

Connecting and Communicating: Building Connection

Oftentimes, when we think of connecting with new people, we think that we have to immediately dive into deep conversation. In reality, building connection starts with small talk. How can we become more comfortable with it?



Building connections consists of getting to know ourselves while we get to know other people. When we show up to conversation, it can be challenging to manage expectations of connection while still being present in our interactions. In the space below, reflect on what challenges you experience when trying to connect with others.

As we reflect on our challenges, it is also important to remember that we can work on our ability to connect with others by remembering a couple of ideas:

1. We must be vulnerable to build connections. Vulnerability is all about being exposed emotionally, which can be intimidating. **Vulnerability** as an act of courage asks us to share our feelings, admit our mistakes, and speak about what we need. When we practice vulnerability, it helps us to build confidence in ourselves, fosters intimacy with others, and grants us space to generate self-acceptance and be more authentic.
2. **Authenticity** is another essential component to building healthy, genuine relationships. It can be easy for us to slip on masks and to act the way we are expected to. Being authentic means sharing our true selves with others, while inviting them to do the same. This curiosity, extended both internally and externally, constructs the foundation with which we shape our developing connections.

Thinking about vulnerability and authenticity, take a moment to reflect on how you show up as yourself in social spaces. What about your authenticity/vulnerability are you satisfied with? What are things you would like to change to feel more fulfilled with being authentic and vulnerable?

To practice vulnerability and authenticity, see the table of questions below. They are categorized by the depth of conversation they invite. We can start off with simpler questions and then progress to more complex questions when we feel more comfortable.

Inviting Connection		
If you could pick up a certain skill instantly, what would it be?	What is a glimmer (thing or moment that brought you joy, safety, peace) you have experienced recently?	Which season suits your personality best – Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter – and why?
What is one way that you are different from when you started college?	If you could be a certain age forever, what would it be?	If you could have unlimited supply of anything, what would it be?
Diving into Connection		
How do you feel cared for?	Give the person you are talking to a compliment involving their strengths. (Resist the urge to deflect, deny, or laugh in response)	What is one aspect of your identity/personality that you are proud of?
What is one thing you want to start doing in your relationships?	What is something your three closest friends/loved ones have in common?	How can someone make you feel seen/heard/understood?

<p>From the interaction you have had with the person doing this worksheet with you, what is one thing that you wish for them?</p>
<p>How did this conversation feel? Reflect on the experience, not by describing the conversation, but by writing about how you felt and/or what the conversation meant to you.</p>
<p>How can you incorporate elements of this worksheet into your daily life? As part of the closing reflection for this worksheet, we encourage you to welcome in the wishes you have sent out to others as wishes for yourself.</p>