



**Socially
Connected
Communities
Network**

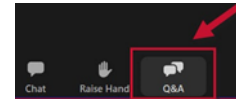
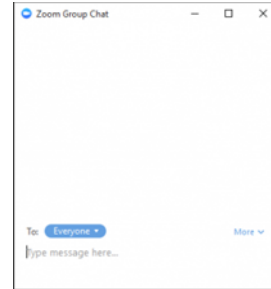
Bridging and Belonging to Strengthen Social Connections

May 28, 2025
3:00-4:00 PM



Ways to Engage

- Chat Box for comments, resources, emoticons to share with “Everyone”
- Q&A Box to pose questions for presenters and hosts
- Closed Captions in English are available
- Recording, Slides, and Resource Guide will be shared



Bridging and Belonging to Strengthen Social Connections





Share with us:

Are you implementing strategies to bridge across differences in your community?

Presenter Information



Calista Small

Research Manager
More in Common



Kira Hamman

Senior Director of Programs
Urban Rural Action

May 2025



The Connection Opportunity

**Insights for Bringing Americans
Together Across Difference**



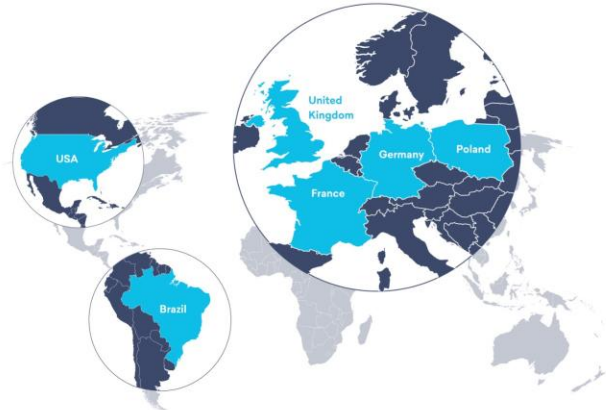


More in Common

More in Common US's mission is to understand the forces driving us apart, find common ground, and help bring Americans together to tackle our shared challenges.

We work with over **200 groups** in civil society, business, faith, education, philanthropy to connect people across lines of difference.

As of 2025, More in Common has a team of 50+ people working across teams in **France, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, Brazil** and the **United States**.



Research questions

01 Who is interested in connecting across lines of difference in the US, and why?

02 What are the barriers to connecting across difference?

We focused on four “lines of difference.”

**Race +
Ethnicity**

**Political
Viewpoint**

**Socioeconomic
Status (SES)**

Religion

How we conducted the research.

December 2023 – August 2024

National



Surveyed 4,522 US adults across two national surveys



Asked 200+ Americans in our online panel about their views on social connection

Regional



Surveyed 550 - 1,000 US adults in Kansas City, Houston, and Pittsburgh

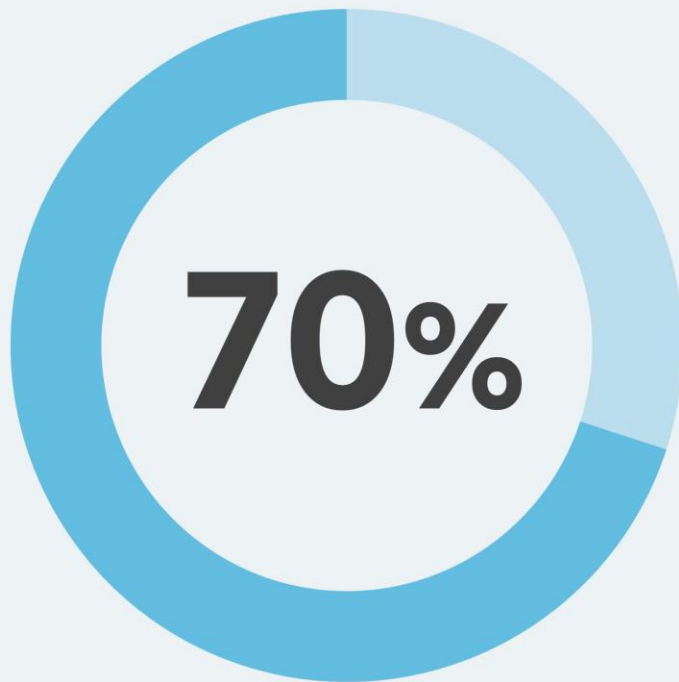


Conducted 15 focus groups

Key Insights

KEY INSIGHT NUMBER ONE

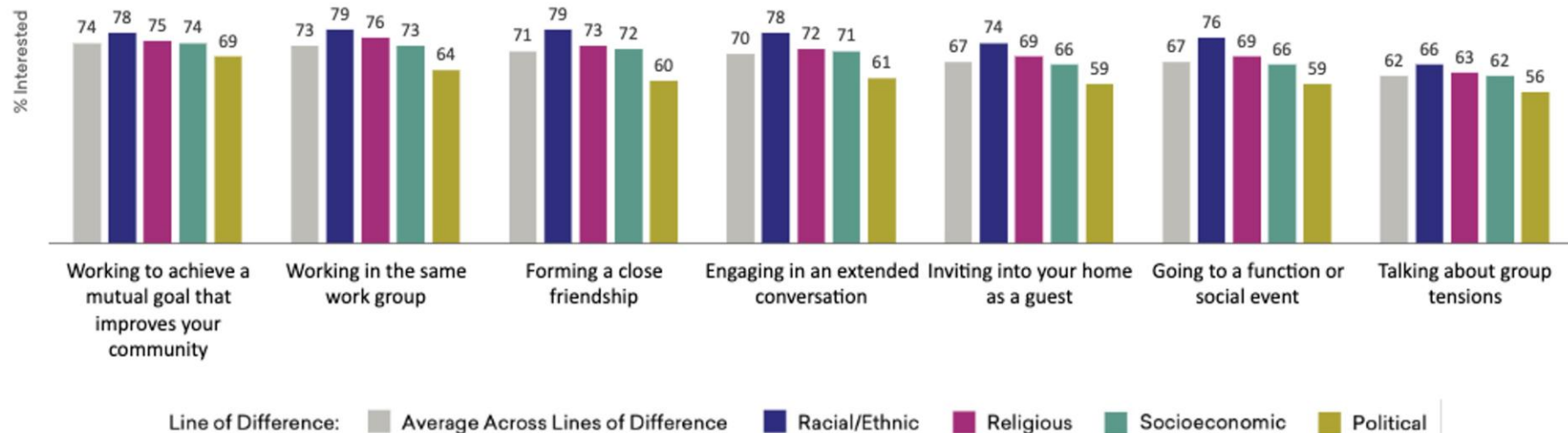
Most Americans value connecting across difference and are most interested in activities where they can work together.



of Americans
agree that we have a shared
responsibility to connect
across difference.

Most Americans are interested in connecting across lines of difference.

"Thinking about the near future, please indicate how interested you are in doing the following with people from a different [group] background than you."
(Numbers in %)



Response scale: 1 (Not at all interested), 2 (Somewhat), 3 (Moderately), 4 (Very), 5 (Extremely interested). Response values 3 to 5 were combined to indicate "Interested". Item wording has been edited lightly for clarity.

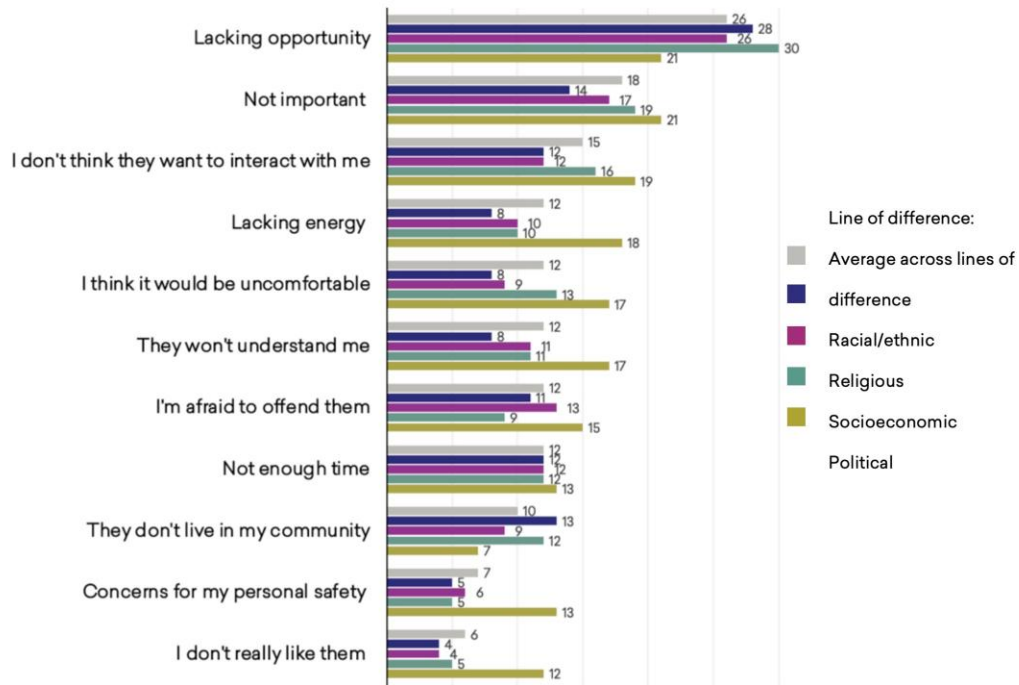
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 4,522 US adults, conducted in 2024.

KEY INSIGHT NUMBER TWO

The most commonly cited barrier to connection is a “lack of opportunity.”

Lack of opportunity is the most cited challenge for all cross-group connection.

"Which of the following factors best reflects what might make it challenging for you to interact with people of a different group than you? [Please select all that apply]" (% citing barrier)

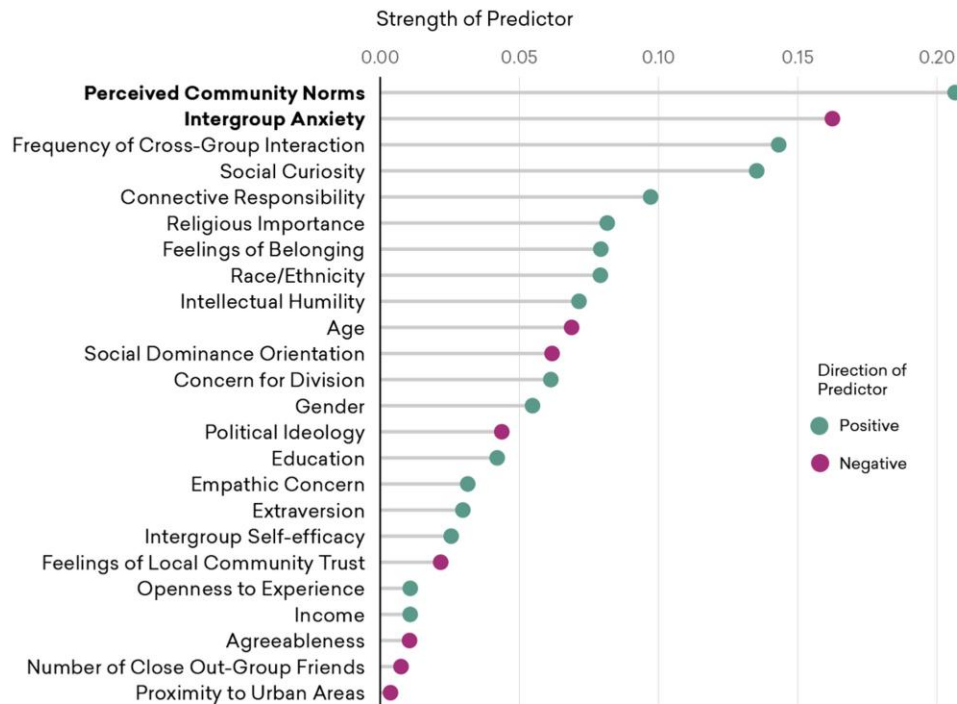


KEY INSIGHT NUMBER 3

Two factors—community norms and intergroup anxiety—stand out as the strongest predictors of interest in connecting across all four lines of difference.

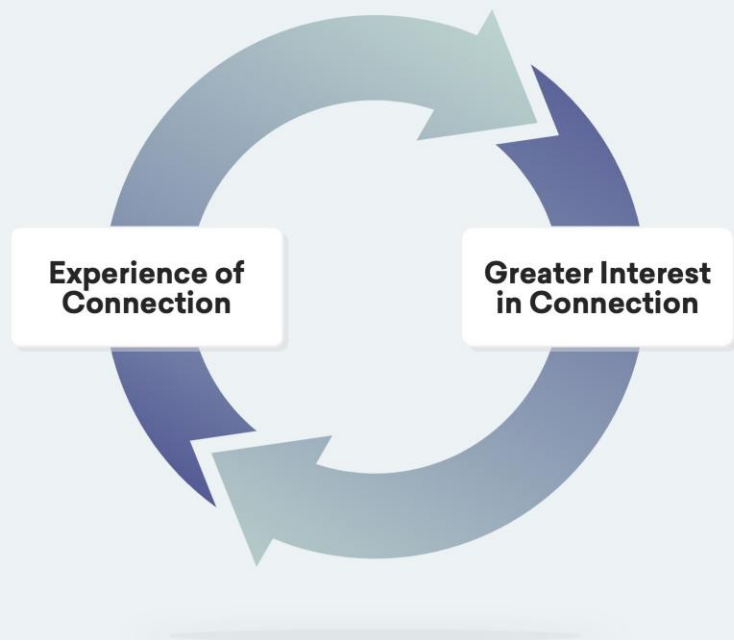
Two factors—community norms and intergroup anxiety—stand out as the strongest predictors of interest in connecting across difference.

Strength of predictors is estimated from a weighted multiple regression model, with standardized beta values on the x-axis.



KEY INSIGHT NUMBER 4

Connection is cumulative: the more people have an opportunity to connect, the more interested they are in connecting.



A “Connection Cascade”

In connection cascades, experiences of cross-group connection lead to greater interest in further connection.

Six Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Provide more opportunities for connection.

The Houston Food Bank: Dining with Purpose



The Houston Rodeo



RECOMMENDATION TWO

Increase the perception that connecting across difference is the “community norm.”

StoryCorps' One Small Step



Urban Rural Action



3

Highlight commonalities, like shared interests or goals, when wanting to broaden appeal of bridging opportunities.

4

Reduce intergroup anxiety through correcting misperceptions and skill-building.

5

Seek opportunities to create “connection cascades.”

6

Foster feelings of local community belonging.

Further resources

The Connection Opportunity mini-site

www.moreincommonus.com/the-connection-opportunity

1



Full report

We identified "Six Approaches" to connection across difference.



Dismissive



Reluctant



Uncertain



Open



Obstructed



Eager

Typology

Spotlight on Pittsburgh

Spotlight on Kansas City

Spotlight on Houston

Regional spotlights

Sign up for our Substack to get MIC's latest research updates

moreincommon.substack.com

2



Urban Rural Action

Reducing Division. Uniting America.

UR Action's vision and mission

Our Vision

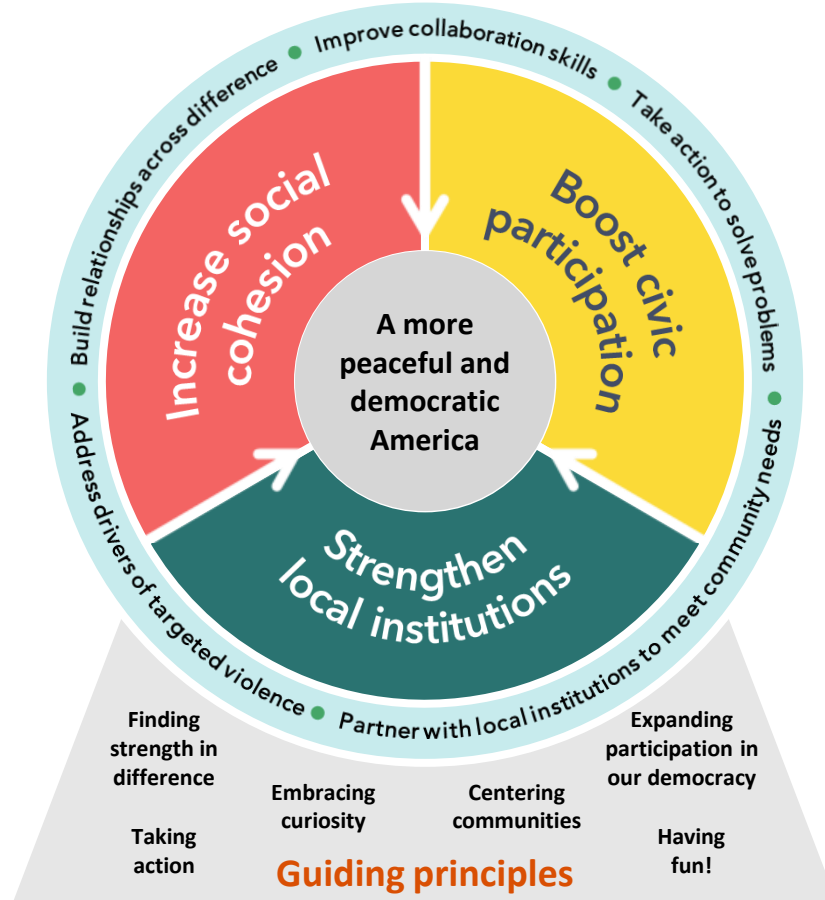
**A more peaceful and democratic
United States**

Our mission

**Bring Americans together across
divides to tackle our country's most
urgent challenges**



Our **Uniting for Action** Local Hubs empower communities to...



Uniting for Action Local Hubs

1

Bring Americans together to solve problems across differences where they live

Uniters work across differences to address a local challenge, in partnership with anchor community institutions



2

Strengthen civic infrastructure through community workshops in third spaces

Individuals and organizations enhance their ability to navigate conflict, take action in their communities, and strengthen community safety



3

Power pluralism in democracy

Local leaders strengthen their community engagement and collaboration skills while making their institutions more responsive, accountable, and transparent so that they're more worthy of community member trust.



Uniting for Action Programs

1

Strengthen individual skills

To engage in constructive conversation across lines of difference, manage conflict, analyze and jointly solve problems

2

Build enduring relationships

Work and play together across lines of difference, using skills above to understand different perspectives and navigate differences

3

Take positive action together

Alongside local community partner organizations, develop shared understanding of problems and goals for addressing them; design and implement an intervention to impact the broader community



Measuring Impact

Pre- and post-program surveys measure changes in:

- Feelings of belonging
- Attitudes towards members of out-group
- Perspective taking
- Collaboration and joint problem-solving skills

Focus group discussions & interviews track:

- Individual stories of growth and change
- Impact on partners & institutions
- Changes to community cohesion & resilience



Some Results

- In Arizona, 80% of participants said their participation in the program increased their belief in Americans' ability to work across difference to solve problems
- In Oregon, 32 percentage point increase in those reporting they were "very confident" that they and their fellow community members could effect positive change together.
- In Pennsylvania, 100% of participants reported that the project they had worked on was meaningful to them personally.
- In Wisconsin, 27 percentage point increase in agreement with the statement "I'm able to build relationships with individuals who have different opinions, beliefs, or political ideologies than me."



Reducing Division. Uniting America.

Kira Hamman
kira@uraction.org



JOIN US JULY 30, 2025

Improving Community Safety through Social Connections

Webinar from 3–4 pm ET
Discussion Group from 4–5 PM ET



RUBEN CANTU
Director of Safety
and Wellbeing
Prevention Institute



Discussion Group

- **When:** After we close this webinar
- **What/Why:** Engage with others to deepen learning and brainstorm ways to apply ideas
- **How:** Zoom meeting – click on the link in the chat box to register and join



THANK YOU!



Engage with Us



LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/healthy-places-by-design>



Newsletter

<https://bit.ly/HPbDNewsletterSignUp>



YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@HealthyPlacesbyDesign>