

# Hopes and Concerns

## Summary

This activity prepares students to be in constructive dialogue together. Students will have the opportunity to share their hopes and their concerns around engaging in constructive dialogue about issues they care about, and listen to others do the same.

## Outcomes

Students will:

- Be able to anticipate the opportunities and challenges of an upcoming dialogue or conversation across lines of difference
- Become comfortable sharing their hopes and concerns about engaging across lines of difference with peers – a practice called “talking about talking” that support learning and growth in constructive dialogue

## Details

<b>For Who?</b>	Any age, any experience level with constructive dialogue
<b>How Long?</b>	20-30 minutes
<b>Supplies Needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stickie notes or index cards</li><li>• Pens or markers for all participants</li></ul>

## Activity Purpose

Naming hopes and concerns helps any group prepare for constructive dialogue. This activity can enable students to plan how they will engage in that conversation based on how each other share about their hopes or their concerns. It can also be a way to invite students to invest in the dialogue process, and could be paired with [Co-Creating](#)

[Resilient Group Norms](#), which is another way to help students think about the type of learning space they want to create together.

## Detailed Agenda

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### Set the Stage With a Silent Reflection

- Invite students to reflect on disagreements they may have encountered in the past through a silent or written reflection.
- Suggested language:
  - *“Think about a conversation that did not go as well as you wanted or hoped. It could be a conversation from a class, or with a friend, or with a stranger. What happened? How did you feel?”*
  - *“What could you have done differently in that moment? What do you wish the other person did differently?”*

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### Turn To This Group

- Next, take a second to pause. Remind students that the goal of this dialogue experience is not to *replicate* those experiences, but to create a *new* type of conversation.
- Suggested language:
  - *“Now, think about our group. When it comes to engaging in constructive dialogue about issues that are important to you, what do you hope for?”*
  - *“What do you worry about most when you think about these types of conversations?”*

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### Write Hopes and Concerns

- Instruct students to write **HOPES** on one sticky note or index card, and **CONCERNS** on another sticky note or index card, quietly.
- Students can write as many hopes or concerns as they would like.
- All contributions should be anonymous – no names!

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### Share With Others

There are two possible ways to have students hear one another’s hopes and concerns: a gallery walk or an anonymous share-out.

- **Option 1: Gallery Walk**

- Have students post the sticky notes on the walls of the room at eye-level. The instructor can set up different spaces for **HOPES** and **CONCERNS**.
- Students can take 10 minutes to wander quietly around the room to read what others have written.
- **Option 2: Anonymous Share-Out**
  - Have students fold their index cards and put them in a bowl, one bowl for **HOPES** and one bowl for **CONCERNS**.
  - Mix the index cards up and re-distribute them in two rounds.
  - Ask students to go around the circle and read aloud what is on their index card.
  - This way, students are hearing each other's hopes and concerns, but all anonymously.

## Wrap-Up

### Debrief Questions

Ask students to share their reflections in the full group or in smaller groups.

- What surprised you about what you heard?
- What did you learn?
- What hopes resonated with you?
- What concerns resonated with you?
- How do you think you'll achieve some of those hopes?
- How do you think you as a group will mitigate, or avoid, some of those concerns?