

LEAN IN



ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

CONNECTION CARDS

Overview

Connection activities are focused on sharing personal stories and benefiting from your Circle's ideas, experiences, and support. The Connection Card activity uses a deck of cards to facilitate the process of sharing deep information with one another quickly through a series of questions. The goal of this activity is to get to know one another better by answering questions and sharing a lot of information fast—think of it as TableTopics for your Circle!

Meeting Goals

- Get to know yourself and your Circle on a deeper level
- Build trust with your Circle by opening up and sharing personal stories and experiences

Pre-Meeting Prep

- One member should purchase or print a deck of Connection Cards. For groups of twelve or more, we recommend using two decks of cards.
leanin.org/connection-cards
- Remind everyone to bring a copy of this PDF
- Remind everyone to bring her One Action update (if you're doing this)



Brought to you in partnership with...

Carole Robin from the Stanford Graduate School of Business and based on a similar activity originally developed by Stanford's Interpersonal Dynamics course faculty.

Meeting Agenda

🕒 Approx. 90-100 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

1 Check-In 🕒 Approx. 10-20 minutes
Warm up, catch up, and get going **p.4**

2 Connection Activities 🕒 Approx. 55 minutes
Share, connect, and grow together **p.5**

- **Activity 1: Connection Cards** 🕒 Approx. 40 minutes
Deepen your understanding of yourself and your fellow Circle members **p.5**
 - **Activity 2: Connection Card Debrief** 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes
Discuss what makes it easy or hard to share and the role of gender in sharing **p.7**
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3 One Action 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes
The little push you need to go for it **p.8**

4 Wrap Up 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes
What's next and a few final words **p.10**

Optional Member Materials

One Action Update, Vocabulary of Feelings **p.12**

Meeting Guide

Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 10-20 minutes

Step 1: Icebreaker

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less per member

A quick icebreaker is a great way to get people talking. One by one, complete the following statement:

One thing that helps me open up and feel close to others is ...

Listen carefully as each member takes a turn and say thank you when she's finished. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

Step 2: Member Updates

👥 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting; the goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

For example, a member update might go like this: *"Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action update]."*

Connection Activities

Share, connect, and grow together

🕒 Approx. 55 minutes for all activities

Activity 1: Connection Cards

🕒 Approx. 40 minutes

Before you jump into today's meeting, take a moment to review the setup, instructions, and guiding principles as a group.

Step 1: Set the Stage

👥 Group activity

🕒 Approx. 5-10 minutes

Setup

- For groups with more than twelve members, consider dividing your group into two smaller groups, each with its own deck, to maximize sharing.
- Separate the deck into two piles: one pile with question cards and one pile with trump cards.
- Trump cards are used to ask someone how she is feeling after she shares something personal. Using one demonstrates support and increase closeness within the group.
- Shuffle the question cards pile and place question cards facedown.
- Hand out one trump card to each player.

Rules

- Player 1 draws a question card, places it faceup, and answers the question.
- Player 2 either answers the same question as player 1 or draws a new card and answers that question.
- The next player answers a question on any card that's already been played or draws a new card. And so on...
- At any point, listeners can use a trump card to ask a player how she's feeling. The responding player answers by completing the sentence, "I am feeling ..."

The objective is to get through the deck and get as many answers out as possible (minimum two per person). Try to avoid asking a lot of follow-up questions once someone answers. The goal is to move

Activity 1: Connection Cards (cont.)

Recommendations:

- Each player should use her trump card no more than two times, depending on the length of the game.
- If all question cards have been drawn, shuffle the deck and start over.
- The Vocabulary of Feelings sheet (see page 13) has a great list of words you can reference if someone plays the trump card to ask you how you're feeling.

Agreements

Perhaps not surprisingly, the rules of this activity link directly back to the principles of a Circle. Take a moment to recommit to these principles:

- Maintain confidentiality (trust is critical to the success of any group!)
- Everyone participates
- Try to stretch outside your comfort zone

Step 2: Time to Play!



Group Activity



Approx. 30-35 minutes

It's time to start! Begin the Connection Card activity, going through as many rounds as you can in the allotted time.

Activity 2: Connection Card Debrief

 Group activity

 Approx. 15 minutes

As a full group, discuss the following questions, allowing people to contribute as they are moved to share.

- What helped you talk/share/risk higher levels of disclosure?
- What (if anything) got in your way of sharing, risk taking, or disclosing?
- Do you think there would have been a difference in the way you responded had this been a mixed gender group? (Or, for groups with male members, would there have been a difference if the group was more dominantly male?) Why or why not?
- How does this activity and discussion inform what you might do going forward?

One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

We recommend you close every activity by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

Step 1: Identify the action you’re going to take

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

Are you moved to action based on any of the cards that came up today? Pick a Connection Card that resonates with you and identify an action you can take before the next meeting related to this card.

For example, you might say: *“The card that read ‘Who’s had an impact on your life whom you haven’t thanked?’ made me think of my college research mentor. I plan to send her a card thanking her for her years of mentorship and sharing how it continues to impact me.”*

Alternatively, choose an action based on a thought or feeling that came up for you during the activity.

For example, you might say: *“I should open up more to my sister about what is really important to me to bring us closer together. I plan to call her this week and spend quality time catching up.”*

If you cannot decide on a card or action, feel free to use one of the following:

- Schedule time to catch up with a person you’ve been meaning to spend more time with before your next meeting.
- If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on? Make time for this three times before your next meeting.

What action do you commit to taking before the next meeting?

One Action (cont.)

Step 2: Share your One Action with your Circle



Group activity



1 minute or less per member

One by one, go around your Circle and share the action you commit to taking before the next meeting. Move quickly from member to member and consider cheering one another on as you go.

Housekeeping Note: We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 12 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update. Individually or as a group, you can decide to bring the worksheet to your next Circle meeting.

Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting: day and time, location, food and drink. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who's going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting and brainstorm improvements going forward.

Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 Approx. 1 minute or less

To punctuate the end of this meeting, go around your Circle one by one and each share three words that describe how you're feeling right now. Try using some words from your Vocabulary of Feelings sheet. (See page 13)

Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following pages for an optional member activity
and the Vocabulary of Feelings.

One Action Update

Use the following prompts to give your One Action update during your next meeting. You can even prepare your answers ahead to maximize your time with your Circle.

- This month, I chose to ...

Describe the activity you decided on

- Something I enjoyed about this was ...

Describe what you enjoyed

Vocabulary of Feelings (Abridged)

(Hammond Hepworth, & Smith, 1978, pp.86-87)

HAPPY	CARING	APPRECIATIVE	DEPRESSED	FEARFUL
glad contented satisfied gratified pleased cheerful excited enthusiastic delighted great	warm toward friendly like positive toward caring fond of respectful concern for close affection for	appreciative admiration thankful grateful valuing look up to esteem in awe INADEQUATE lacking confidence weak inadequate defeated overwhelmed ineffective lacking small worthless powerless inferior like a failure	unhappy down bad disappointed sad distressed upset demoralized discouraged pessimistic awful terrible dejected hopeless alienated in despair	nervous unsure hesitant shy worried uneasy embarrassed ill at ease doubtful uncomfortable self-conscious afraid scared apprehensive threatened distrustful risky awkward defensive intimidated vulnerable
CONFUSED	HURT	ANGRY	LONELY	GUILTY/ASHAMED
uncertain uncomfortable undecided curious disorganized troubled disconnected ambivalent disturbed puzzled trapped confused	put down neglected overlooked minimized let down unappreciated belittled overlooked abused criticized censured discredited disparaged laughed at ridiculed devalued mocked exploited wounded disgraced humiliated rejected	disgusted bugged turned off put out irked ticked off cross dismayed impatient resentful irritated annoyed upset with mad offended exasperated vindictive furious pissed off indignant bitter hateful	left out excluded lonesome distant aloof alienated estranged remote alone apart from others isolated abandoned all alone forsaken cut off	regretful wrong embarrassed at fault in error responsible for ashamed guilty remorseful to blame lost face demeaned exposed unforgivable humiliated disgraced degraded horrible mortified