



## Overview



**Topic:** The role of differences within a community, whether they are visible or not

**Audience:** A group of adult/mature people who are (or want to become) a community of support to one another. Works well with communities formed around a shared identity. This activity invites and addresses difference in spaces otherwise focused on similarity.

**Conceptual Objective:** Participants will understand that communities may be formed around shared identities and experiences, but differences are also present within communities. Some identities and experiences may be implicitly privileged over others in a group. This can threaten the community. Instead of basing membership in the group solely on similarities, the community can choose to come together as a group where everyone's experiences are listened to and valued.

**Experiential Objective:** Each person will express their own experiences and ideas within the context of a community -- even the scary ideas. Participants will recognize differences in the group and ultimately generate a more powerful and resilient community where individuals feel they can show their full selves.

**Facilitator Prep:** Review the slide deck and assess your own comfort talking about these topics. Edit the topics as needed, based on your context and the issues you're able to speak to. Consider a co-facilitator.

**Related Content:** This workshop can be a good start to any of the other Us or Now themed workshops. It is a useful place to begin a longer day-long workshop.

**Materials:** Computer, projector, and PowerPoint slide deck.

## Procedure

### INTRODUCTIONS (3 MIN)

- Presenters introduce themselves to the group, participants introduce themselves to a neighbor.

### AGREEMENTS (5 MIN)

- Invite the group to suggest agreements to create a safe discussion environment. They may include:
  1. Stay engaged. (Remove distractions.)
  2. Speak your truth. (Talk about your own self, life, and story, rather than those of others.)
  3. Experience discomfort. (Stay in the conversation, even when you are uncomfortable.)
  4. Expect/accept non-closure. (Some things will remain unclear.)
  5. Ouch! (We may feel hurt by what we hear -- please speak up when this happens.)

### OPENING (2 MIN) (set the stage, introduce the topic)

- Set the stage and introduce the topic, perhaps including the following comments:
 

Often, communities form because we have something in common -- an identity, interest, experience, or shared commitment. But differences are also present, even if we come together around what makes us the same. Sometimes it is easier not to talk about what makes us different. However, if we want everyone here to feel like they can truly be themselves and fully engage in this group, it's helpful to talk about who we each are and what we believe, even if we disagree, so that we can know whether we're free to fully be ourselves here. This activity will allow us to explore our similarities and differences in a fun, active way.

### WHERE DO YOU STAND? (30 MIN)

- Show the PowerPoint (<http://mncampuscompact.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2016/10/where-do-you-stand.pptx>).
- Slide by slide, ask participants to move to reflect their stance on the topic shown. They can stand in the middle to show ambivalence, a little to one side to show a slight preference, or at a far end to show a strong opinion.

- ❑ After the group arranges itself for a given slide, ask several people to share why they're standing where they are.
- ❑ Be mindful of calling on different people, standing in different places along the continuum of answers with each slide.
- ❑ Refer to the agreements to help the group navigate discomfort.

## DEBRIEF (10 MIN)

Stand or sit in a circle, if possible.

Facilitate a full group discussion, or (if you have more time or think it will work best for your group) have participants discuss their reflections in pairs.

- ❑ What was it like being open about your opinions?
- ❑ What did it feel like when you were in a majority? In a small minority (perhaps even alone)?
- ❑ Did you ever feel yourself influenced to change where you stood based on where others went? What happened?
- ❑ Did you notice that within this group some opinions were privileged? What is it like when we have a system where certain values and experiences are privileged?
- ❑ Has our community here today become homogenized? Is that good or bad?

## CLOSING (5 MIN)

Some identities and experiences may be implicitly privileged over others in a group. This can threaten the community. Instead of basing membership in the group on similarities, the community could choose to come together as a group where everyone's experiences are listened to and valued.

Going around circle, ask each participant to share one word reflecting how they are feeling now.

## TAKEAWAYS (5 MIN)

- ❑ Note the tools participants can re-use:
  - use the agreements for dialogue
  - use the "human barometer" technique (having people move to different places in a room) to show the range of opinions in a group
  - use this facilitation template
- ❑ Ask each participant to identify one additional takeaway (e.g., an insight, a specific commitment to action, a question to think more about).

"Where Do You Stand?" is adapted by Minnesota Campus Compact staff based on workshops developed by Michael Birchard and Gerry Heurth at North Hennepin Community College. The agreements in this workshop have been adapted from Glen Singleton's Courageous Conversations.

We welcome your suggestions for improving this guide further for future trainings. We also welcome you to use it and adapt it for your own trainings, subject to the terms below.

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Campus Compact  
Minnesota

## Survey for "Where Do You Stand?" Workshop

Thank you for taking time to attend this Civic Agency workshop. We are very interested in receiving your feedback. (Alternatively, you may also complete this survey online at <http://tinyurl.com/ja28zek>). If you have participants complete evaluations on paper, please scan them and send them to [info@mncampuscompact.org](mailto:info@mncampuscompact.org).

### Your information

**Primary Role:** Student, Faculty, Staff, Administrator, Community Organization Staff, AmeriCorps/VISTA

**Institution** (College, University, Organization):

**Date:**

<b>Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following about your experience with the Civic Agency workshop you participated in</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt welcomed and included.					
I learned about one or more leadership tools or resources.					
The tools and exercises I learned about are valuable.					
I feel capable of using the tools and exercises I learned about.					
I intend to use at least one thing I learned here.					
Other participants in the workshop helped me see things from a different perspective.					
I developed new or deeper connections with others.					

**Is there anything you would like to tell us about the workshop?**