

Introduction:

Sense of belonging is referred to as the extent to which a member feels accepted within a community (O'Keeffe, 2013). This acceptance only has the potential to be felt when members of a community interact and communicate in healthy and meaningful ways with one another. In this activity, participants will learn how positive interaction across differences can improve overall sense of belonging.

Facilitator Notes:

Be aware of students who may find this activity challenging for reasons of abilities. You might consider generating topic cards (in [Downloads](#)) in Braille depending on classroom needs.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the role of interaction and communication in fostering sense of belonging.
2. Identify the differences and commonalities among people from different cultures or backgrounds.

Time:

25 minutes.

Group Size:

Pairs.

Materials:

Topic cards (in [Downloads](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Polarization
- Minimization
- Adaptation

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:**Cultural Self-Awareness**

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Activity Instructions:

1. Utilizing the Sense of Belonging PowerPoint (in [Downloads](#)), introduce the activity to participants.



2. Pass out topic cards (in [Downloads](#)), one for each participant.
3. Next, you can either instruct participants to pair up amongst themselves, or you can set up the room prior to facilitating the activity in such a way that half of the participants remain seated while the other half rotates around the room to speak with a different individual for each conversation.
4. Instruct pairs to decide on a topic to discuss between the two cards they each bring to the conversation. Set a timer for 2 minutes for partners to talk about the chosen topic.
5. Once the time is up, instruct the partners to switch topic cards. Then, you can either instruct participants to find a new partner themselves, or ask them to rotate to the next seated participant (with everyone moving in the same direction within the classroom).
6. Repeat the above instructions until each participant has spoken to at least 5 other participants.
7. Once participants have finished speaking with their partners, bring the group back together for a final debrief, asking the following questions:
 - How did you feel while doing this activity?
 - What surprised you about this activity?
 - What connections did you make with others?
 - What was the role of commonalities and differences in your connection with partners?
 - How would you define sense of belonging? What creates sense of belonging for you? How did this activity inform your understanding of sense of belonging?
 - What aspects of this activity might you bring into your personal/academic/professional life?

Related Tools:

- [Different Similarities](#)
- [First Impressions](#)
- [Sense of Belongingness Scale](#)
- [Six Differences](#)