

APPENDIX

more Tools for Group Work

- Check-in questions & grounding
- Energizers & icebreakers
- Activity formats
- Blank notes sheet
- Healing Circles, Inc.
- Land/Body/Spirit/Work
- Rose/Bud/Thorn debrief sheet
- Working Glossary of Organizing Terms



CHECK-IN QUESTIONS & GROUNDING

CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

- How is your head? Heart? Body? Spirit?
- What's your favorite smell? (Connect to multiple senses, not just head and brain)
- Who are your people? Whose shoulders do you stand on?
- What is the story of your name?
- What did it take for you to get here?
- What is your intention for this time together today?
- Who's your movement hero/shero?
- When did you decide to work for justice? What was the moment?
- When did you realize all was not well with the world?
- What do you do that helps you bounce back from hard times?
- What's one thing about yourself that we don't already know?
- What would be your superpower? What is your superpower?
- What are 2 or 3 things you know for sure at this moment ? (From Dorothy Allison's book, *Two or Three things I know for Sure*. In it she says...Two or three things I know for sure and they are never the same things. What we know for sure can change all the time.)
- What is your favorite pair of socks?
- What is your favorite way to eat potatoes?

GROUNDING

- **Altar building** - folks bring and share a sacred object and share the intention for themselves in the time together (that represents peace, tranquility, strength, etc.)
- **Poetry** - Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Gloria Anzaldúa, Marge Piercy
- **Hand massage** - with consent
- **Shoulder rub** - with consent
- **Stretches** - Down to the grass roots, out to your friends and neighbors, up to the heavens ... and a couple deep breaths
- **Songs**
- **Body scan** - from toes to head, scanning body for tingly, tightness, pain, discomfort, cold, hot, pay attention, breathe into our depth, height and width. Release the tension and acknowledge the sensation. Connect to our body before proceeding - and pay attention to sensation throughout meeting

ENERGIZERS & ICEBREAKERS

Questions ask yourself when creating an icebreaker:

- Who are the people breaking the ice?
- What is their relationship to each other? Think specifically about outliers and bringing everyone in.
- What is their organizational culture (silly, stiff, emo)?
- What is the purpose of the gathering? What are we breaking ice in order to do?
- Are there other important factors? Underlying tensions? Huge differences between the group members?

WHAT IS/IT IS (FROM GABRIEL FOSTER)

- Need as many small pieces of paper as there are people, pens, and a hat or something to put the scraps in.
- Ask everyone to write a question on one side starting with 'What is ...' i.e., what is your mom doing right now, what is queer love ..., whatever.
- Then have everyone fold those pieces of paper and put 'em in a hat in the middle, mix 'em up and have everyone pick a new one (WITHOUT LOOKING).
- Without looking at what is written on the other side, have them answer a question starting with 'It is...' i.e.; it is a pony, it is raining in Pittsburgh, etc.
- Then have folks read and share. Hopefully you'll get some good funny ones.

DANCE TELEPHONE

This requires people to move around so it depends on mobility and comfort level of the group. It is great though cuz everyone loosens up and everyone is laughing by the end.

You need one brave volunteer to come up with a dance move (like a little sequence). Then have everyone get in a line, everyone with their back to everyone else, with the 1st dancer at the head of the line. The first dancer taps the shoulder of the 2nd person in line, who turns around so they are facing each other, and the 1st dancer does the dance move once and the 2nd person mirrors it back. Then the 2nd person taps the 3rd person on their shoulder and the 3rd person turns around so the 2nd and 3rd person are facing each other. The 2nd person does the dance move for the 3rd person ... and on and on until everyone has gone. Then you compare what the dance was at the beginning and what it transformed into at the end. It is hilarious. With 20 people, you could do one long game of telephone or you could do 2 teams. That could be fun, too.

A LITTLE WIND BLOWS

There is a circle of chairs with one missing. One person stands in the middle; they state something that applies to them "A little wind blows for anyone who likes to watch *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*." Anyone that applies to has to get out of their chair and find a new seat not directly next to the one they just got up from.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Play musical chairs and the last person checks in.

THE QUESTIONS GAME (FROM CAAAV)

Everyone writes a question. One person picks the mixed-up questions out of a hat. They answer the question without giving away the actual question and pass the same question to the next person. This continues until the question gets to the person on the left or right of the person who first answered the question, depending on which way you went. The last person to not see the question has to guess the question based on the answers people gave. That means no yes/no or number questions.

WRITEY DRAWY

For this you need long strips of paper, at least 5-inches wide, and an odd number of people. People should be in a circle/ish but it doesn't really matter. Best with 7+ people. Someone starts at the top of the long strip of paper by writing a sentence. Any sentence! Then they pass the piece of paper to the next person and that person draws a PICTURE of what the person's SENTENCE is. Then this person folds the paper over so you can't see what the original sentence was (with only the image showing) and passes it to the next person who WRITES a sentence describing the PICTURE, and so on ...

FIRE (FROM TANUJA)

Create a fire ... Everyone takes a note card and write an intention. Think about what makes you stuck ... and throw it into the fire. Then you have to show the fire your intention.

ELEPHANTS & PALM TREES

Everyone stands in a circle. One person volunteers to stand in the middle. They point at one person and say either 'elephant' or 'palm tree.' If they say 'elephant,' the person in the middle has to put their hands forward and the two people on the right and left of that person have to make elephant ears with their arms. If they say 'palm tree,' then the person in the middle has to put their arms up like a palm tree and the two people on the right and left have to put their arms out like palm tree branches. If anyone messes up then they become the person in the middle of the circle.

TOILET SECRETS

Pass around a roll of TP and everyone takes a much or as little as they want. Then, for each square of TP that they took, they have to tell the group a secret about themselves.

SPEED DATING

Facilitator(s) come up with a list of questions – from funny to serious. Everyone stands up and finds a partner (someone they don't know). The facilitator has the list of questions, each person in the pair will take turns answering the question. Facilitator asks the question. The pair has 30 seconds or a minute to answer the question – switching off half way. You can ring a bell or clap or yell for them to switch. Then after the time is up, people have to find a new partner and you ask a new question. Repeat!

ID GUESSING GAME

Pass out an index card and a pen to each person who is playing. Then each person has to write two things they have done and one they haven't. The more unique and interesting, the better, but the object is to make it hard for the others to guess that it is your card. Then the cards are collected, and the group votes on who they think the card represents and which item they haven't done.

THE BOWL GAME *LONG, FUN

Cut paper into small pieces, yet big enough to write on. Have the players write down virtually anything that can be used for guessing: objects, famous people, movies, places, anything that comes to mind. Fold the pieces up and put them into the bowl. Divide into two teams. Each team has one minute to describe as many pieces of paper from the bowl as possible without saying the word on the paper. Each team gets one pass per turn, and after that it is minus one point for every pass. Whoever has the most points when the terms in the bowl run out, wins. Variations include: doing charades with the same set of clues for the second round, followed by being allowed to say one word only for the third round.

FINGER

Everyone is in a circle, and each person puts their left hand out, palm up, and their right pointer finger in the palm of their neighbor's left hand. The goal is to grab your neighbor's finger, and not get your finger grabbed! Start on a count of 3; if you get your finger grabbed, you're out! Once you're out, you leave the circle and become a cheerleader for the remaining people playing until you have a 'winner.'

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS TOURNAMENT

This is a good energizer to get the energy up. It is a standard game of Rock, Paper, Scissors, so clarify the rules beforehand ('1,2,3, shoot!' and if you are doing 2 out of 3). Everyone pairs up and plays a first round. Whoever loses becomes the cheerleader for the person that beat them, standing behind them and chanting their name. Then that person finds someone else to face off with, and the game repeats until you have a grand finale.

NOTES...

TOPIC

DATE

KEY IDEAS



QUESTIONS...

ACTIVITY FORMATS FOR GROUP WORK

Training for Change has many ideas.

PAIR SHARE: Important and simple activity for building relationships and ensuring all people in the room can share and contribute. People can have the same pair over the course of a full day or training, or be requested to switch pairs. This can also be modified into groups of 3 aka triads.

JOURNAL/WORKBOOK PAGES/WRITTEN

REFLECTION: Time for group participants to do silent reflection in the form of writing, doodling, drawing. Helpful for giving people a chance to digest and reflect on information and/or for people to have a break from verbal processing of information.

SMALL GROUPS/BREAK-OUT GROUPS:

Smaller work teams so that people can work together and contribute more actively than in a larger group. Helpful to give groups clear instructions so louder, bossier, more assertive people don't take over.

SPECTROGRAM: Also can be called 'Yes No Maybe' or 'Agree Disagree Don't Know.' This is an exercise that gets people moving, where they place their body in space based on their response to a question being asked. The questions can be silly, serious, or a mix. Helpful to visually and physically represent the range of opinions, experiences, thoughts on a subject, and to get people out of their heads. One side of a room is 1 response ('YES!') and the other side is the other ('NO!') with 'Maybe' being the in the middle. It's helpful but not needed to put up signs for folks to expedite setting up the exercise. If moving around isn't available to members of your groups, you can give those members a set of signs that they can hold up with Yes/No/Maybe.

FISHBOWL: Interactive group exercise, really good for storytelling and sharing of history. Facilitator should use it for a very specific topic with specific questions. A set of people sit in the middle of the circle of participants, they are the fish in the bowl. Facilitator asks them to respond to a specific question, other people in the bowl can also ask questions and/OR when someone in the middle is ready to swap out, they can leave and someone from the bowl can replace them. So, many people can come in and out.

GALLERY WALK: Good tool for having small groups share the results of their work on a topic. All groups put their 'report-back' on the wall and everyone silently looks and reads for a set amount of time. Then afterwards the full group can discuss.

AROUND THE WORLD/WORLD CAFE: This is a method for group learning where you have multiple topics being workshopped or discussed in small groups simultaneously for a set amount of time. After time is up, each small group goes to the next area, reads the previous group's notes, and then adds on. By the end, people have gone around the room and visited or engaged each topic. There can be one facilitator that stays in each group, or good notes on flip chart paper for each team to read and add on to.

FULL GROUP-DISCUSSION TOOLS: GO ROUND:

Have everyone in the circle share. A good activity to do for a check in. **POPCORN:** a discussion/convo/meeting that is open and not structured (vs a go round). **DOT VOTING:** good tool to get a temperature check from a group on a specific topic and to narrow down. Facilitator collects the options, then everyone gets a certain number of dots (1-2) and they vote for what they support.

HEALING CIRCLES, INC.

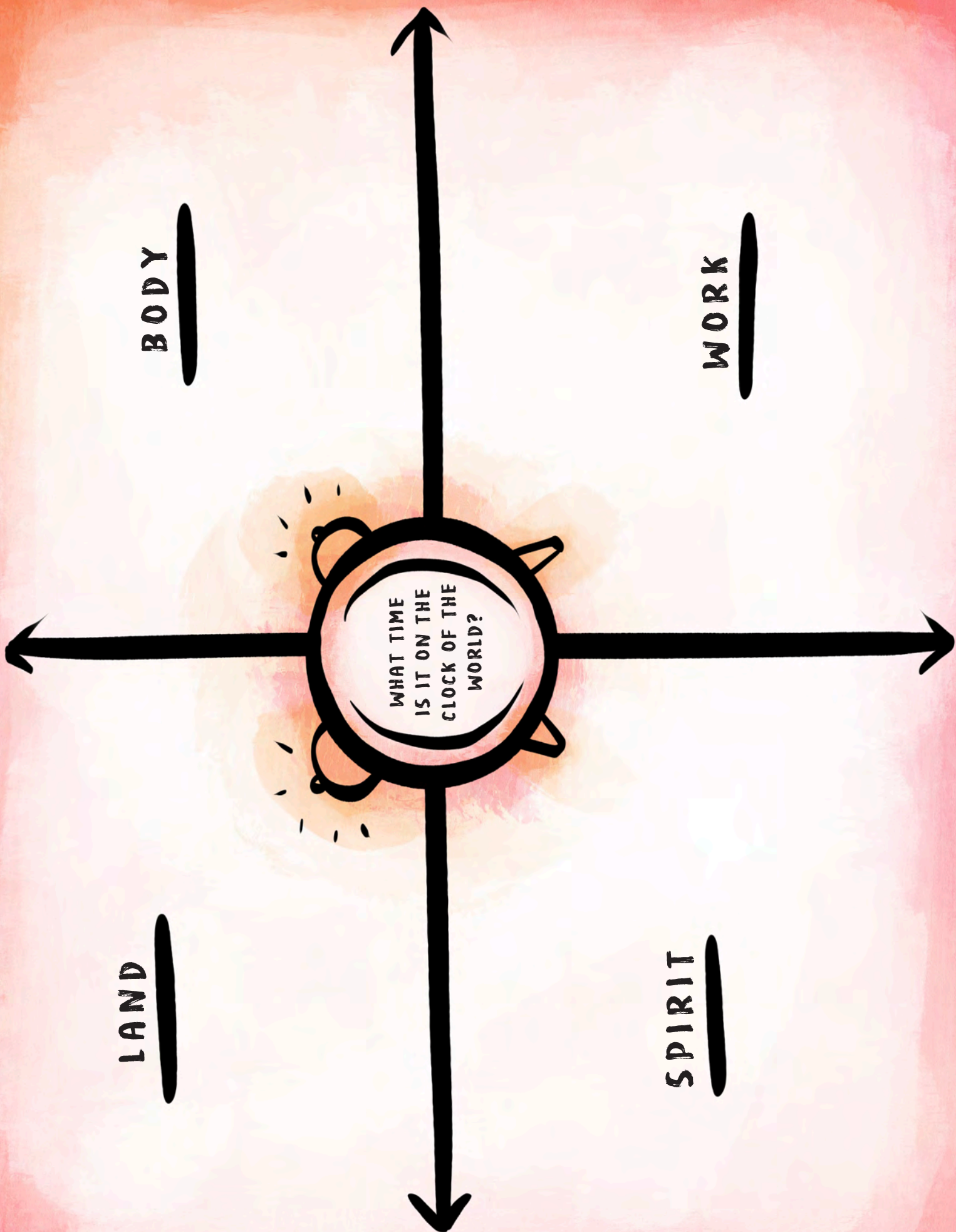
ETHICAL COMMUNICATION, AUGUST 2001

The information below is adapted from *Feminist Perspectives on the Ethics of Communication Explored in the Context of an On-going Group of Women with Decision-Making Responsibility* by Kit Evans (1980). The language has been modified to be inclusive of progressive male participants and is not designed to obscure the origins of this work as a feminist treatise on ethical communication.

'It is time to face reality that how we treat each other and how we feel we are being treated affects the direction of our movement and deeply affects our view of working with progressive people issues which challenge our communities ... Each time we communicate with each other, we create a negative or positive thread in our weaving/work.'

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL COMMUNICATION BY KIT EVANS:

- Personal agendas are valid. Secret agendas are anti-group and invalid. Dishonesty/secretcy of purpose creates dishonest/unethical communication.
- Invalidating another person is an unethical means of advocating a point of view.
- Seeking power over group direction by blocking the voices of others is not-consensual in intent/outcome.
- It is the group's responsibility to make sure that no person is alone, though s/he may share a singular viewpoint.
- Empowerment of each member is the responsibility of each other member.
- Persons have a right to information that affects them.
- Each member has an obligation to get/be/stay clear with each other member. Each person owes it to each other person to do that clearing with him/her, not by speaking it out with others.
- The purpose of each individual's communication within a group is to work toward agreement, not to shape decisions in his/her own image.
- There are times when it is valid for members to agree that what is said in the room stays in the room. It is fair for the group and its members to demand that some things be spoken about only as a group, in the group.
- Progressive people know/notice when there is a conflict, pain, or mistrust among members. There is a patriarchal process that ignores feelings in business. It is progressive (women-inspired) pioneering to seek a way that acknowledges and validates feelings as part of our work.
- Every personal relationship between members of a group affects the group and, therefore, may be personal but not always private.
- **THE MEANS IS THE END.**



ROSES:

WHAT ARE WE REFLECTING ON?

DATE



THORNS:

BUDS:
