>20 min</p>
<p>Step Four</p>	<p>Debrief as a Full Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What role do emotions play in the discussion? ● When are emotions good for the discussion and when might they be bad for the discussion? ● Did any of the emotional responses surprise you? 	<p>10 min</p>

Reflection Journal

- How might your emotions limit the ability to hear other perspectives?
- How might noticing or registering the emotional charge of a group help you to navigate the group discussion?

Practice Journal

This week, take notice of which issues, topics, or processes invoked a strong emotional response from you. How did you show (or hide) this emotional response? How might you redirect or channel this emotional response in a productive way?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Discussion Sensitivity](#): Byrd, Jack. "Discussion Sensitivity." *Interactivity Foundation*, 21 Oct. 2020, www.interactivityfoundation.org/discussion-sensitivity/. Accessed 3 Sep. 2023.
A short blog post about recognizing outside perspectives as a way to consider alternative viewpoints in difficult situations. Recognizing a wider set of world views forces participants to be more tolerant in discussion.

Activity Cluster

3.2 Critical Feeling in
Discussions

[3.1 Critical Thinking in
Discussions](#)