

# 42 COMMON GROUND FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

 1h 40m

 PLENUM AND SMALL GROUPS

## DESCRIPTION

Values guide how people live, work, and act in their daily lives. They are an invisible force which drives our actions.

Often, we assume that working in the same field and same organization means that we share the same values, but this is not always the case. Sometimes, conflicts and problems can arise in an organization when people act on different values.

When you understand where your common ground is, what you agree or disagree on, where limits might be, and which topics are more sensitive, you can prevent interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings, and improve your teamwork.

## PREPARATION

Review **Background Paper:**  
Value List (30)

## MATERIALS

- Moderation Cards (green & red)
- Markers

## TOOLS

- **Background Paper:**  
Procedure U (29)
- Worksheet:**  
Value Matrix (23)



GROUNDWORK



VALUES

**STEP 1** **INDIVIDUALLY:** Fill in **Value Matrix (23)** 

Which values can you talk about with your family, your friends, within your organization, and in your society? For this exercise, “No-go’s” are values that you don’t feel comfortable talking about within a certain group, while “Go’s” are topics you can speak openly and comfortably about (e.g. in society you may feel uncomfortable discussing values like gender-equality, freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation, or freedom of religion, while with friends or colleagues these may be “normal” and comfortable topics about which you all agree). Write down your “No-go’s” and your “Go’s” by using red and green moderation cards. Then think about 5 examples you would like to share in a small group. **[15 MIN]**

**STEP 2** **IN SMALL GROUPS:** Present your examples and discuss them. Collect the values you want to take with you into the plenum (at least 4 per person; values can be doubled). **[20 MIN]**

**STEP 3** **IN PLENUM:** Create a “marketplace” situation by forming a circle of chairs. Designate one game director. The game director collects all the values from the small groups and redistributes 4 value cards to each person. After this, everyone begins trading their value cards with others by arguing why they want to have this value. The aim of the trading is that every person has a value set of 4 cards in the end that s/he can identify with. In the end, if there are value cards left over which no one has taken yet, you can exchange two of your value cards. Decide which values you would like to keep. **[40 MIN]**

**STEP 4** **IN SMALL GROUPS:** Look through your value sets: Where are commonalities and where do you see tensions between the value sets? **[15 MIN]**

**STEP 5** **IN PLENUM:** Pin your common values on a wall. This is your Common Ground. **[10 MIN]**



**FOLLOW UP**

If you have one problem in your organizational work which you would like to improve (e.g. decision-making). Explore solutions to this with **Method Card: Procedure U for Value-based Problem Solving (43)**.

Further reading:

The Common Cause Handbook, a guide to values and frames for campaigners, Community Organisers, Civil Servants, Activists, Funders, Politicians, and everyone in between.

Source: [www.valuesandframes.org](http://www.valuesandframes.org).