

WE HAVE IN COMMON

MATERIALS |

paper and writing utensils

OPTIONAL: create an accompanying handout

OBJECTIVES | The objectives of this activity are to help participants build community by identifying how much they have in common and to help them practice engaging in dialogue with one another.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS |

Ask participants to fold their paper into thirds or draw two lines down a piece of paper to make three columns. Alternatively pass out a handout you have created that is already divided in this way.

Invite participants to find a partner they do not know well or use one of the grouping techniques to put participants in pairs.

At the top the first column, participants should write their partner's name.

Give the pair two minutes to write in the column all of the similarities they have that they can identify (physical characteristics, commonalities between their families, what they both like or dislike, things they have, places they have visited, etc.). Both partners should write the commonalities they find on their own paper.

Participants should repeat the process two more times, putting the name of each new partner at the top of the column and the commonalities they share below.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS |

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- Was there anything surprising about what you had in common? How many similarities did you find the first time? The last time? Did it get easier? Why might that be?
- How can recognizing our commonalities help us navigate conflict?



SUPPORTING MEDIA |

<https://www.michiganlearning.org/recognizing-commonalities/>

NOTES |

EXTENSION: For the second and third rounds ask participants to find 1-2 commonalities that were also shared with their partner from the first round. In the end, all 3 people can note what they have in common.

This activity is not appropriate for groups in which participants cannot read or write.