

# Let's 'Chat' About...

Common video meeting platforms allow participants and facilitators to mute their voices, turn off their cameras, and simply use 'chat box' features to communicate. The use of these features can make it feel like connection cannot be powerful in the virtual environment. It is important to remember that Zoom and other video platforms also provide users a unique way to make aspects of connecting with others feel less 'risky,' particularly for young people. We know that feeling safe is crucial for genuine trust and connection, and activities that utilize chat box features can create safe spaces for sharing that are not available in person. The following activity explores anonymity on Zoom and demonstrates a way to use online platforms to cultivate social emotional connection.

## Social Emotional Learning

### Competency:

- Relationship building/social awareness

### Connection Key:

- Safe spaces create connections

### Purpose:

- Provide a safe space to discuss big and small topics as a group.
- Learn to process a variety of topics without feeling social consequences of sharing aloud.
- Promote emotional recognition, understanding, and empathy as participants send, view, and relate to shared topics.

### Success Indicators:

- Participants share topics in chat with the host and share about the selected topics.
- Participants report feeling safe to share during the activity.

## Activity

- Make sure that the 'direct chat' option is available to participants via the Zoom chat box.
- Prompt participants to think about a topic or question they have. Shared thoughts can be a simple questions (e.g., How is everyone handling their college search) or participants might want to share about a deeper issue they or someone they know is facing (e.g., depression, anxiety, or other health struggles).
- Ask participants to use the 'direct chat' feature to anonymously share topics and questions with you only.
- Save suggestions in a word document or save the chat as a file on your computer so that you can keep track of suggestions made.
- Select a topic at random and present it to the group.
- Facilitate discussion with the group about the selected topic, directing focus to the question or topic rather than the people sharing.
- Allow participants space to share verbally or in the chat.

For more information and activity resources visit <https://u.osu.edu/4hjournal/>

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