Good Samaritan Facilitation Kit

IN ALL THINGS MAY GOD BE GLORIFIED

OMNIBUS GLORIFICET · OMNIBUS GLORIFICET

OVERVIEW

The *Good Samaritan Facilitation Kit* has been developed by the Area Resource Team, to provide support and direction for those responsible for organising and facilitating Area and Deanery Meetings.

The role of facilitator is a quite specific one, and when effected skilfully, contributes significantly to enhancing the meeting experience for everyone involved. As the purpose, intent and anticipated outcomes of our gatherings vary considerably, the kit is designed to provide a range of processes for facilitating small group discussions in Deaneries, as well as techniques for managing larger groups in contexts such as Area Meetings and Plenary Councils.

The opening sections provide an understanding of the role of the facilitator and how this might be applied in different settings. Strategies and tips are suggested for organising and planning successful meetings, and processes for small group discussions are addressed in detail.

As a congregation, we are blessed by the wisdom and experience of inter-cultural, inter-generational and inter-personal perspectives. Ideas for drawing upon and sharing the diversity of these insights is provided through an explanation of conceptual models for cross-cultural facilitation.

The Toolkit offers a range of very practical approaches for engaging participants in processes aimed at gathering and communicating information, and exploring content. Numerous examples of how to begin a session, ways to bring it to a close, energising flagging groups and methods of evaluation are provided. Suggestions for items to include in a resource box are offered, along with links to useful videos, resources and books.

The balance of work and prayer foundational to Good Samaritan Benedictine life is reflected in the structure of our Area and Deanery Meetings. As we turn our hearts and minds to a spiritual encounter at the beginning and ending of our gatherings, the work of the meeting is thereby inspired and enfolded by prayer. The Rituals and Blessings section therefore provides a range of seasonal and occasional prayers, rituals and reflections for personal, communal and congregational get-togethers.

In reality, there is no such thing as a 'one-size-fits-all' facilitation method. The elements contained in this kit may be adapted and used in a range of applications. A 'mix and match' approach enables the user to personalise techniques to meet the needs of individual groups as they change and develop over time.

The kit is also intended to be a starting point. Feedback from users will assist the committee to respond directly to the emerging needs of facilitators. In particular, sharing your ideas, comments, strategies and 'successes' will be of mutual benefit to all. We wish you well as you continue to develop and refine your own unique facilitation style.

Good Samaritan Area Resource Team.

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1 Facilitation Skills

One of the most important sets of skills for leaders are facilitation skills. These are the "process" skills we use to guide and direct key parts of our work such as meetings and planning sessions.

Whether the meeting is small or large, someone has to shape and guide the process of working together so that you meet your goals and accomplish what you've set out to do. While a group of people might set the agenda and decide on the goals, one person needs to concentrate on how you are going to move through your agenda and meet those goals effectively. This is the person we call the "facilitator."

SO, HOW IS FACILITATING DIFFERENT FROM CHAIRING A MEETING?
Well, it is and it isn't. Facilitation has three basic principles:

- A facilitator is a guide to help people move through a process together, not the seat of wisdom and knowledge. That means a facilitator isn't there to give opinions, but to draw out opinions and ideas of the group members.
- Facilitation focuses on *how* people participate in the process of learning or planning, not just on *what* gets achieved
- A facilitator is neutral and never takes sides

The best meeting chairs see themselves as facilitators. While they have to get through an agenda and make sure that important issues are discussed, decisions made, and actions taken, good chairs don't feel that they have all of the answers or should talk all the time. The most important thing is what the participants in the meeting have to say. So, focus on how the meeting is structured and run to make sure that everyone can participate. This includes things like:

- Making sure everyone feels comfortable participating
- Developing a structure that allows for everyone's ideas to be heard
- Making members feel good about their contribution to the meeting
- Making sure the group feels that the ideas and decisions are theirs, not just the leader's. Supporting everyone's ideas and not criticising anyone for what they've said.

1A WHY DO YOU NEED FACILITATION SKILLS?

If you want to achieve good outcomes and keep the group involved, you need facilitation skills. The more you know about how to shape and run a good learning and planning process, the more your group will feel empowered about their own ideas, participation, responsibility and ownership, the better your meetings will be.

HOW DO YOU FACILITATE?

Meetings are a big part of our life. We seem to always be going from one meeting to the next. This section focuses on the process skills that good meeting leaders need to have. Remember, these facilitation skills are useful beyond meetings: for planning; for "growing" new leaders; for resolving conflicts; and for keeping good communication.

CAN ANYONE LEARN TO FACILITATE A MEETING?

Yes, to a degree. Being a good facilitator is both a skill and an art. It is a skill in that people can learn certain techniques and can improve their ability with practice. It is an art in that some people just have more of a knack for it than others. Sometimes we are required to facilitate meetings and can also draw on members who have the skill and the talent.

To put it another way, facilitating actually means:

- Understanding the goals of the meeting
- Keeping the group on the agenda and moving forward
- Involving everyone in the meeting, including drawing out the quiet participants and controlling the domineering ones
- Making sure that decisions are made communally

1B HOW DO YOU PLAN A GOOD FACILITATION PROCESS?

A good facilitator is concerned with both the outcome of the meeting or planning session, with how the people in the meeting participate and interact, and also with the process. While achieving the goals and outcomes that everyone wants is of course important, a facilitator also wants to make sure that the process if sound, that everyone is engaged, and that the experience is the best it can be for the participants.

In planning a good meeting process, a facilitator focuses on:

- Climate and Environment
- Logistics and Room Arrangements
- Ground Rules

A good facilitator will make plans in each of these areas in advance. Let's look at some of the specifics.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

There are many factors that impact how safe and comfortable people feel about interacting with each other and participating. The environment and general "climate" of a meeting or planning session sets an important tone for participation.

Key questions you would ask yourself as a facilitator include:

- Is the location a familiar place, one where people feel comfortable? If you're planning to have an interactive meeting sitting around a conference, some of your people might feel intimidated and out of their environment. A comfortable and familiar location is key.

- Is the meeting site accessible to everyone? If not, have you provided for transportation or escorts to help people get to the site? Psychologically, if people feel that the site is too far from them or in a place they feel is "dangerous," it may put them off from even coming. If they do come, they may arrive with a feeling that they were not really wanted or that their needs were not really considered. This can put a real damper on communication and participation. Another reminder: can people with mobility issues easily access the site? Is it suitable for people with a hearing impairment?

- Is the space the right size? Too large? Too small? If you are wanting to make a planning group feel that it's a team, a large meeting hall for only 10 or 15 people can feel intimidating and make people feel self-conscious and quiet. On the other hand, if you're taking a group of 30 people through a meeting, a small conference room where they are uncomfortably crunched together can make for disruption: people shifting in their seats, getting up to stretch and get some air. This can cause a real break in the mood and feeling of your meeting or planning session. You want the group to stay focused and relaxed. Moral: choose a room size that matches the size of your group.

LOGISTICS AND ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

Believe it or not: how people sit, whether they are hungry and whether they can hear can make or break your planning process. As a facilitator, the logistics of the meeting should be of great concern to you, whether you're responsible for them or not. Some things to consider are:

Front of room

- Chair arrangements: Having chairs in a circle or around a table encourages discussion, equality, and familiarity. Speaker's podiums and lecture style seating is a more formal environment and not conducive to long discussions.

- Places to hang butcher's paper: You may be using a lot of butcher's paper or other board space during your meeting. Can you use tape without damaging the walls? Is an easel available? Is there enough space so that you can keep important material visible instead of removing it?

- Sign-In sheet: Do you need one? Is there a table for people to use?
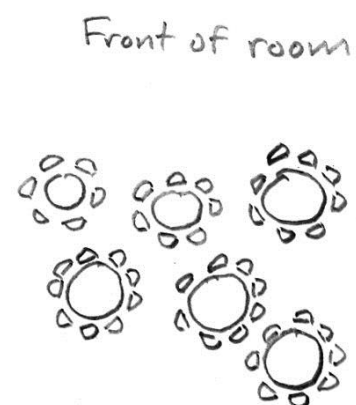
- Refreshments: Grumbling stomachs will definitely take people's minds off the meeting. If you're having refreshments, who is bringing them? Do you need outlets for coffee pots? Can you set things up so group members can get food without disrupting the meeting? And who is cleaning up afterwards?

- Microphones and audio visual equipment: Do you need a microphone? Video cameras? Can someone set up and test the equipment before you start?

- Do you need break-out spaces?

To build a safe as well as comfortable environment, a good facilitator has a few more points to consider. How do you protect people who are worried their ideas will be attacked or mocked? How do you hold back the big talkers who tend to dominate while still making them feel good about their participation? Much of the answer lies in the Ground Rules.

GROUND RULES

Most meetings have some kind of operating rules. Some groups have formal procedures for meetings while others have rules they've adopted over time. When you want the participation to flow and for people to really feel invested in following the rules, the best way to go is to have the group develop them as one of the first steps in the process. This builds a sense of power in the participants and a much greater sense of investment in following the rules. Common ground rules are:

- One person speaks at a time
- Raise your hand if you have something to say
- Listen to what other people are saying
- No mocking or attacking other people's ideas
- Be on time coming back from breaks
- Respect each other

A process to develop ground rules is:

- Begin by telling people that you want to set up some ground rules that everyone will follow as we go through our meeting. Put a blank sheet of butcher's paper on the wall with the heading "Ground Rules."

- Ask for any suggestions from the group. If no one says anything, start by putting one up yourself. That usually starts people off.

- Write any suggestions up on the butcher's paper. It's usually most effective to "check - in" with the whole group before you write up an idea ("Sue suggested raising our hands if we have something to say. Is that okay with everyone?"). Once you have gotten five or six good rules up, check to see if anyone else has other suggestions.

- When you are finished, ask the group if they agree with these Ground Rules and are willing to follow them. Make sure you get people to actually say "Yes" out loud. It makes a difference!

1C FACILITATING A MEETING

As we've already said, the facilitator is responsible for providing a "safe" climate and working atmosphere for the meeting. But you're probably wondering, "What do I actually do *during* the meeting to guide the process along?" Here are the basic steps that can be your facilitator's guide:

START THE MEETING ON TIME

Few of us start our meetings on time. The result? Those who come on time feel cheated that they rushed to get there! Start no more than five minutes late, ten at the maximum and thank everyone who came on time. When latecomers straggle in, don't stop your process to acknowledge them. Wait until after a break or another appropriate time to have them introduce themselves.

WELCOME EVERYONE

Make a point to welcome everyone who comes. Don't complain about the size of a group if the turnout is small! Nothing will turn the people off who *did* come out faster. Thank all of those who are there for coming and analyse the turnout attendance later. Go with who you have.

MAKE INTRODUCTIONS

There are lots of ways for people to introduce themselves to each other that are better than just going around the room. The kinds of introductions you do should depend on what kind of meeting you are having, the number of people, the overall goals of the meeting, and what kind of information it would be useful to know. Sometimes, introductions are combined with an "icebreaker." Icebreaker ideas may be found in Section 5.

REVIEW THE AGENDA, OBJECTIVES AND GROUND RULES FOR THE MEETING

Go over what's going to happen in the meeting. Check with the group to make sure they agree with and like the agenda. You never know if someone will want to comment and suggest something a little different. This builds a sense of ownership of the meeting and lets people know early on that you're there to facilitate *their* process and *their* meeting, not your own agenda.

The same is true for the outcomes of the meeting. You'll want to go over these with people as well to get their input and check that these are the desired outcomes they're looking for. This is also where the ground rules that we covered earlier come in.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

This is one of your main jobs as a facilitator. It's up to you to get those who need to listen to listen and those who ought to speak. Encourage people to share their experiences and ideas and urge those with relevant background information share it at appropriate times.

STICK TO THE AGENDA

Groups have a tendency to wander far from the original agenda, sometimes without knowing it. When you hear the discussion wandering off, bring it to the group's attention. You can say "That's an interesting issue, but perhaps we should get back to the original discussion."

AVOID DETAILED DECISION-MAKING

Sometimes, it's easier for groups to discuss the colour of serviettes than the real issues they are facing. Help the group not to get immersed in details. Suggest instead, "Perhaps the committee could resolve the matter." Do you really want to be involved in that level of detail?

SEEK COMMITMENTS

Getting commitments for future involvement is often a meeting goal, as you would like people to commit to certain tasks. Make sure adequate time is allocated for seeking commitment. For small meetings, write people's names down next to the tasks they agreed to undertake.

One important rule of thumb is that no one should leave a meeting without something to do.

BRING CLOSURE TO EACH ITEM

Many groups will discuss things ten times longer than they need to unless a facilitator helps them to recognise they're basically in agreement. Summarise a consensus position, or ask someone in the group to summarise the points of agreement, and then move forward. If one or two people disagree, state the situation as clearly as you can: "Tom and Lucy seem to have other feelings on this matter, but everyone else seems to go in this direction. Perhaps we can decide to go in the direction that most of the group wants, and maybe Tom and Lucy can get back to us on other ways to accommodate their concerns." You may even suggest taking a break so Tom and Lucy can discuss the matter to come up with some options.

RESPECT EVERYONE'S RIGHTS

The facilitator protects the shy and quiet people in a meeting and encourages them to speak out. There is also the important job of keeping domineering people from monopolising the meeting or ridiculing the ideas of others.

Sometimes, people dominate a discussion because they are really passionate about an issue and have lots of things to say. One way to channel their interest is to suggest that they consider serving on a committee, or suggest a way forward. Other people, however, talk to hear themselves talk.

BE FLEXIBLE

Sometimes issues will arise in the meeting that are so important, they will take much more time than you thought. Sometimes, nobody will have thought of them at all. You may run over time or have to alter your agenda to discuss them. Be sure to check with group about whether this is okay before going ahead with the revised agenda. If necessary, ask for a five-minute break to confer with key leaders or participants on how to handle the issue and how to restructure the agenda. Be prepared to recommend an alternate agenda, dropping some items if necessary.

HAVE A CARPARK

The Carpark is a respectful way to manage issues that arise that are outside the agenda, but are nonetheless important to some members of the group.

At the beginning of the session, section off part of the whiteboard or use a piece of butcher's paper, and label it 'Carpark', explaining to the group that all ideas are important, and need to be addressed with appropriate time and attention.

When issues arise that are not on the agenda, but are clearly important to some members of the group, rather than dismiss them or say "We don't have time for that today" or "That doesn't form part of today's agenda", say "That's a really interesting idea/position /perspective. Right now we need to focus on achieving X, so I will put that idea in the Carpark until later".

By the end of the session the idea may have been covered in some way. If not, acknowledge and address the issue as a group then and there, or make sure (with agreement) it forms part of the agenda for the next meeting.

The important thing is to make sure you come back to it and acknowledge the idea/contribution, and to ensure the person feels that have been heard.

It is a good idea to allocate time for 'Carpark' issues at the end of your session. If it is not needed, an early finish is appreciated by everyone!

SUMMARISE THE MEETING RESULTS AND NEEDED FOLLOW-UPS

Before ending the meeting, summarise the key decisions that were made and what else happened. Be sure also to summarise the follow-up actions that were agreed to and need to take place. Remind people how much good work was done and how effective the meeting hopefully was. Refer back to the objectives or outcomes to show how much you accomplished.

THANK THE PARTICIPANTS

Take a minute to thank people who prepared things for the meeting, set up the room, brought refreshments, or did any work towards making the meeting happen. Thank all of the participants for their input and energy and for making the meeting a success.

CLOSE THE MEETING

People appreciate nothing more than a meeting that ends on time! It's usually a good idea to have some "closure" in a meeting, especially if it was long, if there were any sticky situations that caused tension, or if people worked especially hard to come to decisions or make plans.

A nice way to close a meeting is to go around the room and have people say one word that describes how they are feeling now that all of this work has been done. You'll usually get answers from "exhausted" to "energised!" If it's been a good meeting, even the "exhausted" ones will stick around before leaving.

Don't forget you can always begin and end with a prayer.

1D FACILITATOR SKILLS AND TIPS

Here are a few more points to remember that will help to maximise your role as a facilitator:

DON'T MEMORISE A SCRIPT

Even with a well-prepared agenda and key points you must make, you need to be flexible and natural. If people sense that you are reading memorised lines, they will feel like they are being talked down to, and won't respond freely.

WATCH THE GROUP'S BODY LANGUAGE

Are people shifting in their seats? Are they bored? Tired? Looking confused? If people seem restless or in a haze, you may need to take a break, or speed up or slow down the pace of the meeting. And if you see confused looks on too many faces, you may need to stop and check in with the group, to make sure that everyone knows where you are in the agenda and that the group is with you.

ALWAYS CHECK BACK WITH THE GROUP

Be careful about deciding where the meeting should go. Check back after each major part of the process to see if there are questions and that everyone understands and agrees with decisions that were made.

SUMMARISE AND PAUSE

When you finish a point or a part of the meeting process, sum up what was done and decided, and pause for questions and comments before moving on. Learn to judge how long to pause – too short, and people don't really have time to ask questions; too long, and people will start to get uncomfortable from the silence.

BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR

Take a break to calm down if you feel nervous or are losing control. Watch that you're not repeating yourself, saying "ah" between each word, or speaking too fast. Watch your voice and physical manner. (Are you standing too close to people so they feel intimidated, making eye contact so people feel engaged?) How you act makes an impact on how participants feel.

OCCUPY YOUR HANDS

Hold onto a marker, pen, or the back of a chair. Don't play with the change in your pocket!

WATCH YOUR SPEECH

Be careful you are not offending or alienating anyone. Ideas for working with cross-cultural groups may be found in Section 4.

USE BODY LANGUAGE OF OUR OWN

Using body language to control the dynamics in the room can be a great tool. Moving up close to a shy, quiet participant and asking them to speak make them feel more willing, because they can look at you instead of the big group and feel less intimidated. Also, walking around engages people in the process. Don't just stand in front of the room for the entire meeting.

DON'T TALK TO THE WHITEBOARD OR WALLS - THEY CAN'T TALK BACK!

Always wait until you have stopped writing and are facing the group to talk.

Confidence   Relaxed   Trustworthy   Strength
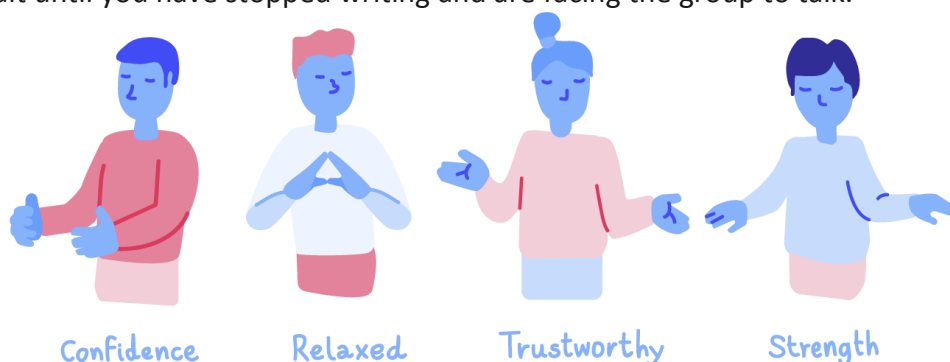
Helpful Hints for Facilitators

If this happens	Facilitator might respond
1. Interrupting: jumping in	1. "Maybe we could stop for a moment to check on our listening to one another."
2. Two people talking at once	2. "We seem to have two conversations going on here; maybe we could hear from Person X, then Person Y."
3. Non response to idea or questions just offered	3. 'Did everyone hear what was said?" or "What are your thoughts or feelings on this?"
4. One person 'wiping out' another's idea and becoming judgmental	4. 'What has been said is from felt experience and has value to that person. One experience appears to be quite different from the other. Let's remember that each person has their own part of the truth."
5. Strong feelings expressed, especially negative	5. "it sounds as if you feel strongly on that point and that's okay" or "I'm glad to know how strongly you feel about that."
6. Member remains silent throughout session	6. "You've been listening intently; is there anything you'd like to add?"
7. Repetition of same ideas	7. Summarise main points expressed by person; "That's helpful – maybe we could hear from someone else."
8. Several different opinions expressed	8. "If I've heard everyone correctly, it sounds as if there are two or three different opinions being expressed." Summarise them.
9. Wandering from topic under discussion	9. "To bring ourselves back to the purpose of the meeting, it appears that the basic question is….."
10. One dominant person	10. "I understand that you feel strongly about…. Let's hear some responses from others."

The World Café Hosting Guide

1E DEALING WITH DISRUPTERS

Along with these tips on facilitation, there are some things you can do both to prevent disruption before it occurs to stop it when it's happening in the meeting. The most common kinds of disrupters are people who try to dominate, keep going off the agenda, have side conversations with the person sitting next to them, or people who think they are right and ridicule and attack other's ideas.

Preventions:

Try using these "Preventions" when you set up your meeting to try to rule out disruption:

Get agreement on the agenda, ground rules and outcomes.
In other words, agree on the process. These process agreements create a sense of shared accountability and ownership of the meeting, joint responsibility for how the meeting is run, and group investment in whether the outcomes and goals are achieved.

Listen carefully.
Don't just pretend to listen to what someone in the meeting is saying. People can tell. Listen closely to understand a point someone is making. And check back if you are summarising, always asking the person if you understood their idea correctly.

Show respect for experience.
We can't say it enough. Encourage people to share strategies, stories from the field, and lessons they've learned. Value the experience and wisdom in the room.

Find out the group's expectations.
Make sure that you uncover at the start what participants think they are meeting for. When you find out, be clear about what will and won't be covered in this meeting. Make plans for how to cover issues that won't be dealt with: Write them down on butcher's paper and agree to deal with them at the end of the meeting, or have the group agree on a follow-up meeting to cover unfinished issues.

There are lots of ways to find out what the group's expectations of the meeting are: Try asking everyone to finish this sentence: "I want to leave here today knowing...." You don't want people sitting through the meeting feeling angry that they're in the wrong place and no one bothered to ask them what they wanted to achieve here. These people may act out their frustration during the meeting and become your biggest disrupters.

Stay in your facilitator role.

You cannot be an effective facilitator and a participant at the same time. When you cross the line, you risk alienating participants, causing resentment, and losing control of the meeting. Offer strategies, resources, and ideas for the group to work with, but *not* opinions.

Don't be defensive.

If you are attacked or criticised, take a "mental step" backwards before responding. Once you become defensive, you risk losing the group's respect and trust, and might cause people to feel they can't be honest with you.

"Buy-in" power players.

These people can turn your meeting into a nightmare if they don't feel that their influence and role are acknowledged and respected. If possible, give them acknowledgment up front at the start of the meeting. Try giving them roles to play during the meeting such as a "sounding board" for you at breaks, to check in with about how the meeting is going.

Interventions:

Try using these "Interventions" when disruption is happening during the meeting:

Have the group decide.

If someone is dominating the meeting, refuses to stick to the agenda, keeps bringing up the same point again and again, or challenges how you are handling the meeting:

- First try to remind them about the agreed-on agenda. If that doesn't work, throw it back to the group and ask them how they feel about that person's participation. Let the group support you.

Use the agenda and ground rules.

If someone keeps going off the agenda, has side conversations through the whole meeting, verbally attacks others:

- Go back to that agenda and those ground rules and remind people of the agreements made at the beginning of the meeting.

Be honest: Say what's going on.

If someone is trying to intimidate you, if you feel upset or undermined, if you need to pull the group behind you:

- It's better to say what's going on than try to cover it up. Everyone will be aware of the dynamic in the room. The group will get behind you if you are honest and up -front about the situation.

Use humour.

If there is a lot of tension in the room, if you have people at the meeting who didn't want to be there, if people are scared/shy about participating, if you are an outsider:

- Try a humourous comment or a joke. If it's self-deprecating, so much the better. Humour almost always lightens the mood. It's one of the best tension-relievers we have.

Accept or legitimise the point or deal.

If there is someone who keeps expressing doubts about the group's ability to accomplish anything, is bitter and puts down others' suggestions, keeps bringing up the same point over and over, seems to have power issues:

- Try one or more of these approaches: Show that you understand their issue by making it clear that you hear how important it is to them. Legitimise the issue by saying, "It's a very important point and one I'm sure we all feel is critical." Make a bargain to deal with their issue for a short period of time ("Okay, let's deal with your issue for five minutes and then we ought to move on.")
- Another strategy could be to "park" the issue on the whiteboard for further discussion later. See Section 5 for further details.

Use body language.

If side conversations keep occurring, if quiet people need to participate, if attention needs to be re-focused:

- Use body language. Move closer to conversers, or to the quiet ones. Make eye contact with them to get their attention and covey your intent.

Take a break.

If less confrontational tactics haven't worked, someone keeps verbally attacking others, shuffling papers, cutting others off:

- In case you've tried all of the above suggestions and nothing has worked, it's time to take a break, invite the disruptive person outside the room and politely but firmly state your feelings about how disruptive their behaviour is to the group. Make it clear that the disruption needs to end. But also try to find out what's going on, and see if there are other ways to address that person's concerns.

Confront in the room.

If all else has failed, if you're sure it won't create backlash, if the group will support you, and if you've tried everything else:

- Confront the disruptive person politely but very firmly in the room. Tell the person very explicitly that the disruption needs to stop now. Use body language to encourage other group members to support you. This is absolutely the last resort when action must be taken and no alternatives remain!

https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main

In conflicts, you need to facilitate calmly yet assertively!

When people start to get emotional there are some basic strategies that the facilitator should use:

- Slow things down. Get the attention of the group by stopping the action and asking people to take a moment to consider the key ideas of what is emerging.
- Stay totally neutral. Never take sides or allow your body language to hint that you favour one idea or one person over another.
- Stay calm. Maintain your composure and do not raise your voice. Speak slowly with an even tone. Avoid emotional body language.
- Revisit the norms. Invite people to visit what they have agreed to and write new ones as the need exists.
- Be assertive. You may need to move into the referee mode. Insist that people take turns in speaking and do not allow them to interrupt one another.
- Raise awareness. If necessary review the difference between debate and argument.
- Make interventions. Refuse to allow people to be rude with one another or to fight.
- Emphasise listening. Paraphrase key points and ask others to do the same thing.
- Call time out. Don't hesitate to stop the action any time emotions get out of hand or if the discussion is spinning in circles.
- Use of structured approach. Use techniques that bring options into focus and help people make choices among the options they have.
- Use of butcher's paper. Make notes of key points so they aren't lost and people know that they have been heard. It will also help people not to go over the same things.
- Create closure. Make sure that the debating is really going somewhere. Involve the group in summarising what has been agreed upon. Test each for agreement. Help the group to create an action plan to ensure implementation of what has been decided.

From "Facilitating with Ease" by Ingrid Bens

7 DEADLY SINS OF MEETINGS

1 People don't take the meeting seriously
2 Meetings are too long
3 People wander off topic
4 No follow-through post-meeting
5 People aren't candid
6 Important information is missing
7 Meetings never get better

2 Effective Group Discussions

The literal definition of a group discussion is obvious: a critical conversation about a particular topic, or perhaps a range of topics, conducted in a group of a size that allows participation by all members. A group of two or three generally doesn't need a leader to have a good discussion, but once the number reaches five or six, a leader or facilitator can often be helpful. When the group numbers eight or more, a leader or facilitator, whether formal or informal, is almost always helpful in ensuring an effective discussion.

A group discussion is a type of meeting, but it differs from the formal meetings in a number of ways:
- It may not have a specific goal – many group discussions are just that: a group kicking around ideas on a particular topic. That may lead to a goal ultimately...but it may not.
- It's less formal, and may have no time constraints, or structured order, or agenda.
- Its leadership is usually less directive than that of a meeting.
- It emphasises process (the consideration of ideas) over product (specific tasks to be accomplished within the confines of the meeting itself.
- Leading a discussion group is not the same as running a meeting. It's much closer to acting as a facilitator, but not exactly the same as that either.

An effective group discussion generally has a number of elements:
- All members of the group have a chance to speak, expressing their own ideas and feelings freely, and to pursue and finish out their thoughts
- All members of the group can hear others' ideas and feelings stated openly
- Group members can safely test out ideas that are not yet fully formed
- Group members can receive and respond to respectful but honest and constructive feedback. Feedback could be positive, negative, or merely clarifying or correcting factual questions or errors, but is in all cases delivered respectfully.
- A variety of points of view is put forward and discussed
- The discussion is not dominated by any one person
- Arguments, while they may be spirited, are based on the content of ideas and opinions, not on personalities
- Even in disagreement, there's an understanding that the group is working together to resolve a dispute, solve a problem, create a plan, make a decision, find principles all can agree on, or come to a conclusion from which it can move on to further discussion

Many group discussions have no specific purpose except the exchange of ideas and opinions. Ultimately, an effective group discussion is one in which many different ideas and viewpoints are heard and considered. This allows the group to accomplish its purpose if it has one, or to establish a basis either for ongoing discussion or for further contact and collaboration among its members.

There are many possible purposes for a group discussion, such as:
- Create a new situation, start an initiative
- Explore cooperative or collaborative arrangements among groups or organisations
- Discuss and/or analyse an issue, with no specific goal in mind but understanding
- Create a strategic plan – for an initiative, an advocacy campaign, an intervention
- Discuss policy and policy change
- Air concerns and differences among individuals or groups
- Decide on an action
- Provide mutual support
- Solve a problem
- Resolve a conflict
- Plan your work or an event

Possible leadership styles of a group discussion also vary. A group leader or facilitator might be directive or non-directive; that is, she might try to control what goes on to a large extent; or she might assume that the group should be in control, and that her job is to facilitate the process. In most group discussions, leaders who are relatively non-directive make for a more broad-ranging outlay of ideas, and a more satisfying experience for participants.

Directive leaders can be necessary in some situations. If a goal must be reached in a short time period, a directive leader might help to keep the group focused. If the situation is particularly difficult, a directive leader might be needed to keep control of the discussion and make suggestions about a way forward.

2A GROUP DISCUSSION

Gives everyone involved a voice.
Whether the discussion is meant to form a basis for action, or just to play with ideas, it gives all members of the group a chance to speak their opinions, to agree or disagree with others, and to have their thoughts heard. In many community-building situations, the members of the group might be chosen specifically because they represent a cross-section of the community, or a diversity of points of view.

Allows for a variety of ideas to be expressed and discussed.
A group is much more likely to come to a good conclusion if a mix of ideas is on the table, and if all members have the opportunity to think about and respond to them.

Is generally a democratic, egalitarian process.
It reflects the ideals of most grassroots and communal groups, and encourages a diversity of views.

Leads to group ownership of whatever conclusions, plans, or action the group decides upon.
Because everyone has a chance to contribute to the discussion and to be heard, the final result feels like it was arrived at by and belongs to everyone.

Encourages those who might normally be reluctant to speak their minds.
Often, quiet people have important things to contribute, but aren't assertive enough to make themselves heard. A good group discussion will bring them out and support them.

Can often open communication channels among people who might not communicate in any other way.
People from very different backgrounds, from opposite ends of the political spectrum, from different cultures, who may, under most circumstances, either never make contact or never trust one another enough to try to communicate, might, in a group discussion, find more common ground than they expected.

2B WHY WOULD YOU LEAD A GROUP DISCUSSION?

You might choose to lead a group discussion, or you might find yourself drafted for the task. Some of the most common reasons that you might be in that situation:

You've been asked to.
Because of your reputation for objectivity or integrity, because of your position in the community, or because of your skill at leading group discussions, you might be the obvious choice to lead a particular discussion. You may also have some expertise in particular area.

A discussion is necessary, and you're the logical choice to lead it.
If you're the chair of a committee, a Dean or an Area Counsellor for instance, it's likely that you'll be expected to lead discussion on an issue.

It was your idea in the first place.
The group discussion, or its purpose, was your idea, and the organisation of the process falls to you.

2C WHEN MIGHT YOU LEAD A GROUP DISCUSSION?

The need or desire for a group discussion might of course arise anytime, but there are some times when it's particularly necessary.

At the start of something new.
Whether you're designing an intervention, starting an initiative, creating a new program, building a network, or embarking on an advocacy or other campaign, inclusive discussion is likely to be crucial in generating the best possible plan, and creating community support for and ownership of it.

When an issue can no longer be ignored.
There are times when we need to convene to discuss issues and develop action plans to swing the pendulum in the other direction. Some examples here would be climate change, refugees and asylum seekers, indigenous rights and human trafficking.

When groups need to be brought together.
One way to deal diverse groups, for instance, is to convene stakeholders from all of the groups involved. The resulting discussions – and the opportunity for people from different backgrounds to make personal connections with one another – can go far to address everyone's concerns.

When an existing group is considering its next step or seeking to address an issue of importance to it.
Gathering to talk about ageing in place or health care would be significant issues for discussion.

Significant issues for life and mission.
Discussions around the implementation of the Statement of Directions or an aspect of community life.

Group discussions are common in our society, and have a variety of purposes, from planning an intervention or initiative to mutual support to problem-solving to addressing an issue of community concern. An effective discussion group depends on a leader or facilitator who can guide it through an open process – the group chooses what it's discussing, if not already determined, discusses it with no expectation of particular conclusions, encourages respectful dialogue, and makes sure that everyone is included and no one dominates. It helps greatly if the leader comes to the task with a collaborative style, and with an understanding of how the group functions.

A good group discussion leader has to pay attention to the process and content of the discussion as well as to the people who make up the group. She has to prepare the space and the setting to the extent possible; help the group establish ground rules that will keep it moving comfortably; provide whatever materials are necessary; familiarise herself with the topic; and make sure that any pre-discussion readings or assignments get to participants in plenty of time. Then she has to guide the discussion, being careful to promote an open process; involve everyone and let no one dominate; attend to the personal issues and needs of individual group members when they affect the group; summarise or clarify when appropriate; ask questions to keep the discussion moving, and put aside her own agenda, ego, and biases.

It's not an easy task, but it can be extremely rewarding. An effective group discussion can lay the groundwork for action and real community change.

Phil Rabinowitz

3 Designing Facilitation

3A ASSESSING THE GROUP

When working with a new group, you will need to ask questions to determine who the group is and how they group members work together. Some of these questions are more relevant than others, depending on who you are facilitating!

- What is the history of the group?
- How familiar are they with each other?
- Are the clear goals/outcomes?
- Are there group norms or rules?
- Are there processes that have previously worked well? Processes the group is familiar with?
- Does everyone participate or do a few dominate?
- To what extent are members open and honest?
- Do members listen to and support others ideas?
- How does the group handle conflict?
- How are important decisions made?
- Do people leave meetings feeling that something has been achieved?
- How would you describe the group atmosphere?
- Are meetings thoroughly planned and structured or are they more free-wheeling?
- Does the group stop and evaluate from time to time? Can it adjust to new directions as a response?
- How do people feel about being part of the group?
- Are there reasons why members might not be open and say what they really think?
- Why is facilitation necessary? Is there opposition to outside facilitation?
- What is the worst thing that could happen at the meeting? What can be done to avoid this happening?

From: *Facilitating with Ease!* Ingrid Bens, 2011

3B DESIGNING A WORKSHOP

In art, good design is characterised by elements of unity, harmony, cohesion, repetition, surprise and interest. An appealing painting has a centre of interest (focal point) that draws the viewer into and through the picture. The story is 'read' through the use of colour, shape, line. Similar elements apply to music. A well designed facilitation process has all these elements. Think of a workshop as comprised of a series of activities, each having the same basic shape and differing only in the purpose of the activity and in its length. Each activity in the design grows from the Goals and Objectives for the workshop.

Goals and Objectives

Preparation

- The purpose of the activity
- The context of the activity
- The lead into the activity

Body

This is the place of content, a variety of ways to proceed include:

- Creativity, play, humour
- Reflection, silence
- Exploration, discussion
- Application

This section may include several activities.

Conclusion

- Making connections of the activity
- Beginning the integration of learning
- Concluding the activity

A well designed facilitation, whether and hour, a day or a week, consists of a series of interconnected activities that flow smoothly, each with a specific purpose, sequenced in a particular manner to meet the goals and objectives named. The length and structure of each activity may change but the basic outline does not. Each facilitation design is composed of various activities linked together so that it is experienced as a fluid whole.

From: The Art of Skilled Facilitation, Renee Stephens

3C DESIGNING AN ACTIVITY

A Welcome
This can be as simple as greeting people at the door, some introductions or a simple ritual.

An overview
This could be establishing the goals and objectives, running through an agenda, setting the context for what the group is about to do (Important to think if there is any background or history that needs to be shared or acknowledged), forecast the activity, content and rhythm of the workshop; provide any additional information.

A transfer in
This is an activity that draws the group together and sets up the main activity.

Activity
An activity can vary in length and have different purposes related to the over-all goal. Such as – to open or focus on the topic; to assist the learner identify related experiences, to provide new information; to explore meaning and implications; to gather information; to apply insights; to deepen or conclude exploration of an issue. You can use more than one activity – depends on the overall goal you are trying to achieve.

Conclusion
This gives participants a sense of closure and can be done through ritual; word or summary chart; forecast of next steps; reflection on what has been achieved; evaluation; thank you and farewells. This is never the time to introduce any new thoughts or ideas. If this happens, you may need to rethink the conclusion!

A note on input
A facilitator ideally never speaks for more than a block of 10 minutes. If the activity is for information sharing or delivery, it may be best to have another person present the information. The role of a facilitator is to process the information and draw out the response of the group to the information!

3D A CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING

CONTENT

- what "chunks" of information do I need to impart?
- how much content is too much/not enough for the time I have and the needs of the group?
- what is the source of
    - my content?
        - o from books?
        - o from the experience of the participants?
        - o a bit of both?
- how can I break the content into interesting and manageable bite-size portions?
- what are a variety of ways to impart the content?
    - o lecturettes, handouts, charts, quotations, readings
- how can I best sequence the content that I want to impart or gather?

CONNECTIONS ANDCONNECTORS

- How can I best make it clear to participants that there is a logic and a connection between the content, the objectives and whatever activity I have designed?
    Perhaps:
    - a summarising and linking comment (spoken and/or visual)?
    - a quick review that makes clear the connections?
    - a bridging comment?
    - a visual aid? (diagram, picture, cartoon...)
- How can I do this in ways that are not "pedantic" or ponderous time-consuming?

INSTRUCTIONS

- Break down complex instructions into simple parts and
- Make each part as simple as possible. _
- Repeat key instructions (where group" gathers, key question or task...)
- Have key instruction/question prepared beforehand; at work space or
- Written clearly on chart for reference by participants
- Use voice to best advantage (project, speak clearly, slowly...)
- Remember that clear instructions empower learners and keep the facilitator focused

> *"Clear instructions save time.''*
>
> Marg Miller

ASKING QUESTIONS EFFECTIVELY

Effective questions

- OPEN UP a topic
- invite a reflective exploration of a topic
- are clearly stated and concrete in kind word-choice
- can be intuitive (broad, general, "fuzzy") but need to be re-stated as sensate
- are open-ended and do not 'lead' to a specific response
- never require a yes/no response
- assist the gathering of responses that lead to conclusions
- are not rhetorical

THE AGENDA or SCHEDULE

- is posted and visible to participants .
- shows how time will be used
- reveals the content but never the process:
  - example: "Exploring Implications" is fine; "Small groups Explore Implications" reveals the process, so is not appropriate
- flows from the Goal and Objectives
- identifies workshop beginning and ending times and breaks
- entices participants to move into topic
- attractive, witty, engaging can be helpful
- is often appreciated ahead of the event if this is feasible and possible
- communicates several messages, one of which is "no hidden agenda here"

TIME

When planning your facilitation be aware that

- flexible time can be built into your planning
  - activities that can be cut down or expanded as needed
- As a guide, two activities in a two and a half hour span is sufficient. Make sure you allow for movement of people and time for instructions and context setting.
  This is a guideline and there are many fine exceptions to it!

- small groups (2, 3, 4) enable deeper exploration; the larger the group, the longer the time needed for processing
- time can be saved by having different tasks for different groups.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER ...Your design needs to be simple, clear, engaging...

- clearly reflects the goals and objectives
- each section needs to have its own clear purpose
- connections between all parts must be obvious to participants
- various styles and methods need to be included
- time frames need to be honoured (less is blessed!)
- Agenda and purpose of gathering need to be "posted"
- Clear instructions, clear questions are key
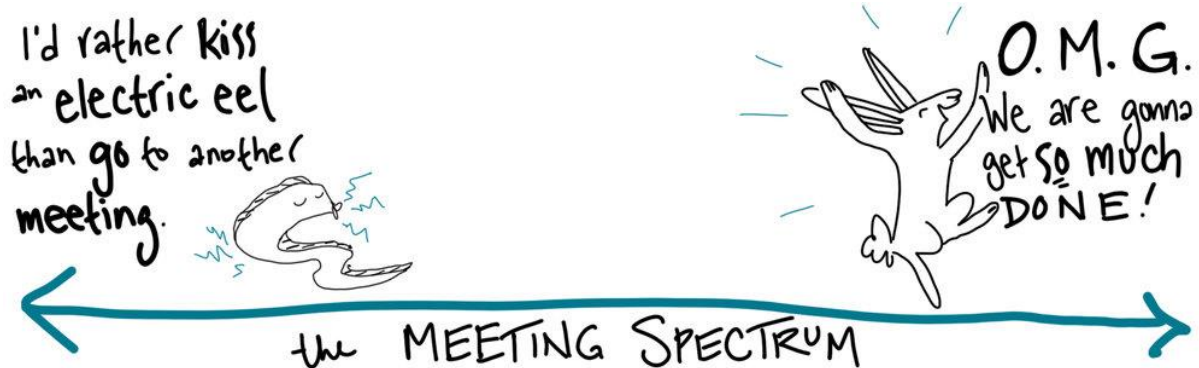- Materials and space must be ready in advance

The Golden Rule of Facilitation and Time

'You may not be able to begin on time, but you must always end on time!'

The only way the Golden Rule of Facilitation and Time can be changed is

-when the group are engaged in making such change

-when the group choose without feeling "forced" to say yes.

4 Facilitation in a Cross-cultural Setting

4A FACILITATION ACROSS CULTURES

Communication across cultures does not always share a common context. Therefore facilitation of cross-cultural groups:

1. Invites sensitivity and attention, so speaking and listening are within a particular context.
2. Calls for intensive dialogue and engagement between conversation partners.
3. Begs understanding of differences between high context and low context cultures

Facilitation across cultures is enhanced when there is a basic understanding of

- The cultural context of the group.
- Patterns of thinking among group members.
- Communication styles of group members.

High Context or Group Cultures

- Are relational and intuitive.
- Value love of and harmony with nature.
- Are past oriented.
- Rely on non-verbal codes over verbal messages.
- Are cooperative.
- Value traditions.
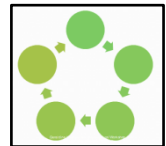
In Low Context or Individual Cultures or Grid Cultures

- The individual is most important. Status is not as noticeable.
- Individuals are first; group comes second.
- Law and authority are more important than whom one knows.

When facilitating across cultures it is also important to understand the various dimensions of cross-cultural communication such as:

- World views - ways of perceiving the world.
- Cognitive processes - ways of thinking.
- Linguistic Forms - ways of expressing ideas.
- Behavioural patterns - ways of acting
- Social structures - ways of interacting
- Media influence - ways of channelling the message
- Motivational Resources - ways of deciding.

Communication and Cultural Thought Patterns.
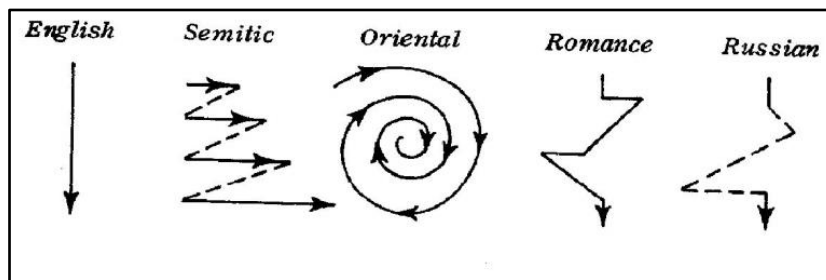
English – (includes Germanic languages such as German, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish) Communication is direct, linear and doesn't digress or go off topic.

Semitic – (for example, Arabic or Hebrew) Thoughts are expressed in a series of parallel ideas, both positive and negative.

Oriental – (Languages of Asia) Communication is indirect. A topic is not addressed head on, but is viewed from various perspectives, working around and around the point.

Romance – (Latin-based languages such as French, Italian, Romanian and Spanish) Communication often digresses and adds other thoughts , adding to the richness of the communication.

Russian – Like Romance languages, Russian communication is often digressive. The digression may include a series of parallel ideas.

4B HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Slow down when you speak.
Allow those who don't have the same native language as you the time to interpret what you are saying.

Speak clearly and concisely.
Make eye contact and enunciate plainly. Avoid using ambiguous or dual-meaning words. One of the problems non-native-English-speaking cultures have with the English language is misunderstanding the many meanings one word can have.

Keep it simple.
Think in terms of your audience, and speak to their understanding. Don't make long speeches that lose your group. Allow listeners the time to soak in what you have said. Pay attention to your audience and be an active speaker and listener. You can ascertain a group's grasp of your communication by their response to your words.

Maintain respect and courtesy for people who come from different cultures.

When you respect the people you communicate with, this helps reduce the stress they feel when trying to understand what you are saying. Doing basic research on specific ways to interact with the cultures you will be coming into contact with is a great way to show your multi-cultural group that you respect them.

Smile and be open.

Your body language communicates your acceptance - or non-acceptance - and respect, as it helps put listeners at ease. Your body language conveys unspoken communication. Avoid large gestures with your hands, as this can be intimidating to people who might misunderstand your meaning. Keeping your arms crossed often makes people think you are not open to what they have to say.

Avoid slang.

Slang words are unique to individual cultures and not always interpreted correctly. To ensure effective cross-cultural communication, don't use slang words others might not know.

Avoid use of idioms.

In a multi-cultural or cross-cultural group avoid using idioms that are from within the host culture. Remember that person from another culture in the group do not often share the same context, therefore the idioms may not be understood and in some cases maybe mis-interpreted and sometimes even found to be offensive. For example:

- Just let it go through to the keeper"
- "Flat out like a lizard drinking water!"
- "Mad as a cut snake"

Be careful with humour.

What is funny in one culture might not be in another. Humour might be misunderstood and interpreted in a bad light. While humour is a good icebreaker, it can backfire when the cross-cultural group misses humour's meaning. When in doubt, avoid using humour when communicating with people from many cultures.

Adopt a formal communication approach until you develop a rapport with your group.

A casual, informal approach can be upsetting to people from different cultures, especially when you have just met them. Use a respectful and formal mode of speech until you have developed a relationship with your cross-cultural group.

Stay away from using negative questions or answers. Double negatives are confusing enough to those with English as their native language. In a cross-cultural situation, double negatives are easily misunderstood. Keep questions and answers simple so everyone understands.

Ask for feedback.
Request members of the cross-cultural group to speak up and provide interaction or ask questions. When you permit two-way communication, this helps prevent misunderstandings and clears up questions people might have.

Summarise what you have said.
Don't assume that just because you said it everyone understands. Repeat what you have said in a different way, summarise it and allow people the time to grasp what you have said. By summarising what you have said, you can verify that everyone is on the same page.

https://work.chron.com/use-good-communication-skills-crosscultural-diversity-8317.html

4C RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

R = take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others

E = use **EMPATHETIC** listening

S = be **SENSITIVE** to differences in communicating styles

P = **PONDER** on what you hear and feel before you speak

E = **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions

C = keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are NOT here to debate who is right or wrong

MUTUAL INVITATION PROCESS (Eric H.F. Law)
Objective: To ensure that everyone in the group has the opportunity to speak.
Process:
1. The group is ideally seated in a circle.
2. Introduce the topic and outline the time allocated for the process.
3. The leader shares first.
4. After the leader has spoken he/she invites another person in the group to share. If that person who is invited is not ready, or does not wish to speak they simply say, "Pass" and they invite someone else in the group to speak.
5. The process can be enhanced if the leader has an object e.g. a message stick; ball; etc. This object is then given to the person who is invited to speak.

Circle

The Circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversations for thousands of years and is an effective method for working with culturally diverse groups.

What is Circle Good For?

One of the beautiful things about circle is its adaptability to a variety of groups, issues, and timeframes. Circle can be the process used for the duration of a gathering, particularly if the group is relatively small and time for deep reflection is a primary aim. Circle can also be used as a methodology of "checking in" and "checking out" or a way of making decisions together. Be creative with circle and be ready for the deep wisdom it can unearth!

Principles of Circle:

- Rotate leadership among all circle members.

- Responsibility is shared for the quality of the experience.

- Reliance on Wholeness, rather than on any personal agenda.

Practices of Circle:

- **Speak with Intention:** noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment
- **Listen with Attention:** respectful of the learning process of all members of the group
- **Tend to the Well-being of the Group:** Remaining aware of the impact of our contributions.

Setting Circle Agreements:

The use of agreements allows all members to have a free and profound exchange, to respect a diversity of views, and to share responsibility for the well-being and direction of the group. Agreements often used include:

1. Listen without judgement (slow down and listen)
2. Whatever is said in circle stays in circle
3. Offer what you can and ask for what you need
4. Silence is also part of the conversation
5. We agree to employ a group guardian to watch our need, timing and energy.

General Flow of the Circle

- Intention
- Welcome/start-point
- Centre and check-in/greeting agreements
- Three principles and three practices guardian of the process
- Checkout and farewell

Intention: shapes the circle and determines who will come, how long the circle will meet and what kinds of outcomes are to be expected. The caller of the circle spends time articulating intention and invitation.

Welcome/Start Point: once people have gathered, the circle host (or a participant) will typically open the circle with a gesture to indicate that the circle will start. Poems, silence, song, or gesture may be used.

The Centre of a circle usually holds objects that represent the intention of the circle.

Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken.

To aid self-governance and bring the circle back to intention, having a circle member volunteer to be the role of **guardian** is helpful. This group member watches and safeguards the group's energy and observes the groups process.

Closing the circle by checking out provides a formal end to the meeting, a chance for members to reflect on what has transpired.

Materials Needed:

Chairs/cushions arranged into a circle – folks should be able to view each other without impediments (ie. tables or desks).

Object for the Centre – this can be flowers, a bowl, basket, or even a poster stating the intention or purpose of the gathering

Talking piece

Chime, bell, or other gentle noisemaker

Materials for harvesting conversation.

4D THREE PRACTICAL METHODS

1. CONCRETISATION

This is a psychodrama method based on the insights of Jacob Moreno, the father of Psychodrama. It is an effective way to enable members of a group to create a visual image, scene, or picture of the task at hand. "*Concretisation* gives size and form to concepts, feelings and situations. Internal experiences are given symbolic form by choosing an object to represent a feeling, relationship or situation and placing it on the stage, or drawing it on paper." *Jocelyn Phiskie*

Concretisation also:

- Activates the right side of the brain enable new and creative ways of thinking.
- Allows for a fuller experience of the task at hand.
- Allows for experience and exploration.
- Assists in bringing unconscious ideas and experiences to the surface, where they can be analysed and worked on.
- Gives voice to internal stories, thoughts and images.
- Enables one to access their inner being and relate to their spiritual self.
- Fosters greater self- awareness and awareness of "the other"

Group members may be invited to use concrete objects such as cushions, scarves, or other items to "map" a particular task, situation, or dream. These items are placed on the floor and group members are able to stand beside or on their object and speak aloud their preferences, their ideas, options etc. The facilitator jots these ideas on a small paste-it sheet and places it on the scarf or concrete items. A visual representation of the thoughts and ideas of the group is then created, and enables participants to interact and engage in the process as it unfolds. This is a positive way to overcome the limitations of language.

Some examples of concretisation.

2. THE PLAY OF LIFE

Effective communication is essential in creating unity in group consciousness, direction setting and discernment. Dialogue is an important part of communication, and a key tool for accessing shared wisdom.

What is the Play of Life?
"The Play of Life" is an innovative, practical, hands-on, 3d simulation method designed to rapidly affect positive transformational change in individuals, groups and organisations. The approach is elegant, respectful and engaging; people relate to it readily.

"The Play of Life" produces breakthroughs in any area where success and growth rely on individual insight and interpersonal dynamics by allowing people to present issues, concerns, feelings, dreams and goals three-dimensionally. People go beyond verbal descriptions and explanations to literally "see" relationships and situations clearly."

3d SIMULATION ACCREDITATION COURSE Developed by: Dr Carlos A Raimundo with gratitude to Dr. Jaime G. Rojas-Bermudez.

1. Play of life allows people to use symbolic images that display all the relevant pieces of information and people in a situation simultaneously. This three dimensional "picture" is not reliant on a person's cultural frame work, or language skills.

The Play of Life makes communication more immediate, effective and efficient.
• It creates a space for discovery.
• Allows us to look at situation from the outside
• Is practical non-judgemental way of depicting a particular situation or even.
• Involves lateral thinking and invites one to explore situations or find solutions in a more creative way.
• Provides creative and innovative ways of relating by making communication clearer.
• It is safe, supported and contained.
• It makes communication more immediate, effective and efficient.

Example:
Question: What future ministries are possible for sisters in our area?
This can be shown by using small objects such as stones, Lego figures, pipe cleaners, paddle-pop sticks etc. Group members are then able to create a scene on a plain place mat, or piece of paper.
Small "paste it papers" are then used to label the picture created.

Individual contributions can then be collated and members of the group, stimulated by the various individual efforts can come together to collaborate and create a team production.

3. ALFOIL MODELS

This is not so much a game but a concept that can be used and adapted for all sorts of activities and exercises, ice-breakers, warm-ups. the ideas are also great for young people and school children.

Alfoil is clean, looks great when put on display, and is very easy to clear up.
Most people will never have tried using it before, so it's very new and interesting and stimulating.

Aside from the ideas below, you can use alfoil for any exercise that you might use newspapers for, especially construction exercise like towers and bridges, etc. Alfoil is also very inexpensive and easy to prepare in advance and to issue to teams and groups.

People of all ages have fantastic fun making models - it's a chance for people to discover talents they never knew they had, and for lots of laughter from one's own efforts and seeing other people's efforts too.

Culture, diversity, attitude, belief, integrity, relationships, etc - these are all quite tricky things to articulate and discuss using conventional media and communications tools. Making models helps the process of expression and realisation, because these less tangible concepts are more related to 'feel' and 'intuition' than logic and typical left-side-brain business and organisational processes.

Here are some simple ideas for alfoil exercises. Structure the group to suit the situation and the timings and the outcomes you'd like to prompt and discuss. Obviously not all individuals or teams need to be given the same task. You can determine who does what by any method that suits your aims and the preferences of the group. Some of these ideas are mainly for fun; others are more potent in terms of addressing and visualising people's own selves, and organisational challenges and solutions:

- make an alfoil horse (you can use the same method for making any four-legged animal)
- make an animal that represents yourself

- make a tree
- make a garden, farmyard or village with plants and tools that represent your family or work-group
- build anything that represents you
- design a new workplace layout model
- create a model to represent the organisation - whatever parts of it that are relevant to the session
- a representation of a particular concept,
- a cultural diversity model
- a symbolic model representing the organisation and its values and aims - how it is and/or how it could or should be
- a symbolic interpretation of a SWOT analysis

The world is becoming more complex and more challenging. The concepts that people need to grasp and address are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. It helps therefore to work sometimes with an exciting medium, daft as it sounds, like alfoil, to free-up people's thinking and imagination.

How to make a Baking Foil Horse

Making animals and other things out of aluminium foil is a wonderful basis for artistic expression, relaxation, team exercises, activities for young people, and simple entertainment.

See the baking foil exercises ideas on the team building games page. Here's how to make a baking foil horse:
- Start with a rectangular sheet of aluminium foil.
- Any size roll.
- A sheet from a small roll will make a horse about 3-4 inches high.
- A larger sheet from a wide roll of foil will make a horse about 4-5 inches high.
- Tear or cut the foil where indicated by the red lines on the picture.
- The side sections fold together to create the body.
- The corner sections become the legs.
- The top and bottom sections will be the head/neck and the tail.

Take care to avoid the foil tearing too far to the centre with the result that a leg is lost.
- At this stage decide which is to be the head and which is to be the tail.
- Choose the end with the most foil for the head/neck.
- Work on each section folding it along its length to create a rolled effect rather than a crushed or flattened feel.
- The wonderful thing about foil is how much moulding is possible.
- You can keep compressing it gently wherever required in order to create an acceptable shape for each part of the horse (or whatever else you are modelling).

- All that matters at this stage is that you have four legs, a body, a neck/head and a tail.
- Detail in the shape is not important at this stage.
- Just aim to create a very basic structure.
- And then press and bend it into the shape you want.

From: https://www.businessballs.com/

4E EIGHT ABORIGINAL WAYS OF LEARNING

The Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning framework is expressed as eight interconnected pedagogies involving narrative-driven learning, visualised learning plans, hands-on/reflective techniques, use of symbols/metaphors, land-based learning, indirect/synergistic logic, modelled/scaffolded genre mastery, and connectedness to community. But these can change in different settings.

Story Sharing: *Approaching learning through narrative.*

Learning Maps: *Explicitly mapping/visualising processes.*

Non-verbal: *Applying intra-personal and kinaesthetic skills to thinking and learning.*

Symbols and Images: *Using images and metaphors to understand concepts and content.*

Land Links: *Place-based learning, linking content to local land and place.*

Non-linear: *Producing innovations and understanding by thinking laterally or combining systems.*

Deconstruct/Reconstruct: *Modelling and scaffolding, working from wholes to parts (watch then do).*

Community Links: *Centring local viewpoints, applying learning for community benefit.*

HOW WE LEARN – CULTURE WAY

1. We connect through the stories we share.
2. We picture our pathways of knowledge.
3. We see, think, act, make and share without words.
4. We keep and share knowledge with art and objects.
5. We work with lessons from land and nature.
6. We put different ideas together and create new knowledge.
7. We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing.
8. We bring new knowledge home to help our mob.

We connect through the stories we share.

Story Sharing: *Approaching learning through narrative.*

Personal narratives (stories) are central

We picture our pathways of knowledge.

Learning Maps: *Explicitly mapping/visualising processes.*

Images or visuals are used to map out processes for learners to follow.

We see, think, act, make and share without words.

Non-verbal: *Applying intra-personal and kinaesthetic skills to thinking and learning.*

Kinaesthetic, hands-on, non-verbal learning is characteristic

We keep and share knowledge with art and objects.

Symbols and Images: *Using images and metaphors to understand concepts and content.*

Symbol, image and metaphor are central to pedagogy

We work with lessons from land and nature.

Land Links: *Place-based learning, linking content to local land and place.*

Ecological and place-based, drawn from the living landscape within a framework of profound ancestral and personal relationships with place

We put different ideas together and create new knowledge.

Non-linear: *Producing innovations and understanding by thinking laterally.*

Nonlinear ways of learning are complementary, not oppositional

We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing.

Deconstruct/Reconstruct: *Modelling and scaffolding, working from wholes to parts.*

Begin with the whole structure, rather than a series of sequenced steps.

Holistic, global, scaffolded and independent learning orientations of students.

We bring new knowledge home to help our mob.

Community Links: *Centring local viewpoints, applying learning for community benefit.*

Connections to real-life purposes, contexts & communities, teams.

https://www.painaustralia.org.au/static/uploads/files/8-aboriginal-ways-of-learning-factsheet2-wfklwmnralub.pdf

4F STEPS TOWARD BECOMING AN INTER-CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PERSON

1. Admit that my way of perceiving the world is not universal.
2. Believe in the necessity of understanding my own culture prior to discovering the cultures of others.
3. Decide to embrace opportunities for encountering others who are different.
4. Recognise and admit that my initial reaction to cultural difference may be defensive either by denigrating the differing culture or implying my culture is superior.
5. Recognise and admit that my initial reaction to cultural difference may be to deny my own culture in order to gain acceptance of differing culture.
6. Discern from my investigation of my own culture the valuable cultural traits that effect my attitudes and behaviour.
7. Let go of my prejudices as I discover them within myself and make amends to the persons and groups that I have hurt as a result of my prejudice whenever possible.
8. Discern from my encounters of other cultures and reflect on what makes their cultural traits valuable to them.
9. Continue to increase & modify my inventory of my own cultural traits by practicing steps 3 – 7.
10. Remain silent and listen when my discomfort toward others' description of cultural differences cause me to trivialise difference.
11. Actively seek opportunities such as reading and listening to and interacting with those with extensive cross-cultural experience to discover why the information I receive about other cultures will enhance my relationships with others.
12. Withhold judgement when I encounter what I consider *improper* verbal and non-verbal behaviour and attempt to discern what is attributable to cultural traits and values.
13. Honestly believe that I can value differences among people and use them as opportunities to learn about self and others by practicing the above steps regularly.
14. Immerse myself in a different culture for an extended period of time and continue to practice the above steps.
15. Commit myself to understand a given situation not only from my point of view but also from the cultural world view of the other.
16. Accept my cultural marginality and use it creatively to help individuals and groups to better understand each other.
17. Recognise that this is an ongoing process.

5 Toolkit

5A WAYS TO BEGIN

ICEBREAKERS

Icebreakers are a good way to begin a session for a number of reasons:

- Break down feelings of unfamiliarity and shyness
- Help people shift roles – from their "work" selves to their "more human" selves
- Build a sense of being part of a team
- Create networking opportunities
- Help share participants' skills and experiences

Some ways to do introductions and icebreakers are:

- In pairs, have people turn to the person next to them and share their name, organisation and three other facts about themselves that others might not know. Then, have each pair introduce *each other* to the group. This helps to get strangers acquainted and for people to feel safe – they already know at least one other person, and didn't have to share information directly in front of a big group at the beginning of the meeting.

- Form small groups and have each of them work on a puzzle. Have them introduce themselves to their group before they get to work. This helps to build a sense of team work.

- In a large group, have everyone write down two true statements about themselves and one false one. Then, every person reads their statements and the whole group has to guess which one is false. This helps people get acquainted and relaxed.

- Give each participant a survey and have the participants interview each other to find the answers. Make the questions about skills, experience, opinions on the issue you'll be working on. When everyone is finished, have people share the answers they got.

SOME CONVERSATION STARTERS…
1. Tell me the three best things about you.
2. On a scale of 1-10, how strict are/were your parents?
3. Who was your worst/favourite teacher? Why?
4. Which would you pick: being world-class attractive, a genius or famous for doing something great?
5. Who are the three greatest musicians? Three favourite movies? Three best celebrities?

6. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

7. What's the most beautiful place you've ever been?

8. Which historical figure would you like to be?

9. What would you do if you were invisible for a day?

10. Who would you like to live like for a day?

11. Would you rather live for a week in the past or the future?

12. If you could eat only three foods for the rest of your life, what would they be?

13. If you could be a movie character for a week, who would you be?

14. If you could have dinner with anyone from history, who would it be?

15. What's one choice you really regret?

16. What's your favourite childhood book? Toy?

17. What's a great book you've read recently?

18. If you could ask your pet three questions, what would they be?

19. What's the most courageous thing you've ever done?

20. If you could be an Olympic athlete, in what sport would you compete?

21. If you had to live in a different country, which would it be?

22. What living person, other than family members, do you most admire?

23. If you could choose your own nickname, what would it be?

24. Who is the funniest person you know?

25. What's your favourite thing about one of your grandparents?

26. Tell the person to your right your favourite thing about them.

27. Do you ever talk to yourself? When and what do you say?

28. When you're having a bad day, what do you do to make yourself feel better?

29. What's your favourite smell in the whole world?

30. What do you think is the greatest invention of all time?

31. Would you rather win an Olympic medal, an Academy Award or the Nobel Peace prize?

32. What's your favourite season? Time of the day?

33. What's the one food you could never bring yourself to eat?

34. What is the sound you love the most?

35. What 3 famous people, living or dead, would you want at your fantasy dinner party?

36. If you could pick a new first name, what would it be?

37. If you had to leave earth on a spaceship and take 4 friends with you, who would they be?

38. What is your favourite movie quote?

39. Do you sleep with your sheets tucked in or out?

40. What's your dream job?

41. What's the best part about having siblings?

42. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?

43. What is your favourite family tradition?

44. What fictional character do you wish you could meet?

45. If you could shop for free at one store, which one would you choose?

46. What personal trait has gotten you in the most trouble?

47. What is the best piece of advice you've received?
48. Would you rather be the best player on a horrible team or the worst player on a great team?
49. Which of the Seven Dwarfs is most like you?
50. Name a product or service you love so much that you'd happily be that company's spokesperson.

SOME TIPS FOR STARTING OFF

When doing introductions and icebreakers, it's important to remember:

- Every participant needs to take part in the activity. The only exception may be latecomers who arrive after the introductions are completed. At the first possible moment, ask the latecomers to say their name and any other information you feel they need to share in order for everyone to feel comfortable and equal.

- Be sensitive to the culture, age, gender and literacy levels of participants and any other factors when deciding how to do introductions. For example, an activity that requires physical contact or reading a lengthy instruction sheet may be inappropriate for your group. Also, keep in mind what you want to accomplish with the activity. Don't make a decision to do something only because it seems like fun.

- It is important to make everyone feel welcome and listened to at the beginning of the meeting. Otherwise, participants may feel uncomfortable and unappreciated and won't participate well later on. Also, if you don't get some basic information about who is there, you may miss some golden opportunities.

- And don't forget to introduce yourself. You want to make sure that you establish some credibility to be facilitating the meeting and that people know a bit about you. Credibility doesn't mean you have a college degree or 15 years of facilitation experience. It just means that you share some of your background so people know why you are doing the facilitation and what has led you to be speaking up.

KITCHEN TOP DRAWER GAME

This exercise is a very simple quick activity for ice-breakers and introductions, and for expressing and revealing feelings of personality. Also for exploring team roles. For groups of any size although is best to split large groups into teams of a dozen or less, with appointed team-leaders to facilitate.

The task is simply for each team member to liken themselves to a utensil or piece of cutlery commonly found in a kitchen top drawer, and say why they think they are like the chosen item, ideally focusing on strengths and styles. Give delegates thirty seconds to think and decide before asking people to reveal their choices and reasoning in turn.

If it helps (especially for young people), start the exercise with a quick brainstorm session with a flipchart or whiteboard of all the sorts of items that people have in their kitchen top drawers at home, which should produce a long list of ideas.

For very large groups you can vary the exercise by asking people to think and decide and then circulate around the room finding other people who have chosen the same utensil to represent themselves, and to form into sub-groupings of the same types. Fun and noise can be injected - especially for young people or lively conferences - by asking people to identify themselves by shouting the name of their utensil, and/or by trying physically to look or act like the utensil.

Be prepared and on the look-out to instruct potentially large sub-groups of 'knives' into different types of knives, so that no category sub-grouping amounts to more than 20% of the whole group.

Extend the activity by asking each group to develop a proposition as to why their particular utensil is the best in the drawer - or 'top drawer' - which they can present in turn to the whole group.

Further extend the activity by asking teams or players to vote (secret ballot on slips of paper given to the facilitator) as to the utensil with most and least value to the kitchen, thereby being able to decide the 'winners', should the activity warrant it.

Alternatively, so as to emphasise the value of all team members and roles, ask each team to identify a particular typical 'project' (Sunday Roast dinner for instance) for the kitchen which demands the involvement (and in what way) of all of the selected utensils.

Add greater depth and interest to the activities by referring to the Johari Window and discussing mutual and self-awareness issues resulting; also refer to personality types and styles to discuss and explore comparisons between 'utensils' and people associating with them, and various personality types from whatever personality models are of interest and relevance to the group. For example, are knives most like Jung's and Myers Briggs 'thinking' types and why? Which are the extravert utensils and which are the introvert ones and why, and what are their relative strengths?

The exercises can of course be adapted for other types of tools instead of those found in the top drawer of the kitchen, for example the garden shed, or the tools associated with a particular industry. If you stay with the kitchen drawer theme it's probably best to avoid any reference to the 'sharpest knife in the drawer' expression so as not to sway attitudes in this direction - rest assured you will see plenty of people aspiring to be 'knives' as it is without encouraging any more.

STARTER KEYS

An easy and flexible exercise (using people's bunches of keys) for ice-breakers and introductions for groups of any size (very large groups need to be split into smaller teams with appointed team leaders). Also a quick fun method for deciding order (who goes first - for introductions, speaking, presenting, etc) and also for splitting a group into smaller teams, threes or pairs. The idea can also extend into various activities for self- and mutual awareness, story-telling, understanding life 'partitions', time management and prioritising, life balance and responsibility. Keys are of course very personal items with significant personal connections and representations, and so provide opportunities to create lots of interesting, enjoyable and helpful activities around them.

Exercises examples:
- For deciding order- 'Who goes first' - Ask each person to put their bunch of keys on the table in front of them. Order is decided according to most keys on the bunch. Tie-breaker(s) can be decided according to the key(s) with most notches.

- For splitting group into teams or threes or pairs - Ask the group to sort themselves into the required number (which you would normally stipulate, unless your purpose allows/prefers them to sort into teams of their own choosing) of teams or threes or pairings according to shared features (in common with others) of their key bunches, for example number of keys on bunch; type of key-ring fobs (sensible, daft, tatty, glitzy, unmanageably large, uselessly small, broken, holiday mementoes, promotional giveaways), size of keys, type of keys, colours of keys, purpose of keys.

- For starting and framing personal introductions and profiles - Ask group members to put their keys on the table. Each person then takes turns (you can use the order-deciding method above) to introduce and describe themselves according to their keys, from the perspective of each key's purpose and the meaning in their life represented by what each key unlocks.

- For addressing time management, life balance and personal change, split the group into threes and ask each person to discuss in turn, among their teams of three, what their own keys represent in terms of stuff they're happy with and stuff they'd like to change.

- For addressing personal responsibilities and delegation, from others and to others, and responsibilities people aspire to - Ask the group to split into pairs or threes, and as individuals, to discuss with their partners what they'd like their bunch of keys to be like instead of how it is at the moment - what responsibilities (keys) would they like to lose or change or give to others - what new keys would they like to add? How else would they like to change their bunch of keys? If anyone is entirely happy with their bunch of keys ask them to think ahead five years. If they're still happy with their keys ask them to help facilitate...

<p style="text-align:right">https://www.businessballs.com/</p>

5B ENERGISERS AND RE-ENERGISERS

What's the purpose of an energiser?
The purpose of an energiser is, quite literally, to *energise* – to move people from a state of lethargy or disengagement to vitality and engagement.

There are lots of ways a good energiser can help. It can:
- change the mood in the room if your group is stuck in a rut
- be a great way of bonding the group old and new
- help a group get to know each other
- help a group work better together
- be a way of sharing key information in a different way
- inject some fun into the meeting

Note - if you don't like it, your group won't either! – so choose wisely.

Truth or lie
Ask each member of the group to come up with two statements – one true and one a lie. For example, 'I like bananas and I used to win competitions in Irish dancing.' Each person takes it in turn to read out their statements and the team then votes on which statement they think is true and which a lie. A great energiser for teams who already know each other well – as a way of uncovering new facts about each other – or for newly formed teams to learn something about their colleagues.

Near and far

A physical energiser that will get your group out of their seats. Ask your group to write down the name of two people in the room on a post-it note, and not let anyone else see it. Then get everyone to stand up. Tell them their goal is to be equidistant at all times from the two names they wrote down. Get people to move until they are. You can decide how long this energiser lasts. A good way of injecting a physical activity if your group needs an uplift.

The chocolate game

Get a box of Celebrations, or any sort that has a number of different chocolates inside. Before you start, give each type of chocolate a question. For example, Dairy Milk: what is your favourite film? Twirl: what is your favourite type of music? Fudge: what is something you are proud of?

Then hand around the box and ask each person to take a chocolate, without looking, and respond to the question that relates to the chocolate they picked out. Go round as many times as you like, or until you have had enough chocolates.

You could try mixing up the questions to include meeting topics as a way of doing individual updates differently. For example 'What has been your biggest highlight?' 'What has been your biggest challenge?' A great energiser for groups to get to know each other better, or as an alternative way of doing task updates.

Speed dating

A very quick physical energiser and a good one to bond teams or get them working better together. You will need an even number of people, so you might not be able to join in. Explain to the team that they are going to take part in a form of speed dating. You can either set up chairs in pairs opposite each other in a large circle or, if you think people need to be up and moving, this can be done standing up. Ask the team to stand/sit opposite someone else in the room and tell them they have 3 minutes to find out as many things as possible that they have in common – and that they don't already know. Let them know when their time is up and then ask one person in each pair to move to their right. Repeat – with the same people moving each time – until there's been a complete circle. The team will end up knowing a lot more about each other than when they started and will have found some common ground with each other.

Congratulations!

A good energiser if your group has been going through difficult changes. Ask everyone to write down their most significant achievement over the past 3-6 months either at work or at home, and to explain it to their neighbour. Each person then takes it in turn to talk about their colleague's achievement.

Choices

This fun group activity helps a team learn more about each other and gets them out of their seats and physically moving to wake up their senses and re-energise the group.

Explain that the room is now divided into two sides and draw an imaginary line for all to see.

The leader will call out two choices – the first choice will be represented by the left side of the room and the second choice by the right side.

Participants need to quickly move to the side of the room that they prefer between the two choices. Or, they can choose to stay in the middle if they are undecided or neutral. The leader can come up with choices ahead of time that match the topic of the brainstorming session, or use some of these samples:

- city or country?
- beach or mountain?
- left-handed or right-handed?
- half empty or half full?
- siblings or only child?
- morning person or night owl?
- Elvis or The Beatles?

Corner conversations

To understand how the group reacts to a certain idea, or related to the topic, create five posters entitled - 'Most Definitely', Why Not?, 'Maybe', 'No Way', and 'Of course Not', and place them in the corners of the room. Ask questions related to the current state of things before asking the group to move to the various statements. The corner with the most number of people, should be asked about their opinions, whether good or bad, when it comes to a particular question raised as part of the round. That way, you'll know what the majority of the group feels and thinks, and you can also explore why others moved to different spots, when asked the same question. This is also a creative way of gathering valuable feedback from the group.

https://www.eclipsemarketingservices.com/how-to-wake-up-a-sleepy-meeting/

5C INFORMATION GATHERING TECHNIQUES

A number of strategies may be used to gather information. Each has value in certain circumstances, and in many cases, multiple strategies may be required to gain a complete picture from a diverse group.

Brainstorming

Basic brainstorming is not complex—though there are important techniques for ensuring success. Here, in a nutshell, is how basic brainstorming works:

1. Get a group of people together to address a problem, challenge, or opportunity.
2. Ask your group to generate as many ideas as possible—no matter how "off the wall" they may seem. During this period, no criticism is allowed.
3. Review the ideas, select the most interesting, and then lead a discussion about how to combine, improve, and/or implement the ideas.

SWOTs

SWOTs help you gather information for strategic planning and other goal setting meetings. SWOT information (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats) provides data to accurately determine your group's current circumstances.

Five whys

Five Whys is a technique for getting to the core source of problems in minimum time. To get to the core of a problem one will need to ask the question *"Why?"* an average of five times. Five Whys involves asking this basic question until your group is satisfied that the root cause of a problem is stated and understood.

Five Whys can be used when you are unsure of what specifically caused a situation to be as it is, and/or when you want a systematic way to lead a group to understand the real reason why a problem is occurring or has occurred. The resulting information can be used to address the issue.

Starbursting

Create a six pointed star. At the centre of the star, write the challenge or opportunity you are facing. At each point of the star, write one of the following words: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Use these words to generate questions. Who are we focusing on? What do they say they want? Use the questions to generate discussion.

Round robin brainstorming

A "round robin" is a strategy in which everyone gets a chance to participate. In the case of brainstorming that means everyone (1) must share an idea and (2) wait until everyone else has shared before suggesting a second idea or critiquing ideas. This is a great way to encourage shy (or uninterested) individuals to speak up, while keeping dominant personalities from taking over the brainstorming session.

Rapid ideation

This simple technique can be surprising fruitful. Ask the individuals in your group to write down as many ideas as they can in a given period of time. Then either have them share the ideas aloud or collect responses. Often, you will find certain ideas popping up over and over again. In some cases these are the obvious ideas, but in some cases they may provide some revelations.

Collaborative brainwriting

Write your question or concern on a large piece of paper, and post it in a central place. Ask the group to write or post their ideas when they are able, over the course of the session/day/week. Collate ideas either on your own or with your group's involvement.

Brainwriting

The brain writing process involves having each participant anonymously write down ideas on index cards. The ideas can then be randomly shared with other participants who add to or critique the ideas. Alternatively, the ideas can be collected and collated by the leadership team/organisers.

Gap filling

Start with a statement of where you are. Then write a statement of where you would like to be. How can you fill in the gap to get to your goal? Your participants will respond with a wide range of answers from the general to the particular. Collect them all, and then organise them to develop a vision for action.

Mind mapping

Mind mapping is a visual tool for enhancing the brainstorming process. In essence, you are drawing a picture of the relationships among and between ideas. Start by writing down your goal or challenge, and ask participants to think of related issues. Layer by layer, add content to your map so that you can visually see how, one problem or issue fits into the broader picture you are attempting to address.

New shoes

The New Shoes technique helps ensure that people in your meeting groups are listening, understanding, and can explain the other perspectives being presented in the room. This is accomplished by asking participants to summarise what they heard to the satisfaction of the people who originally presented an idea or point of view. New Shoes helps participants believe that their viewpoint and position has been heard by other participants.

1. Introduce New Shoes during a part of your meeting when it is particularly important that the opinions of all parties are understood.
2. Listen to all participants' points of view.
3. Ask people to summarise what they heard from participants presenting another point of view.
4. Ask the people whose viewpoints were summarised to approve of the accuracy of the summary.
5. Move forward with problem solving or whatever goal you were working towards.

Keep/throw

Keep/Throw provides a process for a group to agree on what is working and should continue to be done, and what is not working and should be discontinued or changed.

When planning for the future, radical changes are sometimes needed to meet the new goals. In this situation, some people and groups will want to throw everything away and start from scratch. This method definitely gets rid of the bad, but it does not honour or preserve what is already good. It can also leave participants feeling that everything they have done in the past was worthless. Keep/Throw allows for a healthier, more productive approach to change that supports past successes by honouring what is good.

Nominal group process

Nominal Group Process is a technique that allows meeting participants to express themselves without immediate outside influence. The process involves having each group member individually think and write down their thoughts about an issue or problem before presenting them to the group verbally.

Nominal Group Process provides the time for participants to collect and articulate their own thoughts before they hear other perspectives. This creates fuller participation and assures that the most persuasive individuals in the group do not impact and alter the valuable input of the whole group.

1. Introduce the issue or problem under consideration and the Nominal Group Process technique.
2. Ask each person to write his or her ideas to the question/s you have posed.
3. Ask each participant to share his or her responses to the questions. Chart their responses.
4. Review the information as a group.
5. Summarise your findings and determine how to proceed.

http://www.avasbutler.com/category/techniques-to-gather-information/page/2/#.XPycSfg8Shc

1, 2, 4, 8

This process is useful in assisting groups to identify common understandings and to clarify priorities and consensus on particular issues or topics under discussion.

Initially, each individual is asked to come up with as many ideas as they can relating to the issue in a given timeframe (e.g. five minutes).

They are then asked to find a partner and through discussion as a pair, need to come to agreement on the three most important aspects of the issue. The pair then joins with another pair and the process is repeated – the four need to agree on the three most important aspects of the issue.

The four then join with another four to find the three aspects all eight can agree are the most important.

The process continues until the whole group is in the one discussion and can arrive at agreement about the three most important aspects of the issue. (32 would be the maximum for the large group. Consensus between two or three groups of 32 would be done as a whole group report back.)

As a facilitator, you need to remain completely neutral throughout the process and simply give the group updates on timing and when to change to the next grouping. From your perspective, the opportunity provided for dialogue is the crucial thing, not the outcome.

The process is important for you here, not the product. The product will reflect the group's thinking and what is important for them. This process provides a way for all to feel they have been heard, and that their ideas are reflected in the final outcome.

This is a very interesting activity to observe in terms of who stays with the process, who organises, who dominates, who bails out etc.

The decision reached in the final grouping must be a whole group consensus. If the group decides they want to choose four or five aspects for example, rather than three, that is their decision. You are simply there to facilitate their decision-making process. It is better to contain them to three aspects in the first few rounds, otherwise the process becomes very unwieldy and it is difficult to narrow down the options.

It is also important to limit the timing of the discussion in each round, and this will depend on the issue/topic under discussion. Provide a clear timeframe that allows a reasonable opportunity for decisions to be reached, and update the group regularly on how much longer they have to complete each round. Attentiveness to cues from the different small groups is very important here.

Listener role

In small group discussions it is a good idea to have someone allocated to the role of 'Listener'. The Listener is an impartial observer, is familiar with the group and the issue/topic, and is able to summarise the discussion for the group.

This is a particularly useful role in situations where the small group needs to report back to the larger group.

The Listener listens to the conversation, notes down important points of the discussion and feeds back their summary to the group. The group then has the opportunity to clarify the Listener's observations before it is reported back to the larger group.

Keeping a speakers list

A tool that's used in conjunction with hand-signals. It simply involves asking people to raise a finger when they wish to speak, and noting them down in order. They are then invited to speak in that order.

Matchstick discussion

This can be used to place limits on over-eager speakers. It also encourages shy speakers to contribute. Each person is given the same number of matches (one to five matches depending on time available.) Every time someone speaks they give up a match. When someone has used all their matches they may not speak again until everyone else's matches are gone too. Decide beforehand whether people may give their matches to other members of the group.

Talking sticks

You can use a stick or a conch shell or almost any other distinctive object. Place the talking stick in the centre of the group. Speakers take it from the centre, say their piece and return it to the middle. Only the person holding the talking stick is permitted to speak (you can set a time limit if necessary). This tool allows people to consider and take their time in voicing their views as they don't have to be afraid that someone else might jump in. It also makes people conscious of when they interrupt others.

LOTUS DIAGRAM

What is a lotus diagram?
This graphic organiser is used for organisation and brainstorming. It helps break down topics of information, which can then be prioritised for additional exploration.

Steps in creating a lotus diagram
- determine topic to be investigated
- place the main topic in the centre of the lotus diagram template
- brainstorm ideas into major topics in the central coloured squares
- place these major topic ideas into the corresponding outer coloured squares
- brainstorm/explore information about each of the subtopics in the white squares

When do you use a lotus diagram?
- to promote logical and creative thinking
- to engage others in analysis and brainstorming
- to generate ideas that can be split out after the first round of brainstorming

https://www.holmen.k12.wi.us/cms_files/resources/Lotus%20Diagram.pdf

The Spirit of
The Good
Samaritan
Benedictine
Tradition

a group to which to belong

a face of God to see

a language to speak

a work to undertake

a story to enter

a way to pray
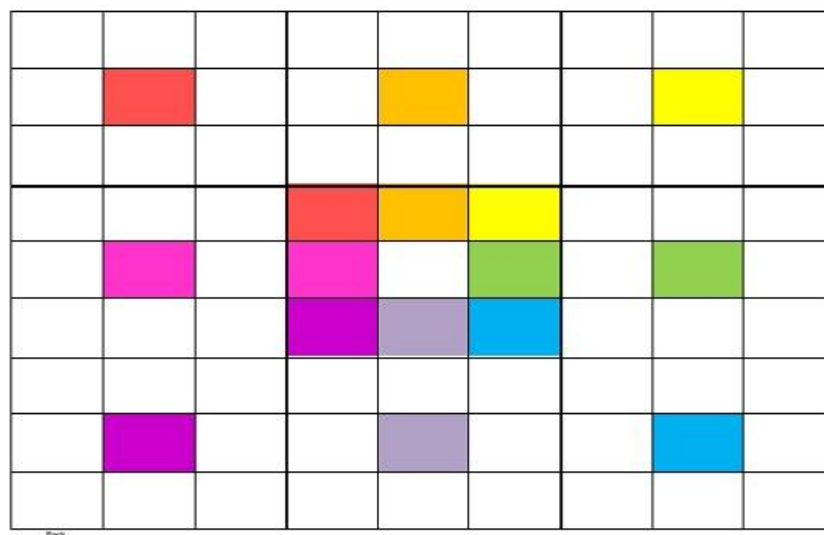
5D CREATING GROUPS WITHIN GROUPS AND MOVING PEOPLE AROUND

Creative ways to form groups:

- Deck of cards
  - All kings together, queens etc.
  - All spades together, diamonds
  - All odd or even numbers together
- Count people off e.g. 1,2,3,4 (depending on the size of the group) then all the 1's together, all the 2's together etc.
- Use the name tags to stick of coloured dot or symbol e.g. all red circles together or all apples etc.
- Start with pairs, find someone who shares the same birth month as you, then find a pair that is on either side of that month and form a group of four.

Form groups based on interests or tasks

Example: for an event, list all the tasks that need to be done and ask for groups to form around the tasks. Give them a list of instructions, directions or outcomes you want them to achieve OR form groups around interest, list the interests of the group and let people move toward the interest group e.g. outing for autumn, garden group, discussion group on ….. Have some direction or way of recording the groups decisions e.g. what is the goal of this group? How will you achieve this goal?

Flip it Consulting LLC 2011 Barbi Honeycutt Ph.D

5E IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR ALL SEASONS

Here are generative questions that are useful to stimulate new knowledge and creative thinking in a wide variety of situations around the world.

Questions for Focusing Collective Attention

- What question, if answered, could make the greatest difference to the future of the situation *we're exploring here?*
- What's important to you about this situation, and why do you care?
- What's our intention here? What's the deeper purpose – the "big why" – that is worthy of our best effort?
- What opportunities can we see in this situation?
- What do we know so far/still need to learn about this situation?
- What are the dilemmas/opportunities in this situation?
- What assumptions do we need to test or challenge in thinking about this situation?

- What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than we do say about this situation?

Questions for Connecting Ideas and Finding Deeper Insight

- What's taking shape here? What are we hearing underneath the variety of opinions being expressed? What is in the centre of our listening?
- What's emerging that is new for you? What new connections are you making?
- What have you heard that had real meaning for you? What surprised you? What puzzled or challenged you? What question would you like to ask now?
- What is missing from the picture so far? What are we not seeing? Where do we need more clarity?
- What has been your major learning or insight so far?
- What's the next level of thinking we need to address?
- If there was one thing that hasn't yet been said but is needed in order to reach a deeper level of understanding/clarity, what would that be?

Questions that Create Forward Movement

- What would it take to create change on this issue?
- What could happen that would enable you/us to feel fully engaged and energized in this situation?
- What's possible here and who cares about it?
- What needs our immediate attention going forward?
- If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose?
- How can we support each other in taking the next steps? What unique contribution can we each make?
- What challenges might come our way, and how might we meet them?
- What conversation, if begun today, could ripple out in a way that created new possibilities for the future of [our situation...]?
- What seed might we plant together today that could make the most difference to the future of [our situation....]?

The World Café Hosting Guide

Questioning Formats

When selecting questions to ask, there is a broad range you can choose from. It's important to understand how each of these question formats achieves a slightly different outcome.

Fact-finding questions are targeted at verifiable data such as who, what, when, where, and how much. Use them to gather information about the current situation.

Example: *"What kind of computer equipment are you now using?"*

"How much training did staff receive at the start?"

Feeling-finding questions ask for subjective information that gets at the participants' opinions, feelings, values and beliefs. They help you understand views. Usually contain words like think or feel.

Example: *"How do you feel about the effectiveness of the new equipment?"*

"Do you think the staff felt they received enough training?"

Tell-me-more questions can help you find out more about what the participants are saying. They encourage the speaker to provide more details.

Example: *"Tell me more." "Can you elaborate on that?"*

"Can you be more specific?"

Best/least questions help you understand potential opportunities in the present situation. They let you test for the outer limits of participants' wants and needs.

Example: *"What is the best thing about receiving a new computer?"*

"what is the worst thing about the new equipment?"

Third-party questions help uncover thoughts in an indirect manner. They're designed to help people express sensitive information.

Example: *"Some people find that computer training is too time consuming. How does that sound to you?"*

"There is some concern about overly autocratic managers in many factories. Can you relate to that concern?"

"Magic wand" questions let you explore people's true desires. Also known as "Crystal ball" questions, these are useful in temporarily removing obstacles from a person's mind.

Example: *"If time and money were no obstacle, what sort of a computer system would you design for the department?"*

QUESTION MATRIX	Event	Situation	Choice	Person	Reason	Means
Present	What is/are…?	Where/when is…?	Which is….?	Who is….?	Why is…?	How is….?
Past	What did…?	Where did/when did…?	Which did….?	Who did…?	Why did…?	How did….?
Possibility	What can….?	Where/when can….?	Which can…?	Who can….?	Why can….?	How can….?
Probability	What would/could…?	Where/When could….?	Which would….?	Who would….?	Why would….?	How would….?
Prediction	What will…?	Where/when will…?	Which will….?	Who will….?	Why will….?	How will….?
Imagination	What might….?	Where/when might….?	Which might….?	Who might….?	Why might….?	How might….?

From "Facilitating with Ease" by Ingrid Bens

5F EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

When to Evaluate

Generally, the sooner people fill out evaluations, the better. Memory of the meeting and their feelings about the meeting are fresh. Specifics can be recalled making the feedback more effective. Build time into the conclusion portion of the meeting agenda to fill out evaluations. Invariably, when meetings run late, the evaluation is dropped from the agenda. This is a mistake. No matter what happens, take the time to offer the group the opportunity to comment on their experience in your meeting.

If you ask people to comment the next day, you will diminish input by at least 50% as people move onto other areas of activity and can't get around to recalling your meeting.

Evaluation Design

Meeting evaluations should meet several simple criteria:

- Keep evaluations short. Three or four questions invite thoughtful responses at the end of a meeting. Thirty questions invite less detailed feedback since they take so much time to complete.

- Encourage thoughtful responses. Open-ended questions such as, "What specifically, was most valuable to you in this meeting?" or, "What should the facilitator do more (or less) of?" invite honest, thoughtful opinions.

- Provide feedback on content and process. Meetings are held to communicate the content of relative issues. However, they are most effective when they have a process that creates participant involvement. Questions such as, "How can we improve our meetings?" or, "What can we do differently at future meetings to improve their effectiveness for you?" get to these issues. Responses to these questions provide feedback on content and process issues.

- Gather feedback about the group's effectiveness. Questions such as, "How can we improve our teamwork?" or, "What can we do in our meetings to improve our communication?" or, "What can we do to build greater cohesion in our meetings?" provide valuable feedback about the group's process.

- Allow all participants to surface their greatest area of concern. Broadly worded questions allow each participant to provide feedback on whatever concerns they have about the group. For instance, "If you could wave a magic wand over our group and change it, what would be different?" or, "What two things do we need to pay more attention to?" allow participants to surface all matters of concern.

- Vary the feedback your evaluation seeks from the group. Ask different questions of different groups. Also, ask different questions from meeting-to-meeting of an intact group. One meeting you might ask questions about complex content issues, the next time you might inquire into the leadership issues the group uses in its meetings.

- Feedback about the leader's behaviour in meetings. Meeting leaders tend to use meeting techniques they learned when they held lower positions of rank within the organisation. As they gain prestige and relative power, those techniques that served them well earlier may have a negative impact on the group without the leader being aware of it. Leaders need to give permission to the group to offer feedback to the leader. Questions such as, "What should I do differently in future meetings to help us?" or, "What behaviours of mine get in the way of our meeting objectives?" are very powerful questions since they gather feedback critical to the leader's success. Further, they set the expectation with the group that feedback is a norm for all group members.

Gathering feedback takes courage on the part of meeting leaders and participants alike. Non-attributed, anonymous responses protect participants from retribution and work well in large groups but are impossible in smaller groups. Therefore, the group leader needs to tell the group—and mean every word—that there are no wrong answers. This feedback is merely each individual's reaction to the meeting.

What to do with the Feedback
Regardless of what they tell you in their evaluations, feed the responses back to the group. Let them know you read their comments and share with them your thoughts. There will be some superb suggestions that can be readily applied in your next meeting. There will also be some suggestions that are impossible. Tell them why a suggestion is impossible and offer alternatives. Your intent is to communicate the value you place on each of their perspectives. If the group is large, feeding the evaluation results back via email or memo can be an effective means of communicating the leader's intent to implement good ideas from the group.

<div align="right">http://myersrue.com/pdf/evaluate.pdf</div>

There are lots of ways to quickly evaluate a meeting. Here are several simple options.

Keep or Change
Draw a line down the middle of a flip chart or a white board. On one half write the word "Keep" and on the other half the word "Change." Ask people to reflect on the meeting and suggest things they think should be kept or changed for the next meeting. You will need to encourage them to be candid about the problems they saw.

A-F
Each person gives the meeting a letter grade (A-F). After recording the grades, ask people for one or two reasons they graded the meeting as they did.

Survey Sheet
Distribute a short survey sheet at the end of the meeting that asks people to comment directly on specific evaluation questions.

https://tomlaforce.com/evaluate-your-meetings/

Ranking
This is a great technique for using in small groups. Write each option on a card or post-it note and give each group a full set of cards/notes. Set a time limit and ask the groups to rank the options, or reduce the options to, say, three. Having a facilitator in each small group will help. It's also helpful to set out clear criteria at the start – for example: "You've got 15 minutes. We're looking for options that need to be done most urgently, are most important, and yet realistic within our budget. Also we've only got a week to make it happen, so please think about what we can realistically achieve in the time available."

Urgent/Important grid
10 – 20 minutes; 3 – 50 people
A classic time-management tool that can be applied to group prioritisation! You can use this tool on paper, or drawn out on the floor. (If using the floor, it is best to mark the lines using string or masking tape, so that it is easy to see the whole grid. Add labels at the end of the lines to remind people what they mean). The group ranks ideas according to their urgency and importance:
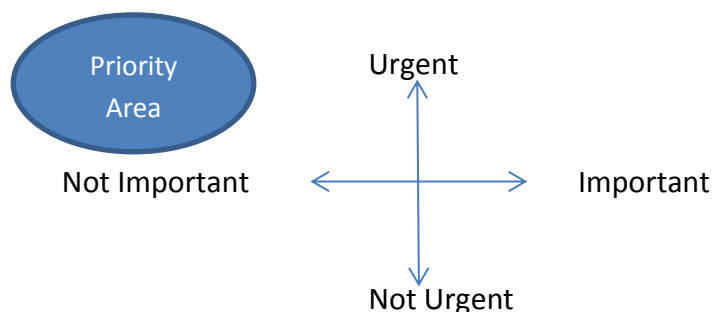
Six thinking hats

This tool encourages a group to look at a situation from a new angle. Each 'hat' represents a different way of looking at something. There are a number of ways to do this exercise. For example, individuals within the group can wear different hats whilst the group discuss an issue. Another alternative is that everyone in the group can try on one of the 'thinking hats' for a while, then everyone can put on another one. As facilitator you may want to think about the order in which the group wear the different 'thinking hats'. Below is one possible order for a creative problem solving process. The roles the 'hats' bring give you a chance to thoroughly examine every option and to prioritise or choose the best one(s).
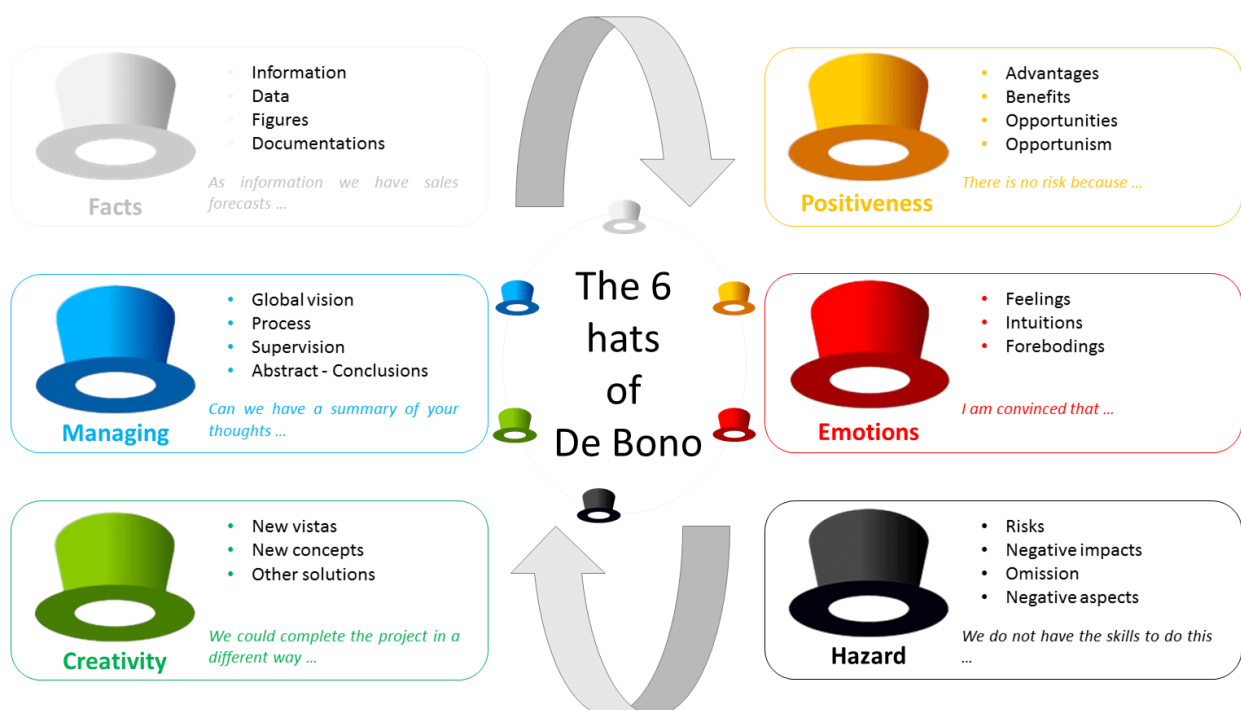
✔ White hat: White hatted people concentrate on the facts – what information and knowledge do you know about the situation? What can you learn about the situation from this information? What info is missing? Can you plug the gap? If not can you take it into account when discussing the situation? What can you learn from past trends?

✔ Green hat: Green hat people think creatively in a no-criticism, freeform thinking kind of way.

✔ Red hat: Red hats are the emotional input of the discussion. They allow themselves to be intuitive and act as much on hunches as fact. They are sensitive to the emotional responses of others in the group.

✔ Black hat: Black hatted people evaluate ideas logically, and look for reasons to be cautious.

✔ Yellow hat: Yellow hats should think optimistically - looking for the value in every possibility. What benefits does it bring?

✔ Blue hat: The blue hat is worn by the facilitator(s). They concentrate on process, calling on the other hats to add in their thinking as and when it's appropriate and making sure that each option is scrutinised from all perspectives. They are neutral, helping the group achieve it's task without trying to shape the decision. This tool actively seeks out the optimistic analysis, the pessimistic analysis etc., so every idea is thoroughly tested and when the decision is made, it's made on the basis of a creative and thorough process.

Pros & cons

Got several ideas and can't decide which one to go for? Simply list the benefits and drawbacks of each idea and compare the results. This can be done as a full group, or by asking pairs, or small groups to work on the pros and cons of one option and report back to the group. One benefit of this tool, is that it allows you to talk about the drawbacks of particular ideas in a way that isn't too personalised. You may find that you don't all agree about what is a pro and what is a con. Or perhaps you have very different ideas about which pros and cons are most significant. This can be a good starting point for discussion about what you are trying to achieve, what needs and priorities you have etc.

Plus-minus-implications

A variation of the simple 'pros & cons' technique. It will help you decide between a number of options by examining them one by one. Create a simple table with three columns titled Plus, Minus, and Implications. In the Plus column write down the positive consequences of the option. In the Minus column write any negative consequences of the action, and in the Implications column write down other possible implications whether good or bad.

As with 'Pros and cons' above, you may find you don't all agree about which criteria goes in which column. Again, this tool can be a springboard for a deeper discussion about your different perspectives.

One alternative is to try scoring the columns, according to how significant a plus or minus something is. Bear in mind again, that people may have different ideas about what score each item should have! Rather than trying to come up with a definitive score for each item, you could think about the scoring system as another way of bringing different priorities into the open. Or measure the 'score' with a tool that allows each person to give their own answer, e.g. using a temperature check.

- **Written Questions**
  The Written Questions technique gathers written feedback on your meeting's effectiveness from each individual in the meeting. The technique requires each participant to complete a meeting evaluation questionnaire that has been prepared in advance.

- Written Questions highlight the positive aspects of the meeting, expose problem areas and provide insights to correct the weaknesses. Their importance to meeting success and their recommended consistent use, thereby, cannot be overemphasised.

- **When to Use Written Questions**
  - when you don't have time to evaluate the meeting as a group
  - when you have participants in different locations
  - when you want to use an alternative to verbal feedback in your meeting

How to Use Written Questions
Before the Meeting:
Reserve as few minutes near the end of your meeting agenda for the Written Questions evaluation technique.
Prepare the Written Questions that you would like to use in your meeting. Two example questionnaires are illustrated below.

> **Meeting Questionnaire**
>
> As you reflect back on our meeting, what are your thoughts?
>
> How effective was this meeting for you? Please circle one:
> 1- very effective
> 2 - somewhat effective
> 3 - somewhat ineffective
> 4 - very ineffective
>
> Why?
>
> What do you think we did well?
>
> What would you suggest we do differently next time?
>
> What additional comments do you have?

> **Meeting Questionnaire**
>
> On a scale of 1-10 (1=very poor 10=excellent), how would you rate your satisfaction with our meeting's results?
>
> 1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7----------8----------9----------10
>
> On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate our use of your time?
>
> 1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7----------8----------9----------10
>
> Comments:

Using one of these two templates, create a questionnaire that meets the specific needs of your meeting group.

NOTE: When creating your questionnaire, be sure to ask open ended questions.

During the Meeting:
Near the conclusion of your meeting, introduce the Written Questions technique and review the instructions and contents of your questionnaire.

NOTE: It is best to schedule the meeting evaluation as the second to the last agenda item. End the meeting with another short agenda item, such as `plan the next meeting.' If you ask people to complete a meeting evaluation questionnaire as you are about to dismiss the meeting, only a few people will stay to do so or take the time required to make it a meaningful exercise. A short agenda item afterwards will ensure that everyone will take the time to complete the questionnaire.
Ask your participants to complete the questionnaire and return it to you as they leave the meeting.

After the Meeting:
Collect, compile and communicate the data received from your Written Questions.

NOTE: In addition to providing the information generated from the questionnaire, be sure to communicate your intended actions as a result of the feedback.

5G WAYS TO CLOSE A SESSION

An effective closure contains one or more of the following elements:
- a sense of value or meaning;
- action;
- planning;
- a sense of accomplishment; or
- movement and completeness.

Participants tend to remember primacy (what happens first), recency (what happens last), and the unusual.

If you have different components in a workshop, a mini-closure can occur after members complete the process for each component.

1:4
Ask the group to draw four columns on a sheet of blank paper and add the heading 'Fact' at the top of Column 1, 'Question' at the top of Column 2, 'Aha!' at the top of Column 3 and 'Action' at the top of Column 4.

Invite the group to reflect upon the content they have just uncovered and in:
Column 1 – write one fact that they now know that they didn't know before;
Column 2 – write one question they still have (if they still have a question);
Column 3 – write one 'Aha!' moment—one or more new ideas they now have; and
Column 4 – write what action(s) they will take as a result of their new discoveries

Invite the group to form pairs and share the 1:4 sheets, adding anything they feel they missed that their partners have shared with them.

Value for me
Ask the group to take two minutes and jot down what they found most valuable from the session and where they could use this content in their situation. Ask the group to form pairs with someone not next to them. Invite the group to share with their partners what they found useful and how they might use it. Invite a few pairs to share their ideas with the rest of the group.   https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/closing-ideas.pdf

Two sentences
Give the group one minute to compose two sentences in their heads to explain what they have learnt, using the key words from the session. Share the sentences in pairs.

60 second challenge
Ask the group to form pairs.
Set a timer for 60 seconds and invite one of the pair to sum up the key points of the session in 60 seconds. When the time up, re-set the timer and the second member of the pair adds any further information in 60 seconds.

The answer is … what is the question?
Provide the group with 'answer' statements from the session. In pairs, they need to provide the question.

True or false
From the session, group members write three true and three false statements. They then swap them with a partner to sort out.
http://www.teach-ict.com/teacher/plenary/plenaries.htm

IQ
In response to the content of the session, group members write one idea (I) on one colour post-it-note and one question (Q) on a different colour post-it-note. Display the ideas and questions on the wall for the group to peruse.

Two stars and a wish
Group members write two positives from the session and something they are still hoping for. Share as appropriate depending on the aim of the session.

Headline
In twos or threes, group members sum up the key points of the session in a seven-word newspaper headline. (Cash register rolls are good to use for this).

Bumper sticker

In pairs, group members create a slogan or a bumper sticker to summarise the key points of the session.

Tweet

In pairs, group members create a tweet to summarise the key points of the session. The limit is 140 characters and include a hashtag.

321

An individual reflection on the session. Group members write three things they found affirming (or helpful), two things they found challenging and one question they still have.

3, 2, 1

3 things you found challenging

2 things you found affirming

1 question you still have

Listen, learn, live

A reflective process incorporating the Rule of Benedict, The Parable of the Good Samaritan and the tradition of the sisters.

⚜ **Listen…**

"Listen with the ear of the heart" RB Prol 1

What have I heard?

⚜ **Learn…**

from the spirit of the Good Samaritan Benedictine tradition

What have I learnt?

⚜ **Live…**

"Do this and you will live" Luke 10:28

What am I going to do differently as a result of this?

Found poem

The Found Poem is an individual reflective process and may be used as a way to personal prayer.

- Ask participants to read a selected piece of text/scripture, underling or highlighting the words and phrases that stand out for them, or resonate with them in some way. Give them time to do this quietly and individually.

- Regather the group and then explain that they will be arranging their selected words and phrases into a poem, providing an example that you have prepared earlier – based on the text they have read.

- Give participants 20-30 minutes individual time to construct their poem.

- When the group regathers, some may like to share their poem.

As one example, the following Found Poem was constructed based on the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council's 2015–16 Social Justice Statement, *For Those Who've Come Across the Seas: Justice for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.*

Has Anyone Wept?
Immigrants dying at sea.
They are our brothers and sisters.
The boats which were vehicles of hope, have become vehicles of death.

They are our brothers and sisters.
Our brothers and sisters who are faceless and nameless.
Where is our compassion?

They try to escape,
we push back the boats.
They flee from persecution,
we incarcerate.
They are looking for a better place,
we transfer them to impoverished nations.

Our brothers and sisters were trying to escape.
To find understanding, to find acceptance.
To find some serenity and peace.

Instead they found death.
Has anyone wept for them?

Hand signals

Sometimes during a meeting you can use hand signals to give immediate feedback:

	Raise a forefinger when you wish to contribute to the discussion with a general point.
	Raise both forefingers if your point is a direct response to a point that's just been made or a question that's just been asked. This allows you to jump to the head of the queue, in front of all those people raising just one finger. For example, if the group is discussing which train to catch, it could be helpful to jump the queue to tell people that the trains are on strike, and you will need to catch the bus. NB: This option can easily be over-used if people don't fully understand how it is different from raising a single hand.
	Silent applause – when you hear an opinion that you agree with, wave a hand with your fingers pointing upwards (this saves a lot of time as people don't need to chip in to say "I'd just like to add that I agree with...").
	Language - Make an L shape with your thumb and forefinger to request translation, or to ask someone to use simpler language. This can be especially helpful in any multi-lingual group. Some groups use 'C' for 'clarification' in a similar way.
	Technical point - Make a T shape using both hands. We've seen this used in a variety of ways by different groups, so always check you have a shared understanding. One use of 'technical point' is to interrupt the discussion with urgent factual information not related to the meeting (e.g. 'Lunch is ready', 'Can someone help me set up the tea urn for the break.') Another is to jump the queue with a facilitation suggestion, e.g. 'Can we break into small groups for this conversation?'

6 Theoretical Change Models

6A U THEORY

Introduction

As part of society, organisations are hardly or not at all able to respond to changes that are taking place in the world. Organisations are stuck in their institutional thinking with respect to their solutions concerning global issues and problems like famine, poverty and pollution.

Dissociation

Otto Scharmer was intrigued by this phenomenon when he was working as a lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and therefore he decided his ground breaking book *Theory U* (2009). With his Theory U (or U Theory), he tries to provide points of reference so that people dissociate themselves from their habitual way of thinking. He explains in which way an individual can make their own contribution to possible solutions that are in tune with what society actually needs. Theory U is about **personal leadership** and a different way of thinking.

What is Presencing?

According to Otto Scharmer there are two ways of learning: from the past and from the future. The latter takes place for instance by focusing on future possibilities without being afraid. Otto Scharmer refers to this as 'presencing'; an amalgamation of the words 'presence' (past and future) and 'sensing' (feeling). In short, 'presencing' means that the realisation of future potential is completely dependent on all individuals together.

What is the Theory U model?

The Theory U, co-developed by Otto Scharmer, is represented as a U shape that moves from the left-hand side of the U to the right-hand side of the U. An individual will have to open their mind to new ideas first and they must not be obstructed by thoughts and emotions. It is not until these obstructions are lifted that the will arises to change effectively. From this point onwards, the theory on the right-hand side slowly works in an upward direction towards reintegration and acceptance of new and innovative ideas. From this point onwards new ideas can be used in practice.

Theory U model by Otto Scharmer — toolshero

Downloading past patterns

Performing by operating from the whole

Suspending

Open Mind

Embodying

Seeing

Prototyping the new by linking head, heart and hand

Redirecting

Open Heart

Enacting

Sensing

Crystallizing vision and intention

Letting go

Open Will

Letting come

Presencing connecting to the source

Who is my self? What is my work

Read more: www.toolshero.com

Cooperation

By joining forces and working well together at all levels in organisations people are capable of relinquishing established ideas, practices and even identities. According to Otto Scharmer, this results in new ideas and solutions that can make a contribution to the environment and to the future.

Listening

A prerequisite for establishing good 'presencing' is the way in which we are able the listen. Scharmer has divided listening into four levels:

1. Downloading

When transferring information that is already largely familiar, people only listen to reconfirm what they already know.

2. Factual listening

People only listen attentively when the information is different from what they know. This new information is added to the information that is already known.

3. Empathic listening

By empathizing and seeing through someone else's eyes, people are able to understand and respect the other person.

4. Generative listening

People listen to create without their personalities getting in the way of results. By connecting their own intuition with the environment, they tap into pure thoughts and ideas.

Practice-oriented

In practice managers use Theory U as an important tool to encourage employees to deal with certain situations differently and to have an open mind with respect to new and different thoughts. A number of specific characteristics of Theory U that are linked to practice:

1. Both executives and employees are better able to focus on the successes they have achieved.
2. Innovation becomes a common cause and forms an integral part of the (departmental) policy.
3. Both individual developments and organisational developments are considered valuable and this creates a natural connection and interaction between people and the organisation.
4. Social technologies are deployed and play an important part in conflict resolution and this will result in more respect between the different parties.

Holistic approach of Theory U

In Theory U it is important to go beyond the personality and to start looking for the 'true self'. Theory U enables people throughout organisations to let go off the prevailing approach that is based on the past and to focus more on the future. This enables them to take a critical look at themselves and as a result they will then embrace their own intuitions and those of other people.

More information

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2. Scharmer, C.O. (2009). *Theory U: Learning from the future as it emerges*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
3. Scharmer, C.O. & Kaufer, K. (2013). *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Mulder, P. (2012). Theory U by Otto Scharmer. Retrieved 1/7/19 from ToolsHero: https://www.toolshero.com/leadership/theory-u-scharmer/

6B TWO LOOPS ACTIVITY NOTES

The Two Loop Theory of Change is a theory of systemic change that looks at the relationship between the life cycle of emerging systems and the life cycles of dying systems. It is both a map of change and a way to help various actors in a system see and understand the role their leadership plays.

Exploring How Living Systems Change

This is a context-setting piece, not a roadmap of 'change management'. This map – or model – is called the Two Loops. It happens at every scale – can easily be a map of ideas, a map of life, of a family, of a community, and organisation or large systems like the fossil fuel economy. It works on all kinds of levels.

Steward

Hospice

innovators

Transition

Illuminate

Name

system of influence

Compost

Connect

Nourish

community of practice

networks
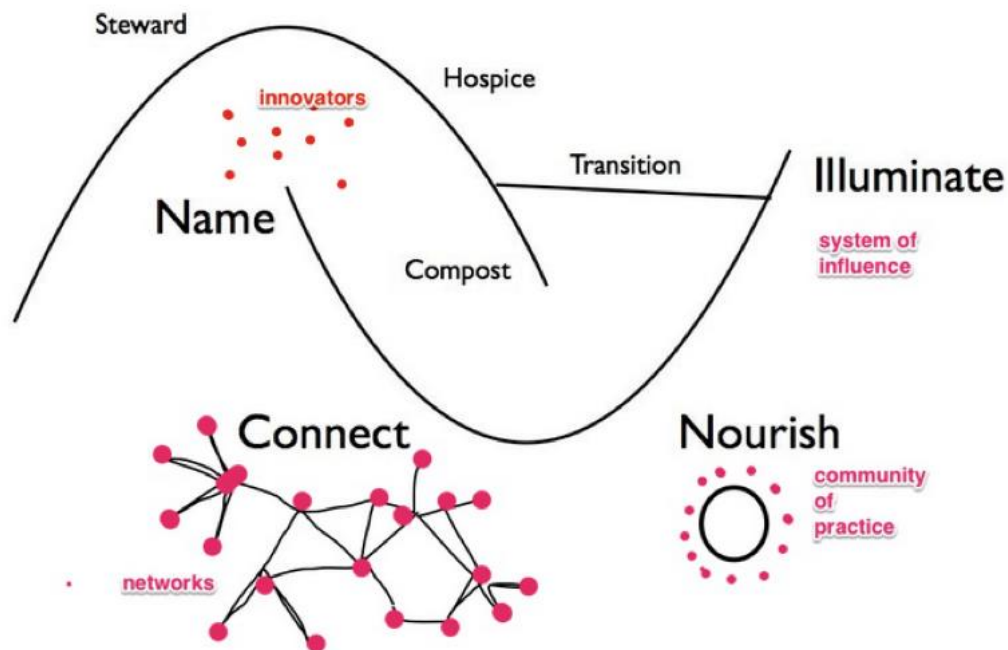
It has two lines – but it isn't a linear timeline. More like a top map. Here is the story of the two loops….

As systems ascend and become the dominant system, they become more powerful and more entrenched. At the top of their game – life is great! Using fossil fuel economy as an example, oil was discovered, we found we could use it as an energy source, and then over time all of our world economy was structured around fossil fuels as an energy source.

The system begins to teeter….starts to lose its significance and influence over time….it peeters out. But right around when it's at its peak, there are some people that drop out – or walk out – and the new system starts being born. They can see that the system curves down@ (Oil is a non-renewable resource!) People drop out and walk out, innovating something new. They look at the way things are – those deeply held beliefs that underpin the current system and see that something else might be possible. This is a radical act – stepping out. Not everyone walks out of the current system, not everyone can. Some are needed to stay behind and **maintain** as best as they can because the new system isn't ready yet.

The leadership action here is to **NAME** what is going on with the walk outs – what they are doing…so they can find each other (then they can Google each other!). What are you working on? Green economy…hey I know someone else who is looking into that! This generates energy. It can be very lonely as an innovator. They might be working on their idea and be unaware that there are others working on the same thing.

The next leadership role in nurturing the emergence of the new system is to **CONNECT** to network and build social capital. What we have learned from living systems is to create a healthier community, connect it to more of itself. To make a system stronger, we need to create stronger relationships. So once we've named the walk-outs, they can find each other (or be connected) and begin to learn from each other in networks.

So the leadership move here is to help the walk-outs, the innovators find each other – help those connections happen. This may mean creating gathering spaces – both real and virtual – so that people can meet, exchange ideas and resources, and develop relationships. These gatherings are a rich source of ideas, inspiration, consolation and confidence. They infuse pathfinders with clarity and motivation to keep experimenting and discovering solutions to their most pressing issues.

Next comes the role of communities of practice, of experiments and rapid learning. Failing forward and upwards as the new system continues to emerge.

To help turn the corner and begin the upward journey as the new system, the leadership role is to **ILLUMINATE**, to make visible and share the stories. Illuminate what is possible, illuminate what you are learning. **Tell the story** – this is useful! You can come over here….there is a bridge that is created. If it is compelling enough they are willing to jump and go there.

Many times, efforts that are based on new ways of thinking are either ignored, misperceived or even invisible. When they are noticed, they are often labelled as inspiring anomalies that do not cause people to change their basic beliefs, worldviews and practices. It takes time, attention and a consistent focus for people to see them for what they are: examples of what's possible, of what our new world could be like.

There is also a leadership role here of protecting what is emerging so the current system doesn't oust it; like antibodies forcing out a perceived threat – an autoimmune reaction. When, how, and to whom to illuminate is a careful dance. Sometimes when illumination might be TOO early and instead what is needed is a cloak of invisibility.

The old is dying, the new is struggling….a leadership move up here is the **_graceful use of power_**. Are you hanging on to the old in a way that is completely toxic? Or might you be able to support both the people trying to maintain the current system with duct tape and band aids long enough until the new system is ready, and be funnelling some resources, connections, support and more to the innovators below?

Naming fear and shadow is also important work here. What are we afraid of? Leaving these unspoken does incredible damage. And we will cart these fears into the new system and build our structures from them.

There is also the important work of hospicing the dying system. And grieving letting go of the old. It's a leadership role to host both the hospice and the grieving. The old system dies a dispersive death, and all parts of the system get recycled (we aren't starting from scratch every time!). This is the compost heap: decomposed, restructured material and energy that is released into the environment for the new system to build from.

This is a powerful skill – not to just walk away, but to harvest what we have learned, relationships, people; what do we want to remember? Everything is used. What is still needed in the new that will serve us well?

As both systems are on the downward direction, can host a conversation between those in with power and resources in the old system and those innovating the new – where might resources be freed up? What's needed?

It's important to note that we absolutely need people who are working on different parts of the two loops. The work of creating the new is absolutely dependent on someone being willing to hold together the existing. Bridges are built in both directions from the old to the new and from the new back to the old.

….less of a move and more of a capacity: to sit in uncertainty. To be able to sit in the swamp of uncertainty for a LONG time – maybe far longer than you ever imagined. How to stay there, gracefully, on that edge…. Using your personal leadership practices to work with your fears and limiting beliefs around uncertainty, of not knowing, of attaching to outcomes, of not being able to control.

So _think about your system and come and stand where you work is on these two loops. Make a little constellation with some folks around you and talk about what it is like for you on this part of the loop_.

Some wise words from Kathy Jourdain: Remember who you are – pioneers and innovators working under the first loop – in the in-between spaces – championing the new or being championed.

We can begin to focus in on and explore new questions: Where are the edges of **my** work? What is the new territory I could begin to walk when I go home? How can I draw on the resources in the room to expand my thinking, even turn it upside down and on its head?

Posted by Amanda Fenton on April 25, 2014 in Stories from hosting Experiences

6C THE JOHARI WINDOW

The Johari Window model is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness, and mutual understanding between individuals within a group.

Johari Window
The Johari Window model is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness, and mutual understanding between individuals within a group. The Johari Window model can also be used to assess and improve a group's relationship with other groups. The Johari Window model was devised by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955 and is especially relevant due to modern emphasis on, and influence of, 'soft' skills, behaviour, empathy, cooperation, inter-group development and interpersonal development.

The Johari Window actually represents information - feelings, experience, views, attitudes, skills, intentions, motivation, etc - within or about a person - in relation to their group, from four perspectives. The Johari Window model can also be used to represent the same information for a group in relation to other groups. Johari Window terminology refers to 'self' and 'others': 'self' means oneself, ie, the person subject to the Johari Window analysis. 'Others' means other people in the person's group or team.

The four Johari Window perspectives are called 'regions' or 'areas' or 'quadrants'. Each of these regions contains and represents the information - feelings, motivation, etc - known about the person, in terms of whether the information is known or unknown by the person, and whether the information is known or unknown by others in the group.

The Johari Window's four regions, (areas, quadrants, or perspectives) are:
1. what is known by the person about him/herself and is also known by others - **open area, open self, free area, free self, or 'the arena'**
2. what is unknown by the person about him/herself but which others know - **blind area, blind self, or 'blindspot'**

3. what the person knows about him/herself that others do not know - **hidden area, hidden self, avoided area, avoided self or 'facade'**
4. what is unknown by the person about him/herself and is also unknown by others - **unknown area or unknown self**

Diagram

Like some other behavioural models the Johari Window is based on a four-square grid - the Johari Window is like a window with four 'panes'. Here's how the Johari Window is normally shown, with its four regions.

1 open/free area	2 blind area
3 hidden area	4 unknown area

This is the standard representation of the Johari Window model, showing each quadrant the same size.

The Johari Window 'panes' can be changed in size to reflect the relevant proportions of each type of 'knowledge' of/about a particular person in a given group or team situation. In new groups or teams the open free space for any team member is small (see the Johari Window new team member example below) because shared awareness is relatively small.

Explanation
Johari quadrant 1 - 'open self/area' or 'free area' or 'public area', or 'arena'
Johari region 1 is also known as the 'area of free activity'. This is the information about the person - behaviour, attitude, feelings, emotion, knowledge, experience, skills, views, etc - **known** by the person ('the self') and **known** by the group ('others').

The aim in any group should always be to develop the 'open area' for every person, because when we work in this area with others we are at our most effective and productive, and the group is at its most productive too. The open free area can be seen as the space where good communications and cooperation occur, free from distractions, mistrust, confusion, conflict and misunderstanding.

The size of the open area can be expanded horizontally into the blind space, by seeking and actively listening to feedback from other group members. This process is known as 'feedback solicitation'. Also, other group members can help a team member expand their open area by offering feedback, sensitively of course. The size of the open area can also be expanded vertically downwards into the hidden or avoided space by the person's disclosure of information, feelings, etc about him/herself to the group and group members. Also, group members can help a person expand their open area into the hidden area by asking the person about him/herself. Leaders also have a big responsibility to promote a culture and expectation for open, honest, positive, helpful, constructive, sensitive communications, and the sharing of knowledge. Encouraging the positive development of the 'open area' or 'open self' for everyone is a simple yet fundamental aspect of effective leadership.

Johari quadrant 2 - 'blind self' or 'blind area' or 'blind-spot'

Johari region 2 is what is **known** about a person by others in the group, but is unknown by the person him/herself. By seeking or soliciting feedback from others, the aim should be to reduce this area and thereby to increase the open area to increase self-awareness. This blind area could also be referred to as ignorance about oneself, or issues in which one is deluded. A blind area could also include issues that others are deliberately withholding from a person. We all know how difficult it is to work well when kept in the dark. No-one works well when subject to 'mushroom management'. People who are 'thick-skinned' tend to have a large 'blind area'.

A climate of non-judgemental feedback, and group response to individual disclosure, which reduces fear and therefore encourages both processes to happen is an important cultural shift for an organisation. The extent to which an individual seeks feedback, and the issues on which feedback is sought, must always be at the individual's own discretion. Some people are more resilient than others - care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset..

Johari quadrant 3 - 'hidden self' or 'hidden area' or 'avoided self/area' or 'facade'

Johari region 3 is what is known to ourselves but kept hidden from, and therefore **unknown**, to others. This hidden or avoided self represents information, feelings, etc, anything that a person knows about him/self, but which is not revealed or is kept hidden from others. The hidden area could also include sensitivities, fears, hidden agendas, manipulative intentions, secrets - anything that a person knows but does not reveal, for whatever reason. It's natural for very personal and private information and feelings to remain hidden, indeed, certain information, feelings and experiences have no bearing on work, and so can and should remain hidden. However, typically, a lot of hidden information is not very personal, it is work- or performance-related, and so is better positioned in the open area.

Relevant hidden information and feelings, etc, should be moved into the open area through the process of 'disclosure'. The aim should be to disclose and expose relevant information and feelings - hence the Johari Window terminology 'self-disclosure' and 'exposure process', thereby increasing the open area. By telling others how we feel and other information about ourselves we reduce the hidden area, and increase the open area, which enables better understanding, cooperation, trust, team-working effectiveness and productivity. Reducing hidden areas also reduces the potential for confusion, misunderstanding, poor communication, etc, which all distract from and undermine team effectiveness.

The extent to which an individual discloses personal feelings and information, and the issues which are disclosed, and to whom, must always be at the individual's own discretion. Some people are more keen and able than others to disclose. People should disclose at a pace and depth that they find personally comfortable. As with feedback, some people are more resilient than others - care needs to be taken to avoid causing emotional upset.

Johari quadrant 4 - 'unknown self' or 'area of unknown activity' or 'unknown area'

Johari region 4 contains information, feelings, latent abilities, aptitudes, experiences etc, that are **unknown** to the person him/herself and **unknown** to others in the group. These unknown issues take a variety of forms: they can be feelings, behaviours, attitudes, capabilities, aptitudes, which can be quite close to the surface, and which can be positive and useful, or they can be deeper aspects of a person's personality, influencing his/her behaviour to various degrees. Large unknown areas would typically be expected in younger people, and people who lack experience or self-belief.

Examples of unknown factors are as follows, and the first example is particularly relevant and common, especially in typical organisations and teams:

- an ability that is under-estimated or un-tried through lack of opportunity, encouragement, confidence or training
- a natural ability or aptitude that a person doesn't realise they possess
- a fear or aversion that a person does not know they have
- an unknown illness
- repressed or subconscious feelings
- conditioned behaviour or attitudes from childhood

The processes by which this information and knowledge can be uncovered are various, and can be prompted through self-discovery or observation by others, or in certain situations through collective or mutual discovery, of the sort of discovery experienced on outward bound courses or other deep or intensive group work. Counselling can also uncover unknown issues, but this would then be known to the person and by one other, rather than by a group.

Whether unknown 'discovered' knowledge moves into the hidden, blind or open area depends on who discovers it and what they do with the knowledge, notably whether it is then given as feedback, or disclosed. The process of self-discovery is a sensitive one. The extent and depth to which an individual is able to seek out discover their unknown feelings must always be at the individual's own discretion. Some people are more keen and able than others to do this.

Providing people with the opportunity to try new things, with no great pressure to succeed, is often a useful way to discover unknown abilities, and thereby reduce the unknown area.

An environment that encourages self-discovery, and to promote the processes of self-discovery, constructive observation and feedback among team members has to be created. It is a widely accepted industrial fact that the majority of staff in any organisation are at any time working well within their potential. Creating a culture, climate and expectation for self-discovery helps people to fulfil more of their potential and thereby to achieve more, and to contribute more to organisational performance.

A note of caution about Johari region 4: The unknown area could also include repressed or subconscious feelings rooted in formative events and traumatic past experiences, which can stay unknown for a lifetime.

1 open/free area	2 blind area
3 hidden area	4 unknown area
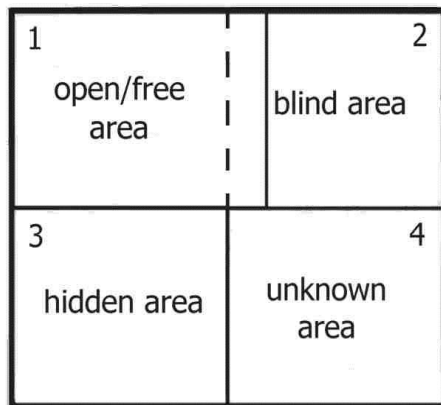
This Johari Window model diagram is an example of increasing the open area, by reduction of the blind area, which would normally be achieved through the process of asking for and then receiving feedback.

Feedback develops the open area by reducing the blind area.

The open area can also be developed through the process of disclosure, which reduces the hidden area.

The unknown area can be reduced in different ways: by others' observation (which increases the blind area); by self-discovery (which increases the hidden area), or by mutual enlightenment - typically via group experiences and discussion - which increases the open area as the unknown area reduces.

A team which understands itself - that is, each person having a strong mutual understanding with the team - is far more effective than a team which does not understand each other- that is, whose members have large hidden, blind, and/or unknown areas.

Team members - and leaders - should always be striving to increase their open free areas, and to reduce their blind, hidden and unknown areas.

A person represented by the Johari Window example below will not perform to their best potential, and the team will fail to make full use of the team's potential and the person's potential too. Effort should generally be made by the person to increase his/her open free area, by disclosing information about his/her feelings, experience, views, motivation, etc, which will reduce the size of the hidden area, and increase the open free area.

Seeking feedback about the blind area will reduce the blind area, and will increase the open free area. Discovery through sensitive communications, active listening and experience, will reduce the unknown area, transferring in part to the blind, hidden areas, depending on who knows what, or better still if known by the person and others, to the open free area.
The Johari Window model also relates to emotional intelligence theory (EQ), and one's awareness and development of emotional intelligence.

Further Ideas

The examples of exercises using the Johari Window theory might begin to open possibilities for you. The Johari Window obviously model provides useful background rationale and justification for most things that you might think to do with people relating to developing mutual and self-awareness, all of which links strongly to team effectiveness and harmony.

Johari is a very elegant and potent model, and as with other powerful ideas, **simply helping people to understand** is the most effective way to optimise the value to people. Explaining the meaning of the Johari Window theory to people, so they can really properly understand it in their own terms, then empowers people to use the thinking in their own way, and to incorporate the underlying principles into their future thinking and behaviour.

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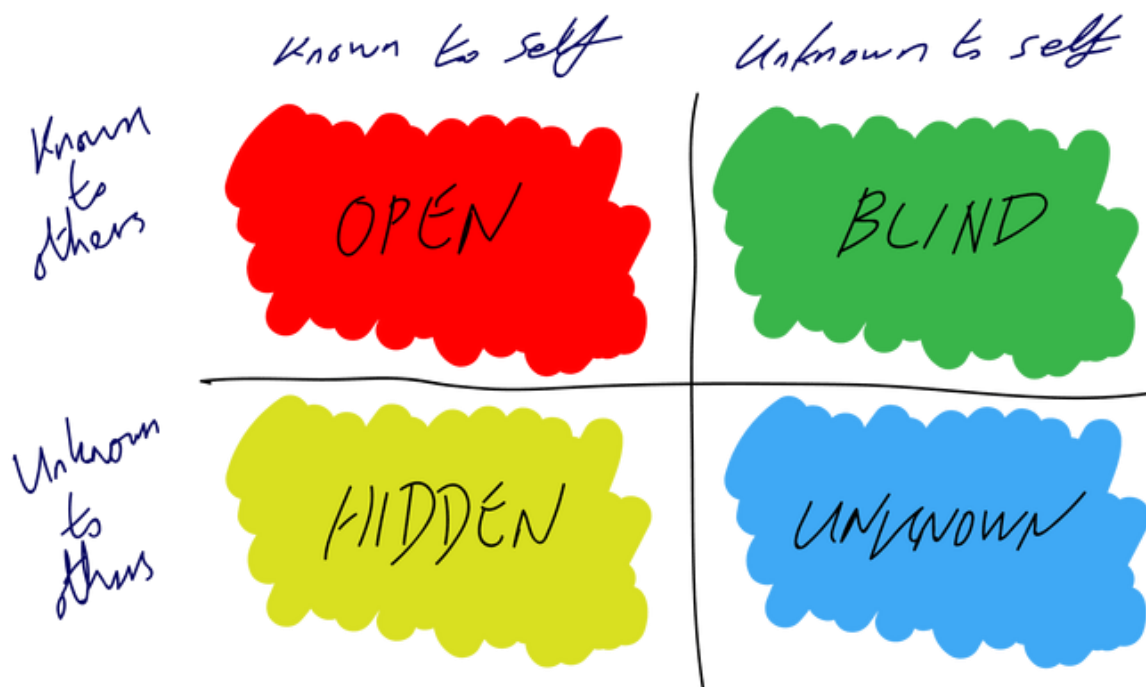
7 Rituals and Blessings

Prayer and rituals are at the heart of our community living. The experience of praying together and engaging in various rituals bind us as a community and shape our lives to witness to the presence of the God. These samples of prayer and rituals have been adapted from a variety of resources, eg. *The Book of Blessings,* Congregation of Divine Worship, 1984: *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayer,* National Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Conference, Washington DC. 1989; *Canticles and Gathering Prayers* by John P Mossi and Suzanne Toolan, St Mary's Press, Winona, Minnesota, 1989.

PRAYERS FOR THE OPENING OF A MEETING…

Leader: In your Spirit gather us,
            in your Spirit open our hearts
            In your Spirit, O God,
            guide and direct and hearts.
            © Monica Brown, Emmaus Productions.
            Used with permission

All   Repeat...

Leader: Blessed are you, Loving God,
            you are our wellspring and omega point.
            Your Spirit binds us together
            in respect, dignity and service.
            Gather us together now and in the future

All: In your Spirit gather us…

Leader: In communion with Jesus Christ
            and with the Holy Spirit
            who remains our guide,
            we give you all praise, all honour, and all glory,
            for by your gracious love,
            we are your holy people for all generations.
            world without end.

All: In your Spirit gather us…

<u>OPENING PRAYER</u> (used in preparation for a general chapter)

Leader: We gather today and pray that we hear God's call inviting each of us to something new…

All: Let us open our ears to the voice that comes from God

Leader: You that have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches…

All: And what does the Spirit say?

Leader: 'Come and listen to me and I will teach you the fear of God'…

All: See how the Lord, out of love, shows us the way of life.

Leader: We must listen if we are to hear God's whispered invitation to gather together in a new and different way. It takes courage to step out in faith; to begin another journey into what is as yet known. Journeys are about leaving in order to arrive somewhere else; journeys are always about beginnings and endings.

Before it occurs, a beginning can be a long time in preparation. Some beginnings start off with great confidence. Other beginnings are slow and awkward. Some beginnings are born as something else ends. Beginnings are filled with possibilities and can open up new horizons for us as Sisters together.

WORD OF GOD   Ecclestiastes 3:1-7

To everything, there is a season,
 and a time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep and a time to laugh
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak
Silent reflection…

Business of meeting…

BLESSING:

Leader: As we set out on this way into a new chapter of the life and mission of our Congregation, let us pray God's blessing on each other:

All: May God's blessing be upon each of us, to be compassionate of heart, clear in word, gracious in awareness, courageous in thought and generous in love, forever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNITY MEETING TO BEGIN A NEW YEAR

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

We've begun this new year!
Our community life means journeying together
with Christ as the centre and the cornerstone
of all that we experience in our daily living
of the gospel, in our serving of each other,
and in our ministry to the people of God.
We give thanks for this new beginning
and sing together…

Ubi caritas et amor
Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.
© 1979, Ateliers et Presses de Taize

WORD OF GOD   Romans 15: 5-7, 13-14

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant you to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus,
so that together you may with one voice
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ
has welcomed you, for the glory of God…
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.   *Silent reflection…*

Community meeting…

BLESSING:

Leader: May the God of steadfast love and kindness
             make of our community a shelter and a shield for one another.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: May Jesus Christ, our way, clear from our path all obstacles
             so that we may run together the way of God's commandments.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: May the Holy Spirit sing in our hearts,
             and make of our lives a harmony of praise.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: And may the blessing of God, Father, Son +
             and Holy Spirit come upon us and give us peace.
All: **Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER

Leader/All: **You are the one who gathers us loving, compassionate God.**

Leader: Blessed are you, Loving God.
             You are the source of our life and energy.
             Your Spirit binds us together
             in respect, dignity, and service.
             Gather our community together now and in the future.

All: **You are the one who gathers us**
             loving, compassionate God.

Leader: Blessed are you, Gracious Giver of Salvation!
             Your great power wells up within us
             to be our strength, to be our hope,
             to be our glory.
             With your mighty arms
             you shelter us in times of distress.
             You go before us that with your grace
             we may win victory over death.
All: **You are the one who gathers us**
             loving, compassionate God.
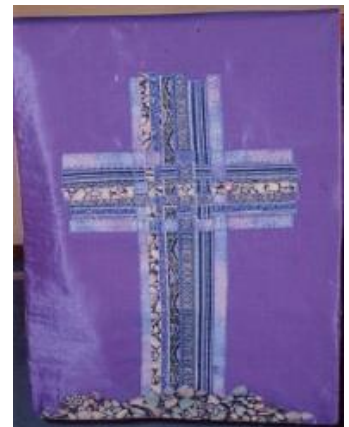
Leader:	Blessed are you, Source of All Compassion! You tremble as a mother giving birth. For when we your people, suffer in darkness, you bring forth light and life. The warmth of your love for us melts away fear and sadness. You bring to new birth the dawning child of mercy.
All:	**You are the one who gathers us** **loving, compassionate God.**

Leader:	Gather us now into one holy people. Give us the grace to look beyond divisions. Show us the ones that we are called to be. Guide us to the source of all community. Infuse our hearts with one desire. and bring us to the fullness of your one love!
All:	**You are the one who gathers us** **loving, compassionate God.**

Leader:	In communion with our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit, who remain our guide, we, your gathered people, give you all praise, all honour, and all glory, for by your gracious love, we are a holy people for all generations, world without end. Amen!
All:	**You are the one who gathers us** **loving, compassionate God.**

OPENING PRAYER (during Easter Season)

Leader:	We gather in your name, O Easter God, for you are the source of all promise and joy.
All:	**Repeat.**

Leader:	You have chosen us to be your disciples and you have given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, Your Son.
All:	**We gather in your name, O Easter God,** **for you are the source of all promise and joy.**

Leader: You call us to be witnesses of your gospel
and proclaim your love and peace
to all those whom you call us to serve
in your name.

**All: We gather in your name, O Easter God,
for you are the source of all promise and joy.**

Leader: You promise us the gift of your Spirit
to draw us into unity, and make us one.

**All: We gather in your name, O Easter God,
for you are the source of all promise and joy.**

OPENING PRAYER – Come, Holy Spirit

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, Come, Holy Wisdom.
All Repeat.

Leader: Blessed are you, gracious God,
well-spring of all wisdom
and fount of every insight.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, Come, Holy Wisdom.

Leader: You pour forth your wisdom
upon every living thing,
and lavished her on Jesus, our hope and our peace.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, Come, Holy Wisdom.

Leader: Through your wisdom, enlighten our minds,
banish all fear and self-doubt,
and so fill our hearts
that we may think and speak in truth.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, Come, Holy Wisdom.

Leader: May your wisdom dwell deep within us,
enfold us in her light,
imbue us with strength and purpose,
and be our constant companion today and forever.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, Come, Holy Wisdom.
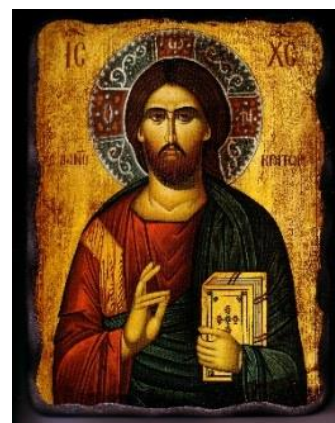
OPENING PRAYER – Come to us, Spirit of the Lord!

Leader: Come to us, Spirit of the Lord!
All: **Come to us, Spirit of the Lord!**

Leader: Spirit of wisdom
                Spirit of understanding
                Spirit of strength
                Spirit of knowledge
                Spirit of joy…we pray…
All: **Come to us, Spirit of the Lord!**

Leader: Spirit of love
                Spirit of peace
                Spirit of jubilation
                Spirit of willing service
                Spirit of goodness
                Spirit of gentleness…we pray…
All: **Come to us, Spirit of the Lord!**

All: **In giving us the Spirit of Jesus, O God,**
                pour into our hearts the fullness
                of your love, so that we may be able
                to love you and our sisters and brothers.
                We pray in the name of Jesus…Amen.

OPENING PRAYER – Spirit of Jesus

Leader: Spirit of Jesus,
                You pour out the love of God in our hearts
All: **Enflame all our lives with the fire of your love**

Leader: Spirit of Jesus,
                Help us to serve our God
                in the lives our sisters and brothers
All: **Lift the veil from our hearts so that we may**
                discover there the face of Christ.

Leader:	Spirit of Jesus, You give your gifts to your people For the good of the whole community
All:	**Strengthen us to use our gifts to bring about your reign.**

Leader:	Spirit of Jesus, You unite us in the bond of peace.
All:	**End all divisions in the Body of Christ, And gather us together in your love.**

Sing:	In your Spirit, gather us In your Spirit, open our hearts. In your Spirit, O God, guide and direct our paths.

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OPENING PRAYER – Come, O Holy Wisdom

Leader:	Come, O Holy Wisdom.
All	**Repeat...**

Leader:	Come, Holy Wisdom. Weave your mystery and profound gifts into the fabric of our journey. Come, Holy Spirit; come, Holy Wisdom.
All:	**Come, O Holy Wisdom.**

Leader:	She is the breath of your spirit, Her delight is ever to be with us, playing in and about the beauty of all creation. Send her forth that she might be with us and work in us.
All:	**Come, O Holy Wisdom.**

Leader:	Through her, enlighten our minds, banish all fear and self-doubt, and so fill our hearts that we may think and speak truly.
All:	**Come, O Holy Wisdom.**

Leader: May she dwell deep within us,
             enfold us in her light,
             imbue us with strength and purpose.
             Above all,
             may the doing of our work together
             be one of the ways she fashions us
             into members of the company of your
             friends and prophets.
All: **Come, O Holy Wisdom.**

Leader: May she hold us fast,
             guide us in your ways,
             and be our constant companion
             today and always.
All: **Come, O Holy Wisdom.**

HOLY THURSDAY (Table Prayer)

The community gathers around the table…

Leader 1:   The night before he died Jesus too,
             shared a meal.
             Before the loneliness and violence,
             there was friendship, and laughter
             under stars,
             and the bread broken and shared,
             the wine poured our and passed.

             REFRAIN: *Ubi caritas et amor,*
                          ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

Leader 2:   Before we recognise the Lord
             in the sacrament of Eucharist,
             before we handle holy gifts of bread and wine,
             we recognize him at this table –
             host and guest in each of us who handle one another's lives
             for our rising and our fruiting,
             for our grinding and our crushing.
             REFRAIN…

FIRST READING: **RB 72:1-8**

Just as there is a wicked zeal of bitterness which separates
from God and leads to hell, so there is a good zeal which
separates from evil and leads to God and everlasting life.
This, then, is the good zeal which sisters must foster with
fervent love; 'They should each try to be the first to show
respect to the other' [Rom 12:10], supporting with the greatest
patience one another's weaknesses of body or behaviour,
and earnestly competing in obedience to one another.
No one is to pursue what she judges better for herself,
but instead, what she judges better for someone else.
To their community they show the pure love of sisters.
REFRAIN…

Leader 3:   This too, is the night when our love must look beyond this table:
to the few crumbs which are bread for the world's poor;
to the wine drunk not for friendship and remembrance,
but in forgetfulness and loneliness;
and to all the broken bread of crumbled hopes
and all the spilt wine of drained hopes.
REFRAIN…

SECOND READING: **RB 53: 1-7**

All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as
Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you
welcomed me [Matt 25:35]. Proper honour must be shown
to all, especially to those who share our faith [Gal 6:10]
and to pilgrims. Once a guest has been announced, the
community are to meet him/her with all the courtesy of
love. First of all, they are to pray together and thus be
united in peace.
REFRAIN…

Ritual of breaking bread and sharing wine…

ALL: Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God
washer of feet, breaker of bread, pourer of wine,
friend and brother; show us who gather at this table
how to care for one another
without fear or favour, without pride or prejudice.
Help us to be bread and wine –
taken, blessed, given and consumed by one another,
so that all may recognize your disciples.
In your name we make our prayer.   Amen.

BLESSING & FAREWELL FOR SISTER MOVING TO NEW COMMUNITY AND NEW MINISTRY

Leader :   I will bless the Lord at all times.

All: **I will speak God's praise forever.**

Leader: The Lord will guard your coming and your going.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: **Blessed be the name of the Lord now and for ever.**

Leader: Let us ask God's blessing
on N., as she leaves our community
and begins her ministry in N.

All extend hands over N. as we pray:

All: **God of heaven and earth,
we give you glory for your holy name.
We call on your name
to bless N…
as she begins her journey to N…
and takes up ministry ….
Give her the guidance and wisdom
she needs so that her efforts
will be fruitful and valuable.
May all of us continue to witness to your reign
where you live with Jesus and the Holy Spirit,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING PRAYER FOR A TRAVELLER

We bless you, O God,
and praise your name.
In your providence you sent Jesus into
the world
to bring freedom, justice and peace
to all peoples of the earth.
We give you thanks
for N. presence with us.
Look kindly on her
and bless her as she leaves us
to return to her ministry in the N.
Guide her steps,
and strengthen her with your grace.
Fill her heart with your Holy Spirit,
so that, in her service of the people
in the N. community,
she may lead many to you,
to live the gospel and sing your praises.
We ask this through Jesus, your eternal Word,
and in the unity of the Spirit, God,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

BLESSING ON THOSE CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

This prayer may be prayed at table or at another time.

Leader: God of all creation,
            We offer you grateful praise for the gift of life.
            Give your blessing to N., your servant,
            who recalls today the gift of her birth,
            and rejoices in the gifts of life and love,
            of family and friends.

Bless her with your presence
and surround her with your love
that she may enjoy many happy years,
all of them pleasing to you.

All: **We give you thanks and praise, O God.**

BLESSING ON JUBILARIANS

TABLE PRAYER (IF A MEAL IS BEING CELEBRATED)

Leader: God of all creation,
                 we gather in your name.
                 In your love, give us your blessing,
                 and bless this food and drink
                 signs of your abundance and goodness.

All: **Blessed are you, O God.**

Leader: God of our journey
                 you have graced us with many gifts
                 and we give thanks for your faithfulness
                 throughout this past year.

All: **Blessed are you, O God.**

Leader: May this time of celebration
                 strengthen us to continue
                 to work with you
                 for the coming of your reign
                 in our communities
                 and in our world.

All: **Blessed are you, O God,**
                 now and forever. Amen.

SHARE THE MEAL…

Blessing on Jubilarians (AT END OF MEAL)

All invited to extend hands

Leader: N, N, N, surrounded by your sisters here
            we now ask God's special blessing on you…

            May your dreams of younger days,
            your wisdom of the present,
            and your hope for years to come
            be renewed within your heart today.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: May your happiness be long,
            your sorrows brief,
            and may both be a part
            of your gentle growth in Christ.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: And in the power of the Father,
            in the presence of Jesus,
            in the joy of the Spirit,
            may the Holy One bless each of you,
            and keep you in love all your days.
All: **Amen.**

**All: (sing)   May God bless and keep you,
            May God's face shine on you.
            May God be kind to you
            and give you peace.**

A COMMUNITY WELCOME

GATHERING REFLECTION

> To welcome one another
> is to open not only our household doors
> but, above all, to throw wide
> the closed doors of our hearts.
> To welcome one another
> is a sign that a community is alive,
> that it has a living treasure
> ready to be shared.
>
> To welcome one another
> means accepting each other's weaknesses,
> our limitations,
> and this can be our strength.
>
> To welcome one another
> is a work not only of accepting, but also
> of disturbing our routines, comforts, apathies –
> as Jesus did.
>
> Today, we welcome one another
> as we begin a new year!
> In our life together, may we never be a cause
> of broken faith or spilt dreams for you,
> or for anyone us gathered around this table.
> And so we sing together…
>
> *Ubi caritas et amor*
> *Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.*
> © 1979, Ateliers et Presses de Taize

READING   Romans 15: 5-7,13-14

> May the God of steadfastness and encouragement
> grant you to live in harmony with one another,
> in accordance with Christ Jesus,
> so that together you may with one voice
> glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ
has welcomed you, for the glory of God…
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Silent reflection…

Community meeting…

CONCLUDING PRAYER & BLESSING

With one hand on the shoulder of the person next to us, we say…

Around the table of our daily lives
our hands hold one another together
as bread for nourishing,
yet broken;
as wine for strengthening, yet spilt;
our weaknesses acknowledged and supported.

Leader: May the God of steadfast love and kindness
make of our community
a shelter and a shield for one another.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: May Jesus Christ, our way,
clear from our path all obstacles
so that we may run together
the way of God's commandments.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: May the Holy Spirit sing in our hearts,
and make of our lives a harmony of praise.
All: **Amen.**

Leader: As a sign of our unity
let us share our meal together,
remembering, as we eat and drink,
those without the food, friendship,
or shelter, with which we are blessed.
All: **Amen.**

8 Helpful Resources

8A CREATING A RESOURCE BOX

Storage – use zip lock bags for small items or items that are similar e.g. cards, pens
- Use various size zip lock bags
- Clear containers help you to find items quickly
- Boxes that are easy to lift and carry

Writing implements – pens, textas, pencils

Paper – All the variety of post it notes from the largest to the smallest, use a variety of colours (you can group responses quickly according to coloured paper, record your positive responses on green paper, concerns on red etc.)
- Coloured dots, can be used to show priorities, record importance.
- A packet of photocopy paper or something similar for groups to record things
- Clip boards

Traffic light squares (red, orange, green) Get a sense of the group and when they are ready to move on or make a decision. You will need to have a sufficient number according to the size of the group. Every person needs a set of 3 (all colours)

General items

Paper clips, bull dog clips, tape

Blu-tac, scissors, string,

Picture chats pictures that help discussion e.g. find a picture that reflects how you are feeling now, that tells us something about what you are passionate about etc.

Resources

Many helpful resources for sessions may be purchased cheaply from:

https://innovativeresources.org/

https://emmausproductions.com/

https://www.spotlightstores.com/categories

https://www.lincraft.com.au/

https://www.etsy.com/au/market/australia

8B BOOKS, WEBSITES AND VIDEO CLIPS

Websites to help with:
- Creating surveys: Google Forms, Typeform, SurveyMonkey
- File storage and document sharing: DropBox, Google Drive, OneDrive, Box
- Video conferencing: Zoom, Appear.in, Skype, Hangouts
- Online whiteboards: Miro, Stormboard
- Task management: Trello, Wudnerlist, Asana
- Note taking: Evernote, OneNote, Google Drive & Docs, Notion
- Session agenda planning: SessionLab, Google Sheets
- Group engagement: Stormz, Mentimeter, Slido

Websites with ideas and talks:
- www.businessballs.com
- www.youtube.com
- www.ted.com

VIDEO CLIPS

Sometimes video clips are integral to the session you are presenting. At other times they can be unrelated and used effectively to change the focus, to lighten the mood of the group, or to send them off to morning tea or lunch in a positive frame of mind. Some examples of these would be:

David Whyte – Irish Poet: A lyrical bridge between past, present and future | David Whyte
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Lu85L111Y

Mary Oliver – Wild Geese
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lv_4xmh_WtE

Banco Sabadell
https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+bank+flashmob+ad&view=detail&mid=CB5698BC958E303F6163CB5698BC958E303F6163&FORM=VIRE

Derek Redmond
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZlXWp6vFdE

The Superhumans
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IocLkk3aYlk

MUSIC

Music for sessions can be easily accessed through YouTube clips. Enter a search describing the type of music you need on an internet connected laptop and it can be played through the venue's sound system. Some examples of quiet reflective music are provided below.

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=relaxing+morning+music&view=detail&mid=EF4251093FC44076C321EF4251093FC44076C321&FORM=VIRE

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=meditation+music&&view=detail&mid=53E0A9FDDA2A172D4ADB53E0A9FDDA2A172D4ADB&&FORM=VDRVRV

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=meditation+music&view=detail&mid=4FD7EC84FDD04325793B4FD7EC84FDD04325793B&FORM=VIRE

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