



Activity bank

ACTIVITY BANK

These activities are ideas you can use to activate people in the space. You can use the activities to open sessions, welcome participants back from lunch, or even as methods for facilitating visioning, relationship building and planning.

Feel free to change the activities as you wish, but make sure that you are thinking about the debrief, and what are the takeaways you want people to have at the end of their work together.

The activities are not in a specific order, so feel free to pick the ones that work best for you and the community you work with!



A Web of Power

Objective:

To teach participants how we can build collective power by coming together.

Materials:

A ball of yarn & 2-3 balloons.

Instructions:

1. Ask for two or three volunteers. Once they are in the front, ask them to form a circle. Tell participants that the balloon you have in their hands is the community you work with (immigrants, women, LGBTQIA+, etc). Their goal is to not let the balloon fall to the ground, but they can only hold it using the yarn, so they need to weave a web.
2. The facilitator should keep dropping the balloon, and encourage them to get others. The more people around the circle, the easier it is for them to have a strong web.
3. Encourage others to come, and keep dropping the balloon, then when you see that the balloon is starting to stay on top of the web they formed, drop a second or third, and have them balance that too.
4. Groups might get as big as 20, and the beauty is that some of them serve as connectors, others as yarn holders, others as coordinators, everyone organically takes on a role.

Debrief Questions:

1. How easy was it to hold the balloons with three or four people? Why?
2. Was it easy to coordinate the participants when more people were standing around? Why?
3. Were there people who took over specific roles organically? Which roles?
4. How does this relate to the organizing model you use?
5. What roles do we utilize?



The I Am Exercise

Objective:

To allow participants to connect on a more human level, and learn about each other's identities and values.

Materials:

None

Instructions:

1. It's important that you start by giving an overview of the activity, but that you explain it step by step by modelling the exercise.
2. If you don't have a partner or co-facilitator, ask someone to volunteer.
3. Tell them that each person will have one minute to start a sentence with "I am..." and say whatever comes to mind.
4. Before you start modeling, say that the only rules are that the person who is listening, who we will call "The Listener", has to be planted and grounded on their feet, and not moving around. They have to avoid making facial or other types of reactions, to ensure that the other person gets everything out they want and not be shaped by the reactions they are seeing. And finally, that they do not interrupt at all. If "The Speaker" stops before one minute and runs out of things to say, then they should allow silence until time is up.
5. Try it with your partner. Make sure you have a timer on a phone or something that makes noise to stop you. Before you start modelling, make sure you are planted, as well as your partner, and think about things that stretch what people might expect. Share things about interests, family, things you like or dislike, don't go straight to obvious things like your title at work, your height or name, and also try your best to show vulnerability and share things that show that people can go as deep as they want, but also allow for levity.



The I Am Exercise

Instructions:

6. When the alarm goes off, stop, and say: "Before we pair up. I'm going to give you one minute to find someone you usually don't work with, chose who'll be the Speaker and who'll be the Listener in the first round and then we'll switch roles for the second round.

7. Before starting the exercise, say that you'll raise your hand to make sure they stop. So when they see others' hands go up, they should stop talking, and raise their hand to let others know time's up. Try interrupting the first or second attempt in the first few seconds to see if they are listening, and if they are reacting to the hands up gesture.

8. Give them one minute. Stop, and switch roles for another minute.

Debrief Questions:

1. How was that? Was it easy to share things about you for one minute? Why or why not?
2. Did anyone have a hard time finding things to share?
3. For listeners, how did it feel to hear someone be so open to share?
4. How does sharing about ourselves help us understand each other?
5. When do we share about ourselves like this? How does it feel?



Creating Our Own Map

Objectives:

To visualize the places where different people in the room come from. To check for an over index of certain communities. To learn about each other's places of birth and what they mean for us. To build relationships and trust.

Materials:

Post its, or pieces of paper, and a big space on the floor.

Instructions:

1. Start by sharing that this activity is often done in rural communities around the world, for teachers to learn where students come from. Sometimes, educators are in remote areas, where people live in places without roads or places located on a map, so the teachers work with students to create their own map. "We are going to do something similar in this exercise, but with the places where we were born."
2. Make sure you mention that we know we all have different memories from the places we were born, and sometimes we don't have any memories at all, but at least we've created memories from others' stories, the way they remember the place or share it with us, or even how we see it in cultural productions.
3. To model, you should have written the responses to the three prompts before you share, so that they can hear you go first. The prompts everyone will answer are:
 - a. My name is _____
 - b. I was born in _____ --- Try to make this a town, city, or as localized as possible.
 - c. And what I remember from that place is _____
 - d. And on the map we are making, the place is HERE - Make sure you place the piece of paper on the ground, in a place that will allow for people to put their pieces of paper around, as if creating a map



Creating Our Own Map

Instructions:

4. Give everyone a piece of paper, and ask them to respond to the prompts, and when ready, you want them to go place the paper where their birthplace is in relation to yours.
5. You will see people start placing their papers and negotiating with each other where their place is, and how far it's from X or Y. Allow for this to happen, and encourage for as much commitment to a real geographic map as they want.
6. Once everyone places their papers on the ground, ask them to walk around and see where different people are from.
7. If time permits, you can ask participants to say their place quickly (less than 20 people), but if the group is large, simply ask for 4-5 volunteers from different regions to share what they wrote.
8. Try your best to include those farthest from the most common place, but also include someone from the most common birthplace to make sure people feel included and proud.

Debrief Question:

1. How was that? How does it feel to see the many places we all come from?
2. What surprised you about our map?
3. What would you like to learn more about from the places we shared?



Activity bank

The Newspaper Cover

Objectives:

To visualize a collective future, who made it happen, and how it happened. To align on a vision. To identify similarities and differences on the potential outcome of your campaign.

Materials:

Flip chart paper, markers.

Instructions:

1. Share with participants that this activity is simply an exercise of visualization, and not a planning exercise. If we work together, we will be able to visualize and share what we think a collective win might look like. Stress that this is an exercise to get our creative and movement juices flowing!
2. Break out the entire room into equal groups. The perfect group is between 5-7, but it can be smaller or larger depending on your convening. You can break them up by counting 1-7 or 1-5 for each participant, and then asking them for all the ones, and the twos, etc. to meet in an area of the room.
3. Once broken up, explain that their mission is to work on creating a newspaper cover that shares the victory of their campaign.



The Newspaper Cover

Prompt:

It is the last Sunday of December, 2021, and the New York Times has a story about how your efforts were victorious. The story is above the fold, and it has a big picture.

Instructions:

With your group, you will have X amount of time (Try to give them at least 10-15 minutes) begin imagining this future by answering the following:

- a. What is the headline of the story? - Remind them headlines are short and catchy
- b. What image conveys your story? - Encourage them to draw or use their creativity
- c. What does it say under the headline (subheadline)? - Remind them that this is a sentence or two that says what the story is about
- d. What does the story say? What does it elaborate on?
- f. Who does it mention? Who is quoted and what do they say?

Once completed, ask the teams (if numbers and time allow) to share their stories for 2-3 minutes.

Debrief Questions:

1. How was that? Was it easy or difficult to come up with the story?
2. What made it easy? What made it difficult?
3. What did you hear from other groups that really inspired you?
4. What did you hear that you think it's important to focus on as we work on a collective goal?