

# Activity 1.5 The Role of Values in Collaborative Discussion

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## Description

This activity encourages participants to reflect upon and identify their personal values and to explore the role that values play in group discussions.

## Learning Goals

- Identify different kinds of values that are commonly embedded in a discussion.
- Better understand how personal values can inform contributions in discussions.

## Instructions (60 minutes)

<b>Set Up</b>	<p><b>Prepare for the Activity</b></p> <p>Organize participants into small groups (5-6 ppl).</p> <p>Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.</p>	
<b>Step One</b>	<p><b>Craft Three Individual Value Statements</b></p> <p>Offer a few minutes for each participant to quietly craft their own value statements. Share the following prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What values are most important to you as a person? For example,</li> </ul>	<b>10 min</b>

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

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	<p>maybe it is self-sufficiency, environmental sustainability, or justice. Write down your top values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your top three values and craft value statements. For example, “I value personal responsibility. I believe that I, alone, am responsible for my actions.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> If participants are struggling to craft a value statement, ask them to think back to a situation where they demonstrated or acted upon a value that they held as important. Invite them to use this example to develop a general value statement from this experience. For example, if they confessed to telling a lie that they had gotten away with, then maybe their value statement is, “I value honesty. I believe it is important to tell the truth even when you don’t have to.”</p>	
<p><b>Step Two</b></p>	<p><b>Share Value Statements</b></p> <p>Within small groups, ask participants to share their value statements with at least one other person. Discussion partners can ask questions about value statements but they should not make comments or share judgments. For example, discussion partners might ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does this value come from? Was it taught to you or did you learn it some other way?</li> <li>• Can you share with me a time when you acted on this value?</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 min</b></p>
<p><b>Step Three</b></p>	<p><b>Practice Listening for Values in Discussions</b></p> <p>Craft a discussion prompt that is relevant for your group, or select one from the list of <a href="#">What IF... Scenarios</a>.</p> <p>In small groups, encourage participants to engage in honest discussion for about ten minutes. Allow enough time for everyone in the group to respond to the prompt.</p> <p>Ask each group to pause the discussion and take a step back. Instruct participants to not worry about who was most convincing. Instead, as a group, ask them to identify which values informed their opinions. Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which values informed the perspectives of people in your group?</li> <li>• How might someone else, not present in your group, respond to the prompt? What values would be informing their opinion?</li> </ul>	<p><b>30 min</b></p>
<p><b>Step Four</b></p>	<p><b>Debrief as a Full Group</b></p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does shifting the focus on values change the way you engage with others in discussion?</li> <li>• Which values seem most common and which seem to be outliers or less common? What does this tell us about our group?</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 min</b></p>

## Reflection Journal

- How does understanding or, at least, being able to name the values of others help you to engage in group discussion? How does it impact the discussion?
- As you reflect on the discussion, revise your own values statements as you feel appropriate. What changed? Why?

## Practice Journal

This week, observe a contentious discussion. Perhaps it is a discussion in class, at home, at work, or on the television. Don't think about who is right or wrong but examine how values are playing out in the discussion. What are the key values held by each person? How are these values playing out in the discussion? If you were a discussant, what would you do differently?

## Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Values in Discussion](#): Byrd, Jack. "Values-Centered Discussions." *Interactivity Foundation*, 6 May 2020, [www.interactivityfoundation.org/values-centered-discussions/](http://www.interactivityfoundation.org/values-centered-discussions/). Accessed 25 Aug. 2023.

## Activity Cluster

1.5 The Role of Values in Collaborative Discussion

[1.6 Understanding Values in Context](#)