

# Hopes and Fears

## Summary

This is an opening activity that prepares students to be in constructive dialogue together. Students will reflect on and share out their hopes and their fears around engaging in constructive dialogue about issues they care about, and listen to others do the same.

## Outcomes

Students will:

- Express their own aspirations and needs, and will listen to the aspirations and needs of their peers
- Be able to anticipate the opportunities and challenges of an upcoming dialogue or conversation across lines of difference
- Be able to plan how they want to support the upcoming dialogue or conversations across lines of difference

## 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>• Stickers or index cards</li> <li>• Pens or markers for all participants</li> </ul>

## Activity Purpose

Naming hopes and fears helps any group prepare for constructive dialogue. This activity can enable students to plan how they will engage in that conversation. It can also be a great way to have students start to buy into the dialogue process, and could

be paired with norm-setting 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 mean something to you, what do you most hope for?”*
  - *“What do you worry about or fear most when you think about these types of conversations?”*

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### Write Hopes and Fears

- Instruct students to write **HOPES** on one sticky note or index card, and **FEARS** on another sticky note or index card, quietly.
- Students can write as many hopes or fears 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 fears: 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 **FEARS**.
  - 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 **FEARS**.
  - Mix the index cards up and re-distribute them in two rounds.
  - Ask students to go around the circle and read what is on their index card, aloud.
  - This way, students are giving voice to one another's anonymous hopes and fears.

## Wrap-Up

### Debrief Questions

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

- What surprised you about this activity?
- What did you learn about your peers?
- What hopes resonated with you?
- What fears 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 fears?