

Generating Discussion & Engagement

Activity: Body Language Communication

Purpose: Brainshift, engagement & joining as group.

Time: Up to trainer – can be 5 minutes if keep time tight – provides quick jolt of energy and can be repeated at various times in the day (skip the debrief/ discussion after for just an energizer).

Materials: None. Work in pairs.

Instructions: Pair with partner. Each person has 2 minutes to tell partner without talking – act out hobbies, family etc. (Trainer give a specific direction). Trainer give sound or flick lights to indicate time is up.

Switch and debrief.

Can be used as a discussion prompt about importance of non-verbal cues and communication.

Activity: When met with a silent group

Purpose: Energy shift & engagement of group.

Time: 2 – 3 minutes.

Instructions: When you have a discussion question you want group input for – have the question up on powerpoint slide.

Ask the group to turn to a neighbour/ partner to respond to the question. Give them short time (ie 1 or 2 minutes only). Then come back to hear some examples.

Trainer comment: *This generated a buzz which then led into a good group debrief.*

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Activity: Build engagement for Day 2 of workshop (2 day workshops only)

Purpose: Build energy and engagement into day 2. Provides a collaborative review.

Time: Day one: 2 – 3 minutes to discuss at end of day 1;
Day two: 10 – 15 minutes in the morning of day 2

Instructions:

Ask participants the first evening to come back with something from day one that: caught their attention, surprised them, wanted to hear more about. Then do 10-20 minutes on that the next morning, writing it on the flip chart.

Activity: “If” questions

Purpose: Wake up brain, creativity & engagement of group. Typically would do at beginning of day 2 in a 2 day workshop. Could do part way through a training day.

Time: 5 - 15 minutes.

Materials: None needed. If do variation – use index cards or small pieces of paper. Choose from “If” list below, or generate your own question(s).

Instructions: Facilitator choose 1 (or more) questions from “If” list – invite participants to take a few minutes to reflect, or discuss with neighbour. Then hear some examples in the large group.

“If” Questions:

- If you could meet one famous person from history, who would that be, and why?
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be, and why?
- If you could create the perfect pet by combining two animals, what would that be?
- If you could be a guest on any TV talk show, which show would it be, and what would you want to talk about?
- If you could stop your aging at any point in your lifespan, what age would you choose and why?
- If you were going to spend 6 months alone in a space station and could only take 2 material possessions (besides basic necessities), what would you choose to bring?

There are oodles more of these questions on the internet and in various books.

Variations:

Prepare index cards ahead of time with one “If” question per card. Place a stack on each table. Then each table can randomly pick one card to read to large group, and hear some examples. This would take longer however can work well as a teambuilder with a small group.

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Activity: Inspiration

Purpose: Engage right side (creative) of the brain of participants. Shift energy and invite creative engagement.

Time: 10 - 15 minutes.

Materials: A poem or story to read to group.

Instructions: Read an inspirational poem or story (ex. Oriah Mountain Dreamer) and then ask a group what is their passion?... debrief response

The poem "Invitation" by Oriah Mountain Dreamer can be found here

<https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/the-invitation-by-oriah-mountain-dreamer>

Activity: Agree or Disagree – Physical Scaling

Purpose: Movement, energizing, generate discussion.

Time: 15 – 25 minutes depending on how much discussion want to build in.

Materials: Pre-made signs with "Agree", "Disagree"... can include "Maybe" if want more of a continuum. List of questions or statements to use.

These can be provocative statements related to your topic (Eg: Women are easier to work with in counselling than man – *this one always got a good discussion going in Counseling Skills workshop*)

Or – trainer can start with more general provocative questions not related to workshop.

EG: Chocolate is better than sex, etc.

Instructions: At start of day, or at a break, tape up the signs in different parts of the room where group can move around.

Tell the group there are no right / wrong answers. Choose a few statements from the list – read the statement and ask them to stand on side of room based on agreement or disagreement that reflects their honest response – without over thinking it.

If using content related statements, then ask them to discuss for a minute with other neighbours by them – what made them choose this response today. Then hear examples from different areas in large group. – brings out nuances of these 'beliefs'.

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Magic Wall – more involved – see this link for full description:

<http://hughculver.com/add-magic-next-planning-session/>