



## real partnering

- purpose**
- To increase the participants' knowledge of themselves and their partners
  - To increase the participants' understanding of how to work together constructively

**time** 60 to 90 minutes

**group size** 6 to 14 participants; group size can be larger if the time is increased accordingly

- materials**
- Markers
  - Pencils and pens
  - Sheets of paper
  - Thick construction paper

**trainer note:** The room should be set up so that partners are sitting next to each other and facing the front of the room. If you set it up in a half-moon shape, the teams will be better able to see the other teams.

### introduction

This activity takes place in three sets. During two sets, each team member will be asked questions in relation to his or her partner. In the third set, each team member will answer questions in relation to him or herself. This activity is designed to help the partners understand the reasoning for the decisions they make and to secure a better understanding of their way of thinking and making choices.

This exercise can also help participants learn more about their and their partners' goals and expectations.



### step one

Divide the group into teams of two (preferably two people who work together often). The youth–adult composition of the teams does not matter. The teams will compete against one another.

### step two

Have the teams send one partner out of the room. When the partners are out of the room (and out of hearing distance), ask the team members who stayed to answer the following questions. Participants will need to use small sheets of construction or regular paper to write down their answers—one answer per sheet of paper. When the partners return, they should not see the answers; have the participants hold their answers face down on their lap.

Answer the following questions about your partner:

- Your partner’s favorite color is. . . .
- If your partner could travel anywhere in the United States, he or she would go to. . . .
- One of your partner’s favorite hobbies is. . . .
- One reason your partner became involved with your organization is. . . .

**trainer note:** You can add or change the questions, but be sure that they remain at a simple level (favorite television show, ice cream flavor, etc.).



### step three

Next, bring in the other half of the teams from the next room. Explain that you already asked their partners a set of questions about them. Now you are going to ask them the same questions about themselves. Start with one end of the room and ask the absent partner the first question. He or she should answer out loud; the partner then holds up his or her answer. Ask the same question of each team before moving on to the next question. Answer the following questions about yourself:

- Your favorite color is. . . .
- If you could travel anywhere in the United States, you would go to. . . .
- One of your favorite hobbies is. . . .
- One reason you became involved with your organization is. . . .

### step four

Now send the partners who initially answered the questions to the other room (i.e., switch positions). Using the same format, including paper and markers, ask the participants the following questions.

- One of your partner's favorite things about working in partnership is. . . .
- If your partner could try one new or different activity, it would be. . . .
- Your partner's favorite food is. . . .
- One of your partner's goals at his/her job (or school) is to. . . .

### step five

Next, bring in the teammates from the next room and repeat the same process as earlier. Ask them the following questions, and compare their answers with their partner's answers:

- Your favorite thing about working in partnership is. . . .
- If you could try one new or different activity, it would be. . . .
- Your favorite food is. . . .
- One of your goals at your job (or school) is. . . .



## step six

For the next section, both team members will stay in the room. They will again write their responses on the sheets of paper, keeping their responses confidential.

**trainer note:** Notice that these questions refer to themselves, rather than to their partners.

Answer the following questions about yourself:

- Three qualities I have that help me work well with others are. . . .
- One of my biggest challenges in working in partnership is. . . .
- If I could change one thing about the way youth and adults work in partnership at my organization, I would. . . .
- I love what I do in this organization because. . . .

## step seven

Have partners share their responses with each other after they have written them down. Allow a total of 5 minutes for sharing.

## reflection and discussion

Bring the group back together for a reflection discussion. Use the following questions, and include your own as you see fit:

- Think about the activity; what is one thing that you remember hearing or doing?
- What surprised you about this activity?
- When were you most excited during this activity?
- When were you most frustrated during this activity?
- What do you think was the purpose of this activity?
- How can you learn more about your partner?
- How could this activity affect your project or work once you leave here today?