

Activity 1.8 Evaluating Your Discussion Style

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Description

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

Learning Goals

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

Instructions (55 minutes)

<p>Set Up</p>	<p>Prepare for the Activity</p> <p>Gather information on discussion participants' discussion styles and needs using the Evaluating Your Discussion Style Questionnaire.</p> <p>Facilitator 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 (and only) to you. If possible, have participants complete the survey prior to the group gathering or beginning of a certificate program.</p>	
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¹ **Citation for this activity:** Ritu Thomas (2023). Evaluating Your Discussion Style. 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>Step One</p>	<p>Share Group Assessment</p> <p>If participants completed the survey in advance, share the group's assessment of their discussion styles (do not share individual results). Share a visual of the general tendencies and trends you see in the collective results. Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do most people in this group self identify? Does this surprise you? • According to our collective feedback, how do most of us like to organize in groups? Does this surprise you? • What are some general discussion participation trends? • What are some common fears or points of anxiety? How could we anticipate and address these as a group? • How can we best support all members in this group? <p>If participants did not complete the survey in advance, then distribute hard copies of the Evaluating Your Discussion Style Questionnaire and invite participants to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did these questions encourage self reflection on your own discussion styles? • Were you surprised by any of your responses? • Not knowing how other people responded, how might we use this activity to help us create a more inclusive discussion space? 	<p>30 min</p>
<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Create Space for Quiet Reflection and Writing</p> <p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stands out most to you when reviewing our group responses or hearing how group members shared their thoughts about creating an inclusive discussion space? • What can you take away from this peer feedback? 	<p>5 min</p>
<p>Step Three</p>	<p>Share Discussion Styles</p> <p>In pairs or small groups (3-4 ppl), ask participants to share the three most important things that they would like others to know about their discussion style. Note that they only need to share what they are comfortable sharing and they may not have three items. Invite pairs or small groups to decide how they will share this information: verbally, real time writing, asynchronously after some time to process, etc.</p> <p>Facilitator Tip: Adjust the group size according to the survey feedback. For example, if most participants prefer working in pairs then create groups of two.</p>	<p>10 min</p>

Step Four	Debrief as a Full Group <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? Why does this matter? 	10 min
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Reflection Journal

- How comfortable were you sharing your discussion style and needs with others?
- How effective was the survey and/or discussions at helping you improve your awareness of your own and others' discussion styles?
- What would it take for you to feel psychologically safe and able to bring your authentic self to 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](#): Tarr, Tanya. "How This Four-Minute Exercise Can Create A Winning Perspective In Negotiation." *Forbes*, Forbes Media LLC, 3 Aug. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/tanyatarr/2017/08/03/how-this-4-minute-exercise-can-create-a-winning-perspective-in-negotiation/?sh=22e490474e94. Accessed 23 Aug. 2023.

Activity Cluster

[1.7 Taking Inventory of Collaborative Discussion Skills](#)

1.8 Evaluating Your Discussion Style