

Facilitation Skills Guide



Brainstorming

Working together

Participatory

Acknowledgements

The NWT Literacy Council gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance for this *Skill Builders for Young Parents* project from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, GNWT.



The NWT Literacy Council is a territorial non-profit group that promotes and supports literacy in all official languages of the NWT. Our program areas include Aboriginal languages, family literacy, adult literacy and essential skills, youth literacy, and plain language.

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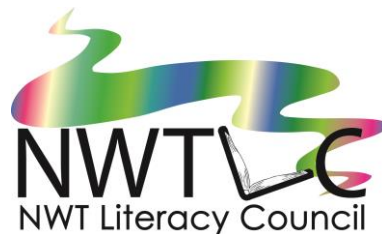
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July 2014

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Introduction

This guide explains what a facilitator does and provides tips and tools to help people successfully facilitate workshops. The guide is good for people who are new to facilitation as well as those who are experienced facilitators. You will find a range of activities that will help make your workshop interesting and engaging.

The introduction section covers:

- A facilitator's role
- Knowledge and skills of a good facilitator
- Values and attitudes of a good facilitator
- Consider your audience
- Differences between teaching and facilitating
- Vary your learning activities

A facilitator's role¹

As a group facilitator, you help a group to discuss an issue, make a decision, or solve a problem. You keep the group moving, and always towards its (not your) goals. The facilitator does not know all the answers. Their role is to help the group think critically about the topic of the training or workshop, and to make decisions for themselves.

The name "facilitator" comes from the Latin word "facilis" which literally means "to make easy."

There should be a balance between offering ideas to guide the group and patiently listening and questioning. The facilitator's role is also to encourage each member of the group to contribute to the best of their ability. Everyone has valuable knowledge and a valuable contribution to make. But people can be reluctant to share their knowledge. They may lack

¹ <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/facts/95-073.htm#role>

the confidence or may not consider what they know to be important. The facilitator's role is to build trust and respect between the members of the group and to encourage discussion so everyone can learn from one another.

With the proper facilitation skills and knowledge, you can help any group achieve its goals efficiently and enjoyably.

Knowledge and skills of a good facilitator

An effective facilitator:

- Is well prepared.
- Thinks and acts creatively.
- Listens and observes.
- Uses visual aids effectively (overheads, flipcharts, etc.).
- Records ideas neatly.
- Asks probing questions.
- Thinks quickly.
- Acknowledges and responds to participants.
- Summarizes.
- Resolves conflict.
- Uses humour.
- Knows a variety of techniques for group discussions, including problem-solving and decision-making.
- Designs or chooses appropriate group discussion techniques.
- Understands people and groups, and energizes the group.

Values and attitudes of a good facilitator

An effective facilitator must also hold certain values and attitudes.

Respect and Empathy: All ideas are important. No idea or individual is more important than another.

Cooperation: Your group members must work together to reach the group's goals. As a facilitator you cannot force individuals to work together, but you can create an environment for it to happen.

Honesty: You and the group need to be honest and open about your feelings, values, and priorities.

Responsibility: The group must assume responsibility for the solutions and their implications. The facilitator assumes responsibility for his or her actions, which ultimately affect the content, participation, and process of the session.

Flexibility: As you facilitate the workshop, you will need to be flexible with time and adjust the schedule as needed.

Consider your audience

Your audience, the people who will actually be part of the workshop, is probably the most important piece of the puzzle here. You will need to consider the following:

- **What do they already know?** What knowledge and skills do they already have? What can they contribute to the workshop?
- **Is the material relevant?** Is the workshop and material relevant to their needs? Is the material of interest to them?
- **Will they come with a particular attitude?** Were they forced to come to the workshop? Are they only at the workshop because they have to be there?

Differences between teaching and facilitation²

| Teaching | Facilitating |
|--|--|
| Teachers start from their own knowledge. | Facilitators start from the knowledge of the group. |
| Teachers follow a pre-set curriculum. | Facilitators address issues identified by the group or their community and adapt new ideas to the needs and culture of the group. |
| Teachers present new information from the front, or “head,” of the room. | Facilitators use practical, participatory methods, like group discussion and activities in which all members of the group participate. |
| Information flows in just one direction, from teacher to students. | Information flows in many different directions between the facilitator and individual group members—a genuine exchange of ideas. |
| Teachers bring extensive knowledge of the subject. | Facilitators draw out and build on the knowledge of the group, and knows where to find further information on the subject. |

² http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Fac%20skills%20English/Facilitation%20_E.pdf

Vary your learning activities

Did you know...that it is important to provide a range of learning activities for participants?

Research tells us that we learn:³

- 5% through lecture.
- 10% through reading.
- 20% through watching a video or listening to a podcast.
- 30% through demonstration.
- 50% through discussion.
- 75% through doing something or practicing something.
- 90% through teaching others.

Provide participants with a range of activities from watching YouTube videos to brainstorming to role playing. Give participants an opportunity to teach or lead the group. Give participants time to talk and connect with one another. Let them share their ideas and their knowledge.

³ <http://www.workshopexercises.com/Facilitator.htm#FacilitatorDefined>

Facilitation Tips



As we have learned, facilitation is the art of guiding but not leading, encouraging learning but not lecturing, engaging but not directing. In this section are some facilitation tips to help you facilitate effectively and successfully!

This section covers:

- Make a safe place
- Do's of facilitation
- Facilitator tools
- Challenges for facilitators

Make a safe place

Almost all workshops ask participants to reflect on their own learning journey, and collectively explore the subject matter. Often workshop material is sensitive and facilitators will have to use their judgment about what and how much they want to tackle at any given time.

Be aware that some adult participants may find talking about certain issues difficult. Many may have dealt with failures in the school system and other training programs. They may feel a great deal of fear around learning and success.

Make sure you allow people to participate at their own pace and level.

Dos of facilitation

Here are a few basic facilitation tips to help you deliver the workshops in this program:

Develop working agreements. Develop ground rules, or working agreements, to help participants understand what is expected of them and others in the program.

Find out the expectations of the group. Ask the participants why they came to the workshop and what they want to learn. Write what they say on flipchart paper and address each statement and whether or not it will be covered in the workshop. Be honest. If it will not be covered, clearly explain why not and tell them that they can get more information from you after the session, or direct them to another workshop that may better suit their needs.

Use the flipchart. Write down what participants say on flipchart paper. This helps show the speakers that their ideas have been acknowledged, and helps group members follow the conversation.

Use games and icebreakers. Games are a great way to set the tone for the workshop and get participants open and ready to learn. You will find a list of introduction activities, energizers, games, and team-building activities in this guide.

Give everyone a chance to participate. The facilitator's role is to make sure that there are opportunities for everyone to participate. You can do this through activities like brainstorming, group work, or using a talking stick.

Use different methods of instruction. Use a variety of facilitation tools: group work, lecture, reading, video, audio, role-playing, warm-ups, discussion, and presentation.

Put up a parking lot. Place a piece of flipchart paper that says "Parking Lot" on the wall. Write items and questions that come up during the training that are not relevant to the content of the training at that particular

moment, but that you want to address later. In the beginning of the training, explain what it will mean to “place questions in the parking lot.”

Make up a participant bag. In almost every workshop, there is a lot of brainstorming and other types of activities that use markers, tape, scissors, stickie notes, etc. Buy some large Ziploc bags and put all these items in the bag. Give each participant a bag to use for the workshop.

Facilitator tools

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a tool that helps a group to come up with as many ideas as possible without worrying about the details. You can do brainstorms as a large group or in small groups. Make sure you have flipchart paper and markers for each group.

Go over the rules of brainstorming before you start:

- Speak one at a time.
- Listen to each other.
- No idea is a bad idea.
- No judgement is allowed.
- The more ideas, the better!

You might want to do a practice brainstorm with participants with something fun. For example, you could ask participants to brainstorm all the things you can do with duct tape.

Different ways to brainstorm

Sometimes brainstorming can get a little boring. Make it interesting by trying these different ways to brainstorm.

1. **Three-way rotation:** Sometimes we can get attached to our ideas and it makes it hard to hear the ideas of other people. The three-way rotation tool can help!

- In small groups have people brainstorm a given topic. Have them write all their ideas on a large sheet of paper. When the groups have had enough time (15 to 20 minutes), take each sheet and give it to a different group. Tell the groups to now cross off all but the five best ideas on the sheet. Because the groups are not working on their own ideas, it will be easier for them to cross off ideas. Next, take each of the sheets and again give them to a different group. This time tell the groups to rank the top three ideas by marking a 1, 2 or 3 next to each one. This is a great way to prioritize or find the top three choices.
2. **Corners:** This is a great tool to get people talking about different topics. Write down each of the topics on a separate piece of flip chart paper. Put the papers up in different areas of the room. Read the topics to the whole group. Ask people to choose the topic that is most interesting to them and ask them to go to that area of the room. The groups discuss their topics and write down their ideas. Each small group reports back to the larger group.
 3. **Carousel:** This type of brainstorming helps participants to really think about a topic and generate lots of ideas. Each group works together to brainstorm a topic. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper with a different topic on it. Give the group about 10 minutes to brainstorm and record their ideas. At the end of the time period, the group exchanges their paper with another group. They read what the other group has written and add their ideas. At the end of the period, change papers again. Continue until all ideas are exhausted. Each group puts their paper up on the wall and participants move around the room and review the lists. You can use this tool with a variety of topics. All you need is a topic that lends itself to a variety of situations.

Pros and 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 reporting back to the group.

Agree and disagree

Make signs up and put them on opposite sides of the room. Pose a question and ask participants if they agree or disagree. Ask each group to discuss why they agree or disagree with the statement and then have them share their ideas with the other group. Participants can then move over to the other side if they are convinced by their ideas.

Talking sticks

You can use a stick, or a feather, 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 and helps them to break the habit. Here is a list of agreements to follow:

- Only one person speaks at a time; everyone else listens.
- Everyone needs to listen respectfully while someone is speaking.
- No one will repeat anything they hear in the circle to others. What is said in the circle stays in the circle.
- People should speak about the topic and not respond to what other people in the circle have said.

Limited discussion

This can be used to place limits on dominant or over-eager speakers. It also encourages shy speakers to contribute. Each person is given the same number of items; it could be candies, sticks, beads, etc. Every time someone speaks he or she gives up one of the items. When someone has used all their items they may not speak again until everyone else's items are gone too. Decide beforehand whether people may give their items to other members of the group.

Working in small groups

There are many reasons why you may want to split into smaller groups, but the biggest reason is smaller groups help people who are too shy to speak in a larger group to have a voice. Smaller groups allow time for everyone to speak and to feel involved.

Questions

Most participants shy away from asking questions. Participants may be scared to ask a “foolish” question and think they might be the only confused person in the room. All questions are valid.

One way to encourage everyone to ask questions is to give everyone an index card. Ask participants to write down a question they want answered. Then ask participants to turn the card over so that the written side is down and pass it to someone else. Participants continue passing the cards in random fashion until you yell "Stop!" Make sure everyone has a card. Now select a participant at random and ask her or him to read a question from the card.

Challenges for facilitators⁴

There are many challenges a facilitator faces when working with a group.

Taking control

One of the greatest difficulties that facilitators can face is the temptation to take control of a discussion or change the process. This is often out of a real desire to help the group move forwards. If we are used to a top-down teaching style, and have not had the chance to observe good facilitators at work, it can be very difficult to change our approach to sharing ideas.

Some ways for empowering participants are:

- Be patient.
- Listen to others and show that their opinions are valued.
- Be open to learning from the group so that information sharing is multi-directional.
- Encourage the group to discover solutions for themselves and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Difficult questions

You do not need to have all the answers, but it is important that you are familiar with the subject material. It is okay to say that you do not know the answer. Tell participants that you will find out the answer as best you can and get back to them. Some ways of dealing with difficult questions are:

- Prepare yourself for the workshop. Read over all the material you will be presenting.
- Anticipate people's questions where possible and think of possible responses.
- Repeat the question for all participants. Maybe someone in the group knows the answer.

⁴ http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Fac%20skills%20English/Facilitation%20_E.pdf

Managing conflict

Sometimes people will have strong and conflicting ideas on a subject. Poor relationships within the group will also affect the way the group works together as a whole. A facilitator needs to be sensitive to possible differences and tensions, and encourage people to work through these, keeping their common goals and interests in mind. Some ways for managing conflict are:

- Acknowledge the conflict.
- Try to establish the cause of the conflict.
- Help lead participants to a place of agreement, or to agree to disagree.
- Use your group agreements to help you manage the conflict. Make sure everyone is treating one another with respect and listening to different points of view.

Handling dominant people

Sometimes there is one person who dominates the discussion. They are confident they have all the right answers! A good facilitator needs to make sure that others have an opportunity to speak. Some ways to make sure that everyone has a chance to participate are:

- Break the group into smaller groups.
- Give each person five stones, matchsticks or candies. When they speak they must put one back in the jar. When all their items are gone, they can't speak anymore.
- Give group members a role. Roles can be facilitator, time keeper, recorder, reporter, etc. Make sure that everyone has a chance to be each role at least once.
- Give dominant participants other responsibilities, like making sure the group keeps to their time table. This will distract them.
- Lead off your discussion group with: "Let's hear from some of you who have not had a chance to voice your opinion."

Working with shy people

Sometimes people may be very shy or afraid to express their views in a group. It is important that you provide the space and opportunity for everyone to participate. Some ways to help shy people participate are:

- Break into smaller groups so they can express their ideas with fewer people.
- Do “pair-share.” Ask participants to share their ideas with the person next to them.
- Refer back to their ideas, so they know that these are important and of value.
- Give them time to think about their answers or their opinions.
- Use role-play activities to build confidence and skills.

Tools for Success



Teaching a subject and delivering a workshop are very different. In this section there are a variety of tools to help you make your workshop fun and engaging.

This section covers:

- Introduction Activities
- Warm-up Activities/Energizers
- Team Building Activities
- Games
- Closing Activities
- Grouping

Fun and laughter are the best ways to engage participants in the learning process!

Introduction activities

C-U-E: Draw C-U-E on a flip chart. As you give directions, complete the words to form “Common,” “Unique,” and “Expectation.” Ask each group to select a recorder and a facilitator. Each group should try to identify one thing that all members have in **common**. Encourage them to look for something a bit uncommon—not “we all live in Yellowknife” or “we all love children,” ...but “we have all have teenagers,” or “we all love mysteries.” Then groups should look for something **unique** about each member of the group—something one person has done that no one else has done. Finally, they should talk about what they **expect** to gain from today’s session.

Pair introductions: Ask people to pair up with people they don't know or know less well. One person interviews the other for three minutes, then roles are swapped. Questions can include the reasons why the person is

there and what they are hoping to learn/achieve during the meeting/workshop. When the whole group re-forms the pairs introduce each other, giving as much detail as they can remember. The facilitator could also suggest specific themes to be included in the interview.

Introduce yourself: Break people into small groups and give each person a penny. Ask them to introduce themselves to the group and talk about what they were doing during the year on the coin.



Baggage claim: Give each participant a baggage card. Have them “pack their bags” by writing five interesting facts about their lives on the bag. Try to have them use facts that other people may not know about them. This will make the game a little more difficult. Collect the cards. Participants now have to pretend they are getting off a flight and they are going to the baggage area to get their bag. Only they “accidentally” pick up someone else’s bag. (In other words, they get someone else’s card.) They then have to go around the room questioning the other participants until they find out whose bag they have.

"Do You Know Me?": Each person is given a nametag and an index card. The name tag has the name of another person in the group on it. Everyone is told to circulate, meet, mix and mingle to gather information, insights or stories about the person on their tag from group members. The opening line "Do you know me?" is used to help generate clues and conversation. The index card is to be used to write down the information collected. At the end of a designated time - about 15 minutes, each participant introduces their "name tag" and its person to the group.

Categories: Ask people a question like: How many siblings do you have? They must roam around the room and get into a group depending on how many siblings they have. Then give them a chance to chat. Other questions are:

- What season do you like best?

- What is your favourite colour?
- Were you born in the NWT?
- What meal do you like best: breakfast, lunch or supper?
- Are you a morning person or a night owl?

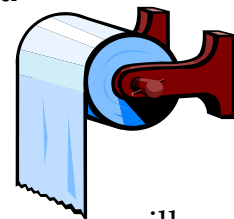
Speed dating: Participants have 30 seconds to one minute to talk to another participant in the workshop and find out about them. Then they move on and talk to another person, then another, etc. At the end of the rounds, everyone comes back together and contributes what they know about



each person. For example, “So everyone had a chance to meet Mary; what did you learn about her?” Make sure you encourage people to be creative about what they ask each other. That way you also hear funny stories about past holidays, or how many pairs of shoes someone has, the craziest person they know, etc. The possibilities for creativity are endless!

Find someone who: Each participant is given a sheet with a list of about 10 to 20 attributes or statements. They must get up and walk around and find people who have those characteristics or attributes. They write their name in the space provided. You can devise your own set according to the group, if you know them, but some suggestions are: has eaten sushi, has a tattoo, likes to wake up early, is a night owl, has four children, listens to classical music, etc. The first person to complete their sheet wins!

Toilet paper activity: This requires a roll of toilet paper and a group that is waiting for introductions. The group leader begins by announcing that, unfortunately, there is only one roll of toilet paper here, so in fairness to all we will share now. Then instructions are given to pass the roll around the table/room and each person is to take what they think they will need. When everyone has some, the leader then apologizes to the group and says, “I’m sorry; I lied. There is actually lots of toilet paper available but this is a way we will determine how many facts are to be shared by

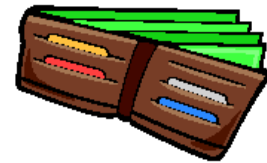


you about yourself, with the group. ONE for each section of paper taken!
" NOTE: Facts can be basic...age, birthday, favorite movie, etc. - and a concern for those who took A LOT of paper.

Pictograph mingle: This is a good activity if the instructor does not know the participants but the participants know each other. Draw five things on the board that are important to you. For example: a dog, a book, a plane, a smiley face, and a dog team. Get participants to ask you questions about these five things to find out more about you. For example: I miss my dog. I love to read. I arrived yesterday on a plane. I am happy to be here. I really want to go for a dog sled ride. Give participants a blank piece of paper, and get them to draw five pictographs representing things they want to chat about, or things that are important to them at the moment.

Name game: This is an easy and fun activity to help participants get to know one another's names. Everyone sits in a circle. Each person says their name and a favourite food that starts with the first letter of their name. The first person starts and then the second person must repeat the first person's name and favourite food and then say theirs. The next person has to repeat the first two people's name and food and then say theirs, and so on.

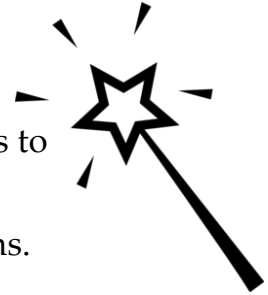
What's in your wallet?: Ask people to look through their wallets or purses and find three things that they can use to introduce themselves to others in the group. Allow 2-3 minutes for each person to share their items. You can do this as a whole group or in small groups.



Excitement Sharing: People share something exciting that has happened to them recently. Examples are: *'I went cranberry picking last week'*, *'My friend from Smith came to visit'*, *'I've got a new job'*. This creates a lot of positive energy for the meeting and puts people more in touch with each other's lives. You can use this instead of introductions when people already know each other. Make sure people keep it brief.

Warm-up activities/energizers

The magic wand: You have just found a magic wand that allows you to change three things in your life. You can change anything you want. What would you change? Ask participants to discuss why it is important to make the change. This activity helps participants to learn about others' desires and frustrations.



Finish the sentence: Go around the room and ask each to person complete one of these sentences (or something similar):

- The best job I ever had was...
- The worst project I ever worked on was...
- The riskiest thing I ever did was...

This is a good technique for moving on to a new topic or subject. For example, when you start a session and you want everyone to introduce themselves, you can have them complete this sentence: "I am in this group because..." You can also move on to a new subject by asking a leading question. For example, if you are doing a workshop on time management, you could ask participants to complete this sentence: "The one time I felt most stressed because I did not have enough time was..."

Sock toss: The group stands in a circle. The leader throws a sock to someone and calls his or her name. This person throws the sock to another person and calls their name. This continues until the sock is back with the leader. He or she sends it around again, but begins to introduce additional socks, so there are lots of socks flying!

Have you ever: Ask participants to stand up if they have ever done certain things. You can make up your own list or you can use the one below:

- Have you ever sung karaoke?
- Have you ever been without a shower for more than 2 weeks?

- Do you have both a brother and a sister?
- Have you ever ridden a horse?
- Have you broken a bone before?
- Have you ever had a close relative who lived to over 100?
- Have you ever been parachuting or done a bungee jump?
- Have you ever seen a polar bear?

I love my neighbor who: One person stands in the middle of a circle. Everyone else is seated in a circle on chairs. The person in the middle says: “I love my neighbor who wears glasses.” Everyone wearing glasses stands up and changes places with someone else who wears glasses. The person in the middle must try to sit down on one of the just emptied seats. The person left without a seat becomes the next person in the middle and uses something different to complete the statement “I love my neighbor who...” You can also do this activity with paper. Make sure everyone is standing on a piece of paper instead of sitting in a chair.

Change: This simple exercise makes people aware of the impact of change and how they feel about it. Ask the participants to fold their arms. Then ask them to fold their arms the other way round. Wait in silence for a few moments before asking them to unfold their arms. Debrief by asking:

- How difficult was it to fold your arms the other way?
- What does it feel to have your arms folded the other way round?
- Did you have the urge to unfold and re-fold your arms again?

This is a great warm-up activity for goal setting or making changes in your life.

Birthday line: Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to form a single straight line, according to birthdays. For example, persons with January birthdays will be at the beginning of the line, earliest January dates first, followed in order by later dates. The line progresses by

months and days with December birthdays at the end. Persons with the same birthday share the same place in line. You must communicate nonverbally (no lip-reading or spelling in the dirt allowed). When the line is completed, each person will shout out his/her birthday, beginning in January.

Line-up: Ask participants to line up according to age, birthday, height, favourite fruit in alphabetical order, favourite colour in alphabetical order, etc. The trick is—they have to do it without talking.

Rebel foot: This is a good exercise for self-awareness and releasing tension in a session. Make sure that the members of the group are sitting comfortably. Now ask them to lift their right feet off the floor and make clockwise circles and, while doing this, ask them to draw the number '6' in the air with their right hands. Their feet will change direction and there's nothing they can do about it!



Three animals: Ask participants to think of an animal. Now think of another animal. Finally, think of a third animal. The three animals represent, in the order you thought of them:

- What you would like to be.
- How you are perceived.
- How you really are.

Questions: A great way to get people talking is by asking questions. You can go around the table or do this in groups.

- If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?
- If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
- What is one goal you'd like to accomplish during your lifetime?
- What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?

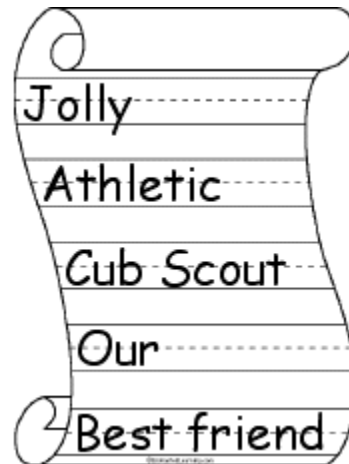


- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you choose to go and why?
- What’s the ideal dream job for you?
- What are your favorite hobbies?

People poems: Ask the participants to use the letters in their names to create a poem. Each line begins with the letters of their name in order. They need only one word in each line. The words must tell something about themselves—for example, something they like to do, or a personal characteristic. When they have finished the poems, ask them to share their poem with the other participants. Participants may use a dictionary to help them find words. You can also make up community poems describing your community, using the letters in the name of your community. This can also be used as an introductory activity.

For example: Catherine might write...

- Carefree
- Athletic
- Tall
- Humorous
- Energetic
- Red-haired
- Intelligent
- Nervous
- Envious



Continuum: Ask participants to line up on a continuum. Give them topics like: spicy food, sports, sewing, or animals. Ask them to line up depending on their like or dislike of the topic.

Person, bear, gun: This game is similar to Rock—Paper—Scissors. Divide the group into two equal lines of people facing each other. There are three possible “characters” the group can assume.

- Bear—growl with claws barred.
- Person—a “he man” stance with grunt.
- Gun—hunter with gun and shout “bang.”

Person wins over gun. Gun wins over bear. Bear wins over person.

Each group huddles together and decides (as a group) which of the three they will represent and then they form a line facing the other team. On the signal from the leader, the two groups face each other and act out their part. This is a really fun and engaging warm-up activity. Do it a couple of times, as the teams will need to try and outsmart each other.

I have never: Each person starts off with some candy. Going around the circle, each person finishes the sentence “I have never...” Everyone who HAS done what they have never done gives that person one of their candies. This is a fun way to learn things you might otherwise not find out about people. Some examples are:

- I have never gone ice fishing.
- I have never been to Calgary.
- I have never gone bungee jumping.

Top three: For a quick energizer, divide the participants into small groups and ask them to come up with their top three of something and have them rank the items in order of importance. It can be something related to the meeting—such as the top three challenges they have at work, or the top three gadgets they couldn't live without, or the top three foods they look forward to during a specific holiday or season. At the end, ask one person from each group to report the group's list of three.

Boop: Break the group into teams of three to four people. Give each group a balloon. Tell them to keep the balloon up using their hands. Next, their elbows, next their feet, next their heads, and so on.



Counting in threes: Participants stand in a circle. They take turns to count out loud around the circle. Every time a number is reached that is a multiple of three or contains the digit 3 (3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, etc.) that person must clap instead of saying the number out loud. If someone makes a mistake, they drop out of the circle and the next person starts from number one again.

Ranking: One person is asked to leave the room. The remaining participants choose something to rank themselves on. This could be their height, their hair colour or length, the month in which they have a birthday, and so on. The participants line up according to the ranking system they have secretly chosen and ask the person outside to come back into the room. This person then has to guess how the participants have been ranked.

Lap sitting: Everyone sits in a chair in a circle. The facilitator makes several statements like: Move three chairs to the left if you are wearing jeans. The people who are wearing jeans must move three chairs. If someone is sitting in the seat, then they must sit on their lap. Other statements you can say are:

- Move five chairs to the right if you are wearing red.
- Move two chairs to the left if you have a driver's license.
- Move four chairs to the right if you drive a truck.

Three animals: Think of an animal. Now think of another animal. Finally, think of a third animal. The three animals represent, in the order you thought of them:

- What you would like to be
- How you are perceived
- How you really are



Team building activities

Marooned: Divide the group into teams and tell them that they are marooned on an island. Ask them: “What five items would you have brought with you if you knew there was a chance that you might be stranded?” You can have them write their items on a flip chart and discuss and defend their choices with the whole group.



This activity helps them to learn about others’ values and problem solving styles and promotes teamwork.

Time capsule: This is a good exercise for practicing reaching consensus and for team members to understand each others' values. Have each member of the team list five items that they feel should be included in a time capsule that will be opened by another civilization in five thousand years' time. Each member of the team should then explain the reasons for their choice. The team then reaches consensus on which five objects should be included in the time capsule. Ask each team to write their final choice of items on a flipchart and discuss and defend their choices with the whole group. Then discuss the things you dislike and why.

Values discussion: Ask participants to find two people who are wearing the same color as them. Have them find a spot where they can talk together. Tell them they will be talking about some issues and you will give them new topics every few minutes. Here are some samples:

- Talk about the most important thing you learned today.

- What is something that few people know about you?
- What do you value in a friend?
- What do you want to be doing in five years?
- What is one goal you have for next year?
- What is a motto you try to live by?
- What is the greatest challenge you are facing?
- What do you like most about yourself?
- What do you value most in life?
- If you won a lottery ticket and had a million dollars, what would you do with it?
- If you could transport yourself anywhere instantly, where would you go and why?
- In your opinion, which animal is the best (or most beautiful) and why?

Skilled hand exercise: Hand out paper and pens. Ask everyone to draw around their hands and to write something they do well into each of the fingers. Split into pairs. Take turns discussing things you do well and how you acquired those skills. This exercise not only helps people find out more about each other, but also develops people's confidence.

Duct tape project: Ask learners to work in pairs of two to three people. Give each group a roll of duct tape and ask them to create something. Give participants at least 20 minutes.

Follow the leader: Everyone gets in a line and puts their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Everyone except the first person in line closes their eyes. The first person who is the leader leads everyone around, and the group has to communicate and work as a team to avoid obstacles.

In common: Break participants into groups of three to four. Give groups about three minutes to come up with one word that describes something they all have in common. Tell them to write this word down on flipchart paper. Now give each group 10 minutes to decorate their paper. Ask each group to present their word and art work to the other groups.

Team building: Break participants into groups of three to four. Give each group an assortment of material (lego, paper, scissors, glue, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, etc.). Ask them to build the tallest building they can. Give them 20 minutes or so to work on the project. The group with the tallest building wins.

Dice Games

You will need two sets of dice for all these games.

Count to 100: You will need at least eight people for this game and an even amount of players. Everyone stands in a circle and finds a partner across from them.



- Choose two participants to start rolling the dice.
- If a person gets doubles they run into the middle of the circle with their partner and start clapping and counting to 100.
- When another person rolls doubles, they run in to the middle with their partner and starting clapping and counting. And the first pair must go back to the outside circle and continue to shake the dice.
- There should only be one pair of people in the circle counting at a time.
- When a pair gets to go again, they start off at the number they left off at. So if they were able to count to 10 their first time in the circle, then they start off at 11 when they get doubles again.
- The first pair to get to 100 wins!
- Give a small prize to the winning pair.

Dice Charades: You will need at least eight people for this game and an even amount of players. Everyone stands in a circle and finds a partner across from them.

- You will need to come up with at least 30 slips of paper with pictures or words/phrases that pairs will act out. If you are doing a workshop on nutrition, you can use nutrition related pictures or phrases like “Cooking in the kitchen” or “Eating and apple.”
- Choose two participants to start rolling the dice.
- If a person gets doubles they run into the middle of the circle with their partner and they pick a piece of paper and act out the picture or phrase. If their partner gets it they put the slip of paper in their pocket and then grab another one. If another person rolls doubles before their partner guesses correctly, then they pass the paper to the next person and their partner guesses.
- This goes on until all the slips of paper are gone.
- Pairs add up their slips of paper and the pair with the most wins.
- Give a small prize to the winning pair.

Interactive games

Scrabble: Divide the members of a group evenly, if possible, to have groups of 3 – 5 people. Then each member donates the first and last letters of both their first and last name:

For example: MarY WhitE would donate MYWE

The group must create as many words as possible using the letters that they have in their pile and record them using pencil and paper. The group with the most words created is the winner.

Bingo: Ask participants to choose a theme, such as literacy, home, school, children, etc. Give each participant a Bingo Card or ask them to make their own. Ask participants to call out 16 words related to that theme, one word at a time—for example, kitchen, garden, etc. Write each word on the board or a flipchart. At the same time, ask each participant to write the word in

any of the boxes. Call out the words at random. The first participant to get a straight line and call out “Bingo!” is the winner. You can use this game for any topic.

Alphabet scavenger hunt: Divide participants into groups of three or four. They must use all 26 letters of the alphabet for the scavenger hunt. In their groups, participants try to find something in the room that they can see that begins with each letter of the alphabet. They need only one thing for each letter. The first group to find things for all 26 letters reads out their words. If the words are all okay, this group is the winner. If any are not okay, the game continues until another group finishes.

Crazy word chains: Ask participants to sit in a circle. Have them clap a slow rhythm. The first participant says any word to the time of the rhythm. The next participant must then say a word that begins with the last letter of the previous word.

For example:

APPLE . . . ELEPHANT . . . TOY. . . YELL. . . LOON . . . NIGHT

The game starts over when a participant misses a turn or says a wrong word.

Scattergories: Divide the participants into groups of three to four. Ask participants to call out 10 different categories of objects—for example, river, food, car, girls’ name, animal, country, etc. The more categories you have, the longer each game will be. Write the categories on the board or a flipchart paper. Ask one of the participants to choose a letter of the alphabet—for example, ‘m’. When the facilitator says “go” all the groups have to try to write down an example for each category beginning with that letter. You can also have decided on the categories beforehand and give groups a handout with all the categories listed. Look at the example below:

| Category | M | L |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| River | Mackenzie | Lee |
| Food | mushrooms | lemons |
| Cars | Mercedes Benz | Lexus |
| Girl's name | Mary | Laurie |

Word hunt: This is another creativity exercise. The group is given a letter — such as ‘S’ — and they are asked to write down as many words, which begin with that letter, as they can think of in five minutes. Names and place names are allowed.

Twenty questions: Choose any item that people might be familiar with. For example, you might choose snowmobile, banana, or lynx. Participants then have to try to guess the item. They can only ask “yes” or “no” questions. For example: “Is it a person?” “Is the person male or female?” “Does he live in Canada?” “Does he live in the Northwest Territories?” “Was he a politician?” “Is he Stephen Kakfwi?” The game is over if twenty questions have been asked and no one has guessed the right answer. If someone guesses the right answer, that person can choose the next item and answers to the questions.

Twenty questions with a twist: Each person writes down a person, place or thing (noun) on a stickie. They tape it on the forehead of the person beside them. Each person must try and figure out what is written on the stickie on their forehead by asking “yes” or “no” questions. The first person to figure out what it says wins.

What's the question: Write one fact on the board. For example: Yellow, or 5 years, or MacDonald's. Participants try to guess the question that matches each fact.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Yellow: | What's your favourite colour? |
| | What colour is your car? |
| | What colour is your parka? |
| 5 years: | How old is your child? |
| | How long have you been married? |
| | How long have you lived in Yellowknife? |
| McDonald's: | What is your favourite food? |
| | Where do you work? |
| | Where are you going to have breakfast? |

The person who guesses correctly gets to write the next fact on the board.

Running dictation: Choose one or more short pieces of text (about 5 lines). Make enough copies of the text for each pair of participants to get one. (You can use different texts for each pair if you like, but they need to be the same length and difficulty.) Stick the texts up around the room at some distance from where the participants are sitting. One person in each pair sits on a chair with a pencil and paper. Their partner has to stand up and run to where the text is. They read it (probably chunk by chunk), memorize it and run back to their partner. They have to dictate it to their partner, helping in any way they can without writing it. For example, "Actually, community has two 'm's", and so on. The winners are the first pair with the first absolutely correct version of the text.

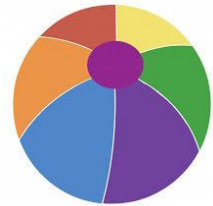
Brainstorm Rummy: Divide the participants into groups of 4 or 5. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper. Announce a general topic to the entire group, such as animals, holidays, vegetables, actors, etc. Give the groups one minute to brainstorm and write down as many examples of the topic as they can. When the time is up, all the teams must stop writing. On

the board, write Team 1, Team 2, Team 3, etc. Ask each team to read out a word and write it under that team. Once a word has been written on the board, another team may not use it. Keep going, until all the teams run out of words. The team with the most words wins that round. You can obviously play this game in any language.

Closing activities

It is important to end each workshop with a closing activity. Ask participants to give some feedback on the workshop. You can give evaluation forms, or ask them to share something that they have learned or found valuable. Provide a brief overview of what is coming in the next session and suggest “why” the group will find this valuable. Here are some fun ways to close your workshop.

Ball Review: You will need a soft rubber ball for this activity. Ask participants to state something they learned in the workshop. The instructor tosses out the ball to a participant; the participant responds to the question and then tosses the ball to another person. The instructor summarizes the feedback and makes closing statements.



Index Card Review: Pass out 3 x 5 index cards. Ask participants to respond to these specific questions:

- What are three things that you learned about yourself today?
- What is one change that you will make?
- What would like you to learn in other workshops?

DIY Quiz: Get participants into two groups. Ask participants in each group to write down five to ten questions about the workshop’s content. Ask each group to read out one question to the other group. If they get the answer correct, they get a point. Continue to do this until all the questions have been read and answered. The group with the most points wins.

One Word: Ask participants to stand in a circle. Ask them to answer a question with a one word answer. For example: What gives you hope? What change do you want to make? How are you feeling? What would you like to learn more about?

Head, Heart, Feet: Hang up a drawing of a person. Ask participants to think about these questions:

- What did you learn?
- How do you feel?
- What are you going to do?

Ask them to write down one answer for each question and then tape it near the head, the heart, or the feet in the drawing, depending on where it best fits.

Create: Give participants a small tub (or piece) of play-dough. Each learner creates an object that reflects something important they learned in the workshop. Participants gather in a circle and show the object they have created and explain its meaning. Then they pass the object to the next person who mashes the object together with theirs and so on, until a big colorful ball of Play-dough is formed. When everyone has finished contributing his or her piece, the large ball is passed around the circle again. Each learner takes a piece of the large ball, so that they can carry away not just their own learning and experiences, but also a part of the whole group.



Visual Representation: Ask participants to get into groups of three. Provide each group with flipchart paper, markers, stickers, glue, and any other art supplies you have. Ask each team to make a visual representation that sums up what they learned in the workshop. Ask each group to explain and share their piece of art with others.

Bingo: Give participants the bingo card. Ask them to brainstorm 16 words or phrases that summarize what they learned in today's workshop. Tell them to write down the 16 words or phrases on the bingo card randomly. Call bingo. You can do one line, four corners, four inside corners, etc. Give a prize to the winners.

Jeopardy: Make a list of questions. Get learners into three or four teams. Give each team a bell. Read out the first question. The first team to ring their bell gets to answer the question. If they get the correct answer, they get a point. If they do not give the correct answer, give the other groups an opportunity to answer the question. The team with the most points wins.

Goals: Ask learners to write out two goals they have for the future. Give them an envelope and ask them to address the envelope to themselves. Tell learners that you will mail out the envelope in six months.



Smarties: Ask participants to get into a circle. Offer them some Smarties as a snack. Tell them to take as many as they would like, but tell them they can't eat them yet!

- There are eight Smartie colours. Write an evaluation question for each Smartie. For example: Red: What was the best part about today?
- Then participants who have red Smarties must answer the questions. If they have two Smarties they must answer the questions twice and so on.
- Make sure you have someone writing down participants comments.

More of ... less of... the same: Divide a flip chart into three columns: more, less and the same. Hand out pens and ask participants to write down things that worked well for them in the 'same' column, things they wanted to see less of and things that they wanted to keep the same.

Ticket to leave: Give participants a question at the end of the day or workshop like.

- Write down two things that you learned today.
- What would you change for tomorrow?
- What are you excited about for this workshop?
- What will you do with this information when you get back to work?

Ticket to Leave

3... Things you learned from today's session

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2... Questions you have

- 1.
- 2.

1... Thing you would like to learn more about

- 1.

Participants must answer the question and give it to the facilitator before they leave for the day.

Compliment sheets: Write everyone's name on separate flipchart paper. Ask everyone to write down one compliment for each person. Share the compliments at the end of the day.

Three questions: Divide a flip chart into three with two horizontal lines. Write one of these questions in each section:

- What's been most helpful so far?
- What hasn't been helpful so far?
- What suggestions do you have for the next time/day?

Hand out three sticky notes and a pencil to each participant. Ask participants to answer each of the questions on a sticky note and then place the answers on the flip chart under the relative question. After the activity, go through participants' answers and write a summary of them that can be presented to the group at the next meeting. Apply the necessary changes, in accordance with their requests and what's feasible.

Grouping

As we have learned it is important that everyone has a chance to work together in small groups. Working in groups gives shy people a chance to participate in the workshop. Here are some fun and interesting ways to put people into groups.

Under the Chair: Put tea bags, stickers, a stick of gum, or a piece of chocolate under their chairs. Ask participants to look under their chairs and then find others that have the same thing.

Animal Sounds: Print and laminate animal pictures for this activity. Place the laminated cards in a hat. Ask participants to pick out a card. Ask them to make the sound of the animal that they chose. Then they have to find other members in their group.

Hum Dingers: Each participant is given a small slip of paper with the name of a popular children's tune on it (i.e.: Mary Had a Little Lamb, Happy Birthday, Wheels on the Bus, etc.). They must find their other team mates by humming or singing their song.

Everyone Loves Candy: Buy an assortment of candy. Sort the candy into the number of groups you want. For example if you have 24 people and want six groups, you will need six different kinds of candy. Give each participant a piece of candy and ask them to find their group. This is a good activity to do when everyone needs a little sugar boost.

Modes of Transportation: Print and laminate different modes of transportation. For example: car, truck, snowmobile, dog sled, bicycle, walking, kayaking, canoeing, skiing, etc. Place the laminated cards in a hat. Ask participants to choose a card and then act out their mode of transportation. Ask them to find their group. When everyone has found their group, ask each group to act out their mode of transportation.

Rhymes: This works well for getting people into pairs. Give participants one part of a rhyme. They must say their rhyme to find their partner.