

Surrounding the Topic

Activity 3.5 Seeking Divergent Thinking

“Surrounding the topic” is a good exercise to practice when you are participating in or leading a discussion. This exercise encourages you to think about a topic from multiple dimensions. It encourages divergent and exploratory thinking. As a discussant, you may ask yourself: Which dimensions are missing from this discussion and then you can think about how you might incorporate that dimension into the conversation. As a discussion facilitator or someone that wants to move the discussion along, you may wait until there is a lull in the conversation and then ask a question that encourages others to explore the topic from another dimension. When possible, it is always helpful to “surround the topic” in your own mind prior to the conversation. This will allow you to see the issue from multiple perspectives or layers and it will help you to prompt others to examine the issue in greater detail and nuance.

