

# Group Discussions and Critical Thinking

## How can group discussions improve our critical thinking skills?

Adapted from LinkedIn : <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/how-can-group-discussions-improve-our-critical-cjvqe>

### **1 Diverse perspectives**

### **2 Challenging assumptions**

### **3 Stimulating creativity**

### **4 Fostering collaboration and communication**

#### **Overview**

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources and perspectives. It is a crucial skill for solving problems, making decisions, and communicating effectively. But how can we develop and enhance our critical thinking skills? One way is to engage in group discussions with other people who have different views, backgrounds, and experiences. In this article, we will consider how group discussions can improve our critical thinking skills in four ways: by exposing us to diverse perspectives, by challenging our assumptions, by stimulating our creativity, and by fostering our collaboration and communication skills.

#### **1 Diverse perspectives**

One of the benefits of group discussions is that they expose us to diverse perspectives that can enrich our understanding of a topic or issue. By listening to other people's opinions, arguments, and evidence, we can learn new facts, insights, and perspectives that we may not have considered before. We can also compare and contrast our own views with those of others, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of different views and positions. This can help us to broaden our horizons, deepen our knowledge, and sharpen our analyses.

#### **2 Challenging assumptions**

Another benefit of group discussions is that they challenge our assumptions and biases that may hinder our critical thinking. By encountering different viewpoints and perspectives, we can question our own beliefs, values, and assumptions, and examine whether they are based on sound reasoning, evidence, and logic. We can also test our arguments and hypotheses against those of

others, and see if they can withstand scrutiny and criticism. This can help us to avoid fallacies, errors, and prejudices, and to improve our accuracy, validity, and objectivity.

Everyone has biases. Group discussions and putting aside our ego is one of the best ways to check our cognitive biases and consider how they are influencing our thinking. Debating with others to see where we might be missing something, or where our blind spots are, is one of the most powerful things we can do. On the other hand, we also don't need to listen to every opinion out there. We should also apply critical thinking to what we're being told and the advice others offer us, because they may have biases, too.

### **3 Stimulating creativity**

A third benefit of group discussions is that they stimulate our creativity and innovation. By engaging in group discussions, we can generate and explore new ideas, solutions, and possibilities that may not have occurred to us individually. We can also build on, modify, or combine the ideas of others, and create synergies and connections that can lead to novel and original outcomes. This can help us to enhance our imagination, flexibility, and divergent thinking.

As noted above, group discussions bring together individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and expertise. This diversity fosters a rich pool of perspectives and knowledge. Each participant brings unique insights and ideas based on their distinct experiences and expertise, contributing to a broader range of creative solutions.

An essential part of stimulating creativity and innovation in group discussions is encouraging an environment and culture built upon respect, empathy, inclusiveness, and freedom. This approach enables anyone and everyone to speak up and share diverse perspectives, and it stimulates cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. The cornerstone of innovation is access to new ideas, and group discussions provide diverse opinions which may help individuals and groups to think “outside the box.”

### **4 Fostering collaboration and communication**

A fourth benefit of group discussions is that they foster our collaboration and communication skills. By participating in group discussions, we can learn how to [work effectively with others](#), respect different opinions, and cooperate towards a common goal. We can also learn how to communicate our thoughts clearly, persuasively, and respectfully, and how to listen actively, critically, and empathetically to others. This can help us to improve our interpersonal, social, and emotional skills.

### **Further consideration**

What other ways can group discussion help promote critical thinking?