

FRIENDS CONNECTION FACILITATOR GUIDE

CREATED BY



**Utilizing and Promoting
Social Engagement
for Loneliness, Isolation,
& Depression in the Elderly**

A PROGRAM OF
THE TALLAHASSEE SENIOR CENTER



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This UPSLIDE Facilitator's Guide is available online or in hard copy.

To view it online or print a copy, use this link

<https://www.tallahasseeseniorfoundation.org/friends-connection-guide/>

If you would like a hard color copy, just ask.

We do request a donation of \$75 to cover the cost of printing and shipping.

<https://www.tallahasseeseniorfoundation.org/make-one-time-gift/>

UPSLIDE is here to help, so if you need more information, guidance, or technical support, contact Melanie.lachman@talgov.com

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Introduction

If you are reading this guide, it is likely that you work with older adults. If so, you are aware that many seniors feel lonely and desire more social interaction. Sadly, this issue is not confined to senior living communities, senior centers, or even Tallahassee. It impacts millions of people all over the world.

Awareness of loneliness as a widespread problem came to light in 2010 when AARP published the results of a comprehensive survey of adults 45 and older which revealed that 35% of participants identified as being lonely (Anderson, 2010). Another study conducted in 2013 found that 40% of adults 65 and older feel lonely (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). And still a later study reported that only 53% of people in the U.S. reported having meaningful in-person social interaction daily (Cigna, 2018). In 2018, the United Kingdom appointed a Minister for Loneliness after their commission became alarmed at similar findings. Thus, began the shift in how we think about and address loneliness – and we began to recognize it as the public health crisis that it is.

We now know that loneliness and isolation take a huge physical and emotional toll. Overall, the physical effects of loneliness are like those of smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Anderson, 2010). It increases one's risk of premature death, hospitalizations, dementia, heart failure and stroke, to name a few. Add to that the stigma of loneliness and mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and it becomes abundantly clear how damaging and painful loneliness and isolation can be.

Loneliness: The Causes

There are many reasons people become lonely. One major risk factor is living alone. The number of single person households in the US has risen steadily -- 27% of adults over the age of 60 currently live alone (Ausubel, 2020). Of course, it is true that one can live alone and still feel completely socially satisfied, and yet another can be surrounded by family/friends and still feel utterly alone. So, obviously, living alone is only part of the story: caregiving status, bereavement, hearing loss, income, chronic disease, mental illness, poor social skills, history of trauma, family estrangement, as well as many other factors, all contribute to loneliness.

People often believe that it is their own fault that they are lonely -- perhaps there is something "wrong" with them. But studies have shown that it is simply harder to make friends as people grow older— Studies have shown that it takes about 94 hours for older adults to identify another as a "friend," compared to 43 hours for college aged adults (Hall, 2019). Many people tend to have the most friends in their mid-twenties, yet only 8% of those friendships last throughout a lifetime. As people leave school and create their own families, social spheres tend to shift, and it becomes more difficult to make new friends. Having fewer friends is rarely one's fault; it has more to do with opportunity.

Loneliness: The Solution

It may seem obvious, but the solution to loneliness is simple – People need to be with other people. Engaging socially. Being heard. Sharing silence. Having new experiences. Laughing. Bonding over shared interests, histories, and beliefs.

Did we know all of this when we started UPSLIDE? No, but we did know that many of the Tallahassee Senior Center (TSC) participants felt lonely, and that TSC was positioned perfectly to help. And perhaps your organization is as well!

We created this guide to help you implement the Friends Connection Group piece of the UPSLIDE program. We hope that you find it helpful. We know that doing this work will leave you feeling humbled and gratified.

How it began: UPSLIDE Overview

Friends Connection is a part of UPSLIDE, a unique program that addresses loneliness, isolation, and depression in older adults. The program concept arose from increasing reports of loneliness among participants at the Tallahassee Senior Center. Some expressed difficulty making new friends, and others seemed to be all alone in the world. At the same time, the loneliness issue was beginning to be recognized globally as epidemic, and the critical role of social engagement in successful aging, firmly established.

In 2015, the TSC Health & Wellness Program Coordinator assigned an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) intern a summer project: develop and implement a weekly chat group for seniors that identify as feeling lonely. It was a perfect fit because at that same time, the core curriculum of the Keiser University OTA program was expanding to include and underscore the psychosocial, as well as physical needs of clients. The program was entitled “Loneliness Chat Group,” and even with the stigma attached to being “lonely,” the group quickly grew from 4 to 22 participants! The original chat group included ice-breaker exercises, brain games, and guided conversation, from which friendships and collective support developed. Interestingly, the group continued to meet independently after the OTA’s internship ended.

In 2016, the Tallahassee Senior Center applied for a Florida Blue Foundation grant. The grant proposal built upon the original loneliness chat group and incorporated other evidence-based initiatives with the goal to ultimately connect individuals to each other and social activities. In addition to the therapeutic groups, now called Friends Connection (FC), the proposal included other activities and services to support its mission -- individual counseling, resource connection, transportation and technology assistance, special events, and social engagement support.

In 2017, Florida Blue Foundation (FBF) awarded the Tallahassee Senior Citizens Foundation (TSCF) \$221,000 to implement UPSLIDE over three years. To date, UPSLIDE has helped 350+ lonely, isolated, rural, or underserved seniors to become socially engaged in meaningful ways. In 2019 UPSLIDE won the National Institute of Senior Centers’ award for Best Practices in Health and Wellness and has become a model for other Senior Centers and organizations.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Tallahassee Senior Center to transition to a virtual environment. The in-person Friends Connection group transitioned to an online format. While this came with its challenges, it was an opportunity to build a format that allowed participants to remain socially connected while sheltering in place. The pandemic stimulated resourcefulness and a desire to share lessons and resources with others.

Friends Connection Group

The Friends Connection group is designed to engage two or more individuals, meeting in-person or virtually, in an interactive way. The intention is to provide support, make friends, and improve quality of life. The activities are designed to build interpersonal connection, encourage relational insights, enhance social wellness skills, and promote life reflection. This program is not curriculum-based, but topics and activities introduced should be relevant to group interests, align with facilitator's abilities, and be engaging and fun! Participants are encouraged to share about themselves and provide and receive mutual support.

Friends Connection is not a counseling or therapy group, but it applies elements from evidence-based programs and individual mental health and wellness interventions.

How does a Friends Connection group work?

While Friends Connection is not a clinical counseling group, it does feature elements of traditional support and mutual help groups. The group sharing allows for altruistic dialogue and interpersonal skill building. Belonging to a group allows participants to feel less alone in their life's challenges. Participants increase their understanding of various issues and have opportunities to explore potential solutions by learning from peers. Speaking openly about challenges in a supportive environment increases confidence, inspires honesty, and destigmatizes the act of seeking help.

We recommend running the program as an "open group" which means that new people can join at any time. There are "pros" and "cons" to an open group. On one hand, it allows access for anyone ready to join, but on the other hand, there will be different relationship histories among participants and an adjustment period within the group. The greatest advantage of an open group format is that replicates real-world social opportunities, and it allows new people to feel welcome and see the success of the group modeled by more experienced participants.

Who are the Participants?

To participate in FC groups, adults should be 50+ years of age, and experiencing loneliness, social isolation, or depression. Individuals represent diversity in education, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and culture. Group participants bring a variety of life challenges, including feelings of loneliness and lack of social support. They may be facing widowhood, health issues challenges, social irrelevance, or lack of purpose. They also possess wisdom, strong spiritual beliefs, high levels of self-awareness, and appreciation for the freedom of their retirement years.

Participants may also have histories of mental illness, substance use and/or trauma. They may require additional clinical support to complement the benefits of Friends Connection. Awareness of community mental health resources is recommended for facilitators.

Group Materials and Evaluation

The success of Friends Connection begins with participants understanding the purpose and requirements of the group. Group guidelines are an effective way to establish expectations up front. They outline the rules on confidentiality, topics to avoid, conduct towards others, and more. Guidelines set a more formal tone for the group and encourage collective cooperation. Guidelines help the facilitator share responsibility for the group management, and they are an objective set of standards to help maintain order (Hinz, L., n.d). See Appendix A for an example of Group Guidelines.

A **welcome letter** is recommended. It will explain the program in a friendly and nonthreatening way and may help ease the adjustment for new participants. Another component that may be helpful is an informational **flyer** which communicates in large bold font when and where the group meeting is held. Encourage participants to put the flyer in a frequently trafficked place in their home; or share the information with a friend.

Participant tracking and program evaluation are paramount for your organization to monitor program successes and challenges. Host organizations will have different participant data collection requirements depending on their funders and organizational requirements. Basic demographic information and an emergency contact for each new person is often standard.

Consider your organization's goals for the program. We recommend developing a system that allows tracking of participants to ensure that goals are being met. It is a helpful practice to evaluate progress by having participants complete a brief survey upon entering the program and again after a set time frame. Assessing a new individual's level of function (i.e., socially and mentally), can help the facilitator maintain a safe, quality experience for each participant. In determining what questions to include in your evaluation, consider how you would measure expected outcomes. For example, have new people joined your organization? Are participants feeling more connected with others and connected to resources?

In our TSC program, participant evaluation survey data reveals that participants feel less lonely, feel supported by staff, and that they have joined new activities at the Center since starting FC.

Please see examples of our Friends Connection Chat Group Evaluation and our UPSLIDE Post-Test Questionnaire in the Appendix.

*Note that our program collects data on participant's depression symptoms including suicidal thinking. If your program chooses to ask participants to share this information, it is imperative that you have a plan in place for addressing these concerns.

Promoting the Program

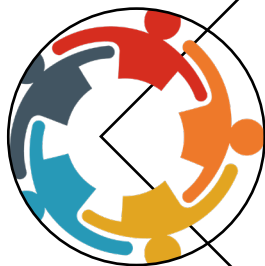
Here are some ways to advertise for the group:

- Flyers
- Press releases
- Targeted mailings
- Posts on social media
- Public Service Announcements
- Personal invitations to existing participants of your organization
- Email blasts to partner organizations and within your own organization
- Advertising in newsletters of referring agencies and community partners
- Outreach presentations to potential referring agencies and community partners

If you have a community relations department or marketing department in your organization, they may be enlisted in getting the word out as well.

Meeting Logistics

In Person: When hosting in person group meetings, there are several logistical items to consider and prepare for:



Room

Select a comfortable, private meeting room. Consider ADA accessibility and space for walkers or wheelchairs. The location must meet basic needs of participants, i.e., accessible to all, comfortable temperature, and access to restrooms.

Give clear instructions on meeting location to participants. Check that entrances and exits are unlocked at least 30 minutes before start of meeting. Inform staff and others of meeting time and location, so they can assist participants to the room.

Room Set-up: To allow visibility and enable the ability to hear others, have participants seated around a large table or in chairs placed in a circle.



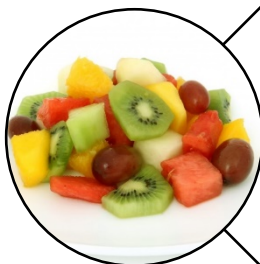
Preparation

Ensure that the meeting agenda is prepared in advance. This includes announcements and day's discussion topics or activities. Have handouts printed and supplies gathered.

Name tags will help people get to know one another, and relieve anxiety about remembering other's names. Ask each participant to fill out and wear their name tag.

Have pens/markers available. Encourage people to write their name in large print.

As participants are getting to know each other, it is helpful for each person to say their name when speaking. This also helps the visually impaired to recognize people and voices.



Refreshments

Provide light healthy snacks and drinks. This can create a more relaxed atmosphere and encourage greater participant interaction.

Online or Virtual: When hosting online or virtual group meetings, there are several logistical items for the facilitator to consider and prepare for (APA, 2020):



Preparation

Set up a reoccurring meeting for your program on your virtual meeting platform of choice. Share meeting information with group participants via email. If they can connect only via telephone, clearly dictate the login telephone number and have them repeat it back.

Login to the meeting at least 10 minutes in advance and greet each person upon arrival.



Facilitation

Facilitator should have host capabilities for the group meeting. This will allow the facilitator to control audio/video of participants, enable screen sharing for an activity, and best monitor the technical aspects of the meeting.

Be prepared to mute participants with background noise or turn off their video camera if they are doing something distracting (like falling asleep).



Meeting Space

Choose a private and quiet location for the facilitator to conduct the meeting. Excessive background noise can interfere with sound quality for everyone.

Ensure good front lighting is available so the facilitator's face appears well lit on the screen. To enhance eye contact, position your camera so it's comfortable to look at the camera and the participants on the screen.

Consider removing personal items or distractions in the background. A less cluttered environment helps others stay focused.

Tips for Online Group Participants

1. Depending on the chosen virtual meeting platform (Zoom, Teams, etc.) there are helpful How-To-Guides available for facilitators and participants. It is recommended to send the guides in the meeting email.
2. Ask participants to limit background noise and/or mute themselves when they are not speaking.
3. To maintain confidentiality and avoid non-participants' listening to meeting content, it is important for participants to join the group from a private location with a secure internet connection. If others are nearby in the home, ask that participants wear headphones to ensure another participants' privacy.
4. Request that participants share their name when speaking. It will help participants get acquainted and put a name to each voice they hear.
 - Facilitators can support this process by calling on people by name, reiterating who is in group, and thanking people by name after they share a comment.
5. Try to avoid spending a lot of the meeting time assisting one person's technology needs. If computer or video connection is not working, a telephone connection is a good option until assistance can be provided.

Meeting Outline

Below is a sample agenda with tentative times. Times will vary depending on the number of group participants and their activity level. Each activity is explained in more detail in the following section of the Guide.

Activity	Action	Time (60-90 minutes)
Welcome Group Participants Share announcements	Share flyers or informational brochures for upcoming events or local resources. Place them in an easy to spot location in the room. Create and maintain a group contact list with names, phone numbers and emails. Ask participants permission to share their contact information. As the group grows and changes, keep it updated, as this will support communication between participants in-between sessions.	5 minutes
Check in	Each participant is given an opportunity to share how they are doing. This process will vary for each hosting organization, but this information is valuable for program tracking and evaluation.	2-5 minutes per person
Discussion and Structured Activity	Activities are provided in the Activity Catalog section, on page 22.	Time will vary based on # of participants

Beginning the Meeting

Welcome Group Participants

Remember the context of the group -- each person joining feels lonely. It is vital that the group leader welcomes and supports each individual. Comments like, "We are so glad you are here" are encouraged.

Here is a sample script to get started:

*"Hello everyone! Welcome and thank you for being a part of our group today. My name is [facilitator name] and I will be leading this group each week. Before we begin, I am going to Review the Group Guidelines * (see example Group Guidelines in Appendix A). I also want to share some announcements about upcoming events at the Senior Center." (Weiskittle & Mlinac, 2020)*

(Proceed to the check-in after announcements and resources are shared, and relevant questions are answered.)

"We start each group meeting with a check in. and then we will have an activity during the latter part of the meeting. Each participant is allowed some time to share what is going on with them, to the extent they feel comfortable. Perhaps you could each share a high and a low from the past week, or something you are seeking support for. We encourage everyone to participate so we can make sure everyone is doing okay. However, it is ok to pass if a you don't feel comfortable sharing something with the group. This is an "open group." That means that new people may join the group in the future, or some folks may attend only intermittently. It is important that we are welcoming and respectful of every person here."

*Note: Reviewing the Group Guidelines in their entirety may not be needed every meeting. It is good to go over highlights with new people and bring up specific guidelines if issues arise and the group participants could use a reminder.

Check-in

Check-in or "rounds" is a helpful way to encourage participation by each participant, one at a time. It allows each person focused time to share information about themselves (Duffy, T., 1994). Check-in is an opportunity for participants to talk about what they are struggling with and what is going well in their life. It offers a glimpse into each participants' personal experience, information about home dynamics, personality traits, and their interests and values.

Depending on group size, and to allow ample time for everyone to share, it is important to encourage comments to be succinct. Try to limit time to about 3 minutes per person (see tips below in Facilitator Tips section on ways to politely stop a talkative member's sharing). There may also be opportunity for other participants to weigh in on someone's comments during check-in. This is easier with a smaller group. As a facilitator it is important to constantly scan the room to assess participants' interest in sharing. If someone is struggling with something, ask if they would like suggestions from the group on this issue (Powerful Tools for Caregivers, 2013). Ask other participants to share what has worked for them in a similar situation or share comments about what they think may be helpful. When someone has finished sharing, thank them for their comments and for being open with the group. The check-in technique is used in the beginning of group meetings but can also be a way to implement activities or discussion. This is also a good time to take attendance.

Time management of the check-in can be challenging. Even so, it is important to find a balance of allowing people time to share how they are doing, with a brief and supportive discussion if applicable, while still allowing at least 30 minutes for a structured activity or discussion. Be prepared for participants to share about unexpected situations or have a crisis they need to discuss. Flexibility may be needed to allow a participant in crisis more time to speak and to

receive support. Sometimes check in can be emotionally intense; remember, a primary goal of this group is to provide a social, fun, and insightful experience for participants.

Discussion and Structured Activity

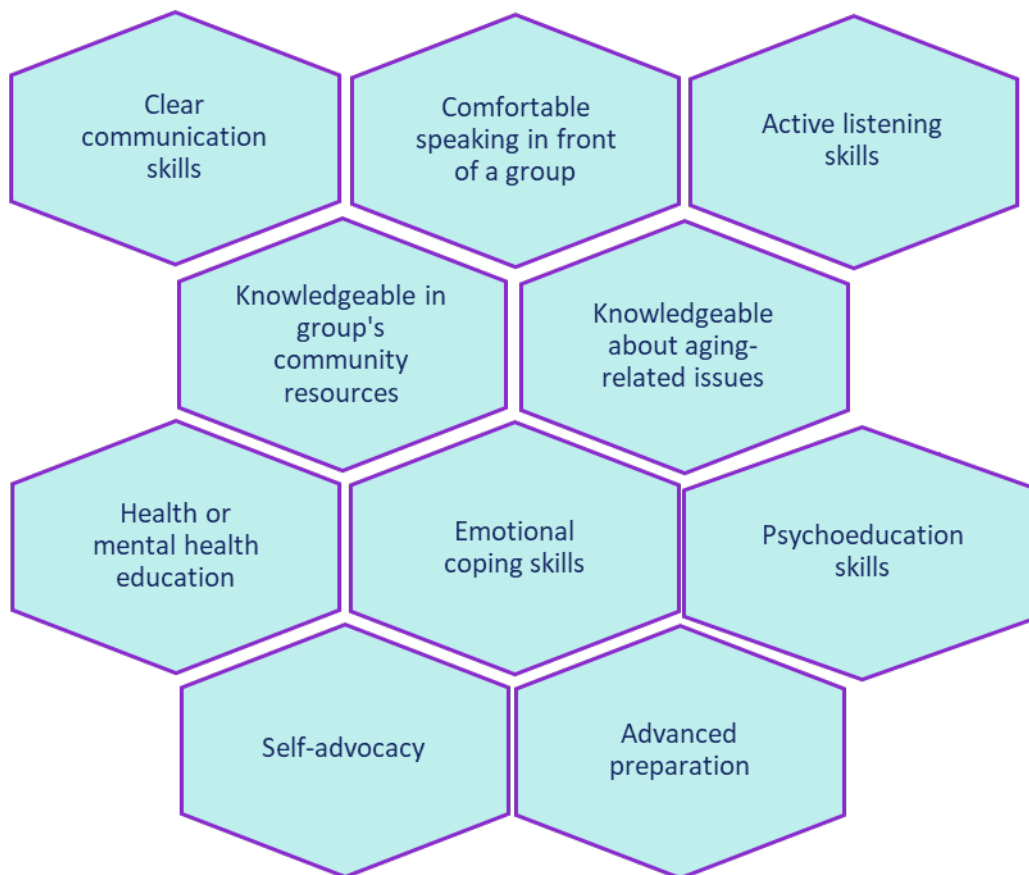
To transition from check-in to group discussion, utilize prepared discussion questions and activities. We have compiled a catalog of successful discussion questions and group activities used in FC groups since 2018. See the Activity Catalog section for activities and discussion questions.

Instructions for activities should emphasize that participation is voluntary, and there is no right or wrong answer. Motivate and encourage participants by relating the discussion or activity to questions they have brought up in group. Engage participants in activities or discussion by asking questions that link participants to other participants. As a facilitator your aim is to encourage personal sharing and keep discussion and ideas flowing. Try inserting questions after pauses in participant comments, *“Did that comment bring up anything for others?”* or *“Who else has something to share?”* Asking others to share their thoughts about another’s comment is an effective way to elicit ideas and feelings.

Facilitator Tips

Who and what is a Facilitator?

You are probably asking yourself if you are a good fit for facilitating a Friends Connection group. Below is a diagram with various skills and knowledge a facilitator should possess to manage a successful Friends Connection group. The skills and attributes are further explained in the coming pages.



It is also important for facilitators to be knowledgeable about their group's community resources to support social, nutritional, mental, and medical needs. Referrals to a variety of programs and connection to services can be an indirect function of Friends Connection. At a minimum, be prepared to refer folks to 211 Resource Hotline or their Area Agency on Aging.

Group facilitators work to help the group meet its goals, including:

- Ensuring that the group environment is physically and emotionally safe and supportive.
- Guiding the communication of the group, listening, and clarifying what has been shared. They should withhold opinions or advice, while remaining neutral, yet supportive.
- Connecting participants with other participants to create a supportive and accepting space.
- Making participants feel welcome, validating their voice and presence.
- Protecting participants from topics that could be harmful or divisive.

Acquire Knowledge about the Needs of Older Adults

Facilitators working with older adult groups should be knowledgeable about common issues among older adults who are experiencing loneliness. Grief, caregiver burden, loss of independence, concerns about physical/cognitive changes, and relationship challenges with adult children and/or grandchildren are some examples. Be prepared to respond to challenges with empathy, encourage support from others, and share relevant resources that may help.

Adapt

Sensory impairment is a common part of aging. Since many seniors have some degree of hearing loss, it is important to speak clearly and loudly and allow group participants an unobstructed view of the facilitator and participant's faces, especially if they rely on lip reading. Some participants with sensory or mobility impairment may require more personal attention. If someone is speaking at a lower volume, or perhaps speaks English as a second language, it is helpful to repeat comments and questions to ensure they are heard by the group.

Clear Communication and Instructions

To help participants feel safe and be able to participate, they need clear expectations and their questions answered. Consider conveying instructions through verbal and written communication, i.e., verbally explain instructions and place prompts on a screen or whiteboard.

Active Listening Skills

It is exceedingly important as a facilitator to use active listening skills to ensure participants feel heard and validated.

Ask open-ended questions to gather additional information, and to stimulate discussion and sharing of personal information. These questions usually begin with *how*, *what*, or *why*.

Paraphrase- Summarize and restate what participants say in your own words. Paraphrasing is an important skill in group facilitation because it helps encourage and model active attentive listening. It also enables the speaker and the rest of the group to consider their thoughts and reactions about what was said. There are many benefits of paraphrasing. It helps prevent miscommunication and ensures that people can hear and understand others' comments. Paraphrasing helps reinforce main points for the group participants to remember and think more about. It also helps the facilitator stay focused. Paraphrasing is said in a positive and supportive tone and be offered without blame or judgment (Gladding, 2016). Here's some examples of phrases to use when paraphrasing:

- *We hear you saying that . . .*
- *So, what I understand you're trying to say...*
- *So, are you saying...?*

Empathic Response

Empathy is the emotional ability to understand what other people feel and to see things from their perspective. Empathy can be communicated through verbal and nonverbal responses to others' comments. Reinforce each person's statements with open body language, such as facing them and nodding your head. Whether in person or on video, seeing nonverbal cues from others, through attention and a kind facial expression, feels supportive.

Be Supportive

As a group leader it is important to encourage participants to speak, share and contribute to the dialogue. When the group has a supportive quality, participants feel safe sharing something new or being direct with others. Be aware that depending on a member's socialization and culture, they may be less trusting of the group and less open to sharing negative personal information (Gladding, 2016).

Have a Nonjudgmental Attitude

Be aware of judgement or opinions that arise within yourself as participants contact you about joining the program or make comments in a meeting. Examine your prejudices or stereotypes about aging and cultural or racial diverse groups. Consider what impact your comments or nonverbal gestures may have on group participants.

Use Humor

Laughter can be a tool to build connection, relieve stress, and feel relief from a challenging situation (Powerful Tools for Caregivers, 2013). It also makes the meetings fun! Any humor or joking in group must be appropriate and respectful, and never at the expense of an individual.

Observing

Leading a group requires continual engagement with the content being shared and each participants' responses, verbal or nonverbal. Visually scan the room and/or computer screen (if virtual) and pay attention to individual participants during group interaction. Commenting on some observations in a scan can be a useful tool to inform the group of similarities that are occurring. For example, *"Bob, I noticed your head nodding when Sharon was explaining her challenge. How can you relate to what she said?"*

Allow for Silence

Allowing a person to pause in the middle of their statement or letting a few seconds pass after they finish a comment can be helpful. Allowing for a moment of silence in between comments allows group participants time to reflect on what is being said or how they want to respond.

Encourage

Some people will need encouragement to participate. This is true especially when people have underdeveloped social skills or limited opportunities to socialize in their daily lives. Gently

encourage reluctant participants to join in group discussion. Monitor discussions to prevent others from monopolizing the conversation.

Stay on Schedule

Certain topics inspire more comments and time-consuming discussion than others. Note that certain participants will predictably be very talkative and others quieter. However, there may be times when the tables turn. There may also be times when you will have to limit sharing by cutting off/interrupting participants to stay on schedule and guarantee everyone their turn to speak.

Suggestions for ending participants sharing:

- *"It's time to move on to the next activity."*
- *"Thank you for sharing... [next participant] do you have something to add."*
- *"That's a wonderful point...what does the group think?"*

Limit Facilitator Self Disclosure

The group facilitator role is to encourage the participants to share and connect, and it is unprofessional to overshare his/her own personal information. Self-disclosure may be relevant at times, and it can be used to model the kinds of content that can be shared and how to do it. If a personal story or comment is necessary as an example, keep the comment succinct.

Addressing Challenges

As a group facilitator, you will encounter various participants types. You can read more about the various participants in the diagram on the next page.

The Overtalkative Person aka Monopolizer



This person dominates the group conversation and doesn't allow others an opportunity to participate (Gladding, 2016). In this situation, the facilitator should sincerely thank the person for his/her comment, and emphasize the importance of assuring that everyone has a chance to respond. Or mention time constraints, and a need to move on. Use body language as a subtle tool to direct attention away from the person, and do not look toward the person when asking the next question. The facilitator can also suggest some one-on-one time at the end of the group meeting.

The Non-Participant or Silent Person



This person shows up, but does not share in or participate in discussions or activities. There can be several reasons for this. The person may be shy, not be very talkative, insecure, or other have personal factors that limit his/her motivation to participate and share. During group activities or discussion, watch for signs that the person wants to participate, especially, facial expression changes, or straighter posture. Speak privately with the person after group or call them between meetings to inquire about how they feel about the group.

Not every activity or discussion topic is appealing to everyone. Also, if someone chooses not to speak that does not necessarily indicate that something is wrong. Avoid evaluating yourself as a leader based on the occasional person who does not participate in group discussion (Gladding, 2016).

The Crying Person



This is a person who expresses feelings of loss, sadness, or frustration by crying. They may feel relief to be able to express emotions in a safe and supportive environment. Allow the person to cry, and verbally normalize crying so this person does not feel embarrassed. Hand them a tissue. Others will likely comfort this person in some capacity. Check in with them privately after group.

The Person in Crisis



This is a person with severe problems who needs help. They may express severe hopelessness or despair, and mention of self-harm or suicide. Look for warning signs in participants that may indicate they need professional mental health care. Check in with them privately after group and consider a referral source to help.

Impolite/Confrontational Person



If a participant is rude to others or sharing comments that could be construed as offensive, the facilitator should interject with something like, *"Each of us is entitled to our personal opinions. It's very important, however, that we are supportive of each other in this group. It's ok to disagree with others; however, personal attacks are not appropriate."*

Additional Tips for Facilitators

Facilitators should also be aware that a mental health referral may be necessary to best serve your group participants. A referral is the process of directing someone to another service provider because they require help that is beyond the expertise or scope of your program. A referral can be made to a variety of services, for example health, mental health, protective services, nutrition, shelter, legal assistance, physical rehabilitation, and/ or social services. Have handouts for community services available to distribute as needed.

Recognize your own limits. Be familiar with the contact information and phone number of the local crisis intervention resource. Talk to the group member privately or call them after the meeting. Provide names, phone numbers, or addresses of specific community resources that can help with their situation. If the person refuses to call the crisis center or other professional for help, consider requesting permission from them to call a family member or friend on their behalf. Refer to your organization's crisis response policies and procedures.

Some Signs of Depression include:

- Loss of pleasure in activities
- Abnormal restlessness
- Appetite changes
- Decreased concentration/memory impairment
- Sleep difficulties
- Preoccupation with thoughts of suicide
- Fatigue/loss of energy

Some other signs to watch for:

- Personality changes or abnormal behavior
- Severe changes in emotion with persistent anger or severe anxiety

Activity Catalog

In the Friends Connection Activity Catalog, you will find an array of activities that can be offered to the group. The activities are categorized by:

- Games- promote fun, creativity, and stimulate imagination and cognitive skills.
- Sharing and Self Disclosure- promote social connection and sharing personal information with others.
- Introspection- promote understanding of individuals' mental and emotional states, their personality, values, and beliefs.
- Therapeutic- promote emotional and mental well-being by encouraging processing and healing of individuals' areas of concern and teaching coping skills.

We have developed a rating system for the activities that indicates level of difficulty to implement. This is relative to facilitator's experience, but we recommend activities that encourage more emotional sharing, participants' reflection of their past, and skill building should only be implemented by mental health professionals, as indicated below.



One UPSLIDER indicates that an activity is fairly easy to implement, should not open up any emotionally challenging subjects and is pretty straightforward for all levels of facilitators.



Two UPSLIDERS may require a bit more preparation for a facilitator to properly respond to participant responses. It may evoke some subjects that encourage vulnerability and discussion of individual challenges, or be more educational in nature.



Three UPSLIDERS indicate that a higher level of skill is required to facilitate this activity due to the potential for difficult emotions to arise, the level of preparation required, and the amount of education and skill teaching being provided. In general, we recommend that these activities be implemented by mental health professionals to ensure that the group remains a safe place for participants to grow and experience difficult emotions and for those emotions to be properly supported and resolved.

Each activity has information on materials needed, instructions to implement in-person and virtually, and notes that give more facilitation context and anticipate issues that may arise when running the activity.

- Websites listed in the reference section and communication tips sections of the facilitator guide can help the facilitator prepare to lead the activity.
 - **Optional Reading-** resource for facilitator to gain more knowledge on the content of the discussion and objective of the activity.
 - **Worksheet download/purchase** – resource for downloading or purchasing materials to facilitate the activity.

Game Activities



Emoji Stories

Objectives

1. Participants will engage in a creative activity
2. Participants will build connections through shared pleasant experience

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

List of sayings, movie titles, etc. written out in emojis

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Participants are provided a set of emojis that “spell” out a movie title or famous sayings and guess what the emojis “spell out”.

Virtual

1. Facilitator can display the emoji sayings and titles using the share screen function.

Notes

May be played in teams


Reference

Cliff, M. (2020, April 23). *Just a phrase latest emoji quiz asks how many of these 26 well-known saying you can guess*. The U.S. Sun. <https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/724929/famous-sayings-emoji-quiz/>

Name that Tune

Objectives


1. Participants will test their musical knowledge
2. Participants will get to know each other better

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Music, paper, pen/pencil
Activity Instructions	In person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Game can be played individually or in groups/pairs. 2. Facilitator plays a song. 3. First person or team to correctly identify the song gets a point.
	Virtual
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator shares audio via Zoom. 2. Facilitator plays a song. 3. First person or team to guess correctly gets a point.
Notes	The songs used depend on the ages and preferences of the people in the group. YouTube has name that tune playlists or participants may offer their music libraries Online versions available.
Reference	Davison, D. (n.d.). <i>Name that tune</i> . Memory Lane Therapy. https://memorylanetherapy.com/name-that-tune-aged-care-activities/

Never Have I Ever

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	List of Never Have I Ever prompts, pieces of paper saying “I Have” and “I Have Not”
Activity Instructions	In person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator reads the prompts. 2. Participants indicate whether they have ever done that thing by using their “I Have” or “I Have Not” sign. 3. Facilitator invites discussion by asking for details about participants’ experiences.
	Virtual
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator provides instruction on how to use the Zoom reaction feature to raise hands. 2. Participants raise their hands or use the raised hand reaction to indicate if they have done the activity contained in the prompt.
Notes	<p>Participants can be asked to raise their hands to indicate if they have done a certain thing in the list instead of using written signs in person as well.</p> <p>Changing the phrase to “I have...” may help to avoid confusion about what is being asked.</p> <p>Prompts may be customized to meet the needs of the group.</p>
Reference	Shay, A. (n.d.) <i>Never have I ever questions</i> . LifeHacks. https://lifehacks.io/never-have-i-ever-questions/

Never Have I Ever Prompts

Dyed my hair

Played Scrabble

Fired a gun

Baked a cake from scratch

Rolled down a hill

Been ice skating

Fallen down in public

Toilet papered someone's house

Hid on Halloween because I had no candy for trick-or-treaters

Broken a bone

Laughed so hard I cried

Been in the hospital

Had braces

Gotten seasick

Made a prank call

Built something out of wood

Eaten food that fell on the floor

Gotten a tattoo

Been to Disney World

Been in an accident

Locked my keys in the car

Eaten a Krispy Kreme donut

Had chickenpox

Ridden a horse

Screamed during a scary movie

Ridden in a limo

Been lost

Been to a professional sporting event

Had a pet fish

Been to Europe

Slept till noon

Lied about my age

Built a fire

Opened Christmas presents early

Bought something at a yard sale

Been skydiving

Never Have I Ever Prompts

Played golf

... walked out of a movie because it was bad.

... sung karaoke in front of people.

Had a manicure

... tried to cut my own hair.

... been on TV or the radio.

Made mashed potatoes from scratch

... had a surprise party thrown for me.

... pressed send and then immediately regretted it.

Been to the circus

... cheated on a test.

... been so sun burnt I couldn't wear a shirt.

Made all A's in school

... gotten stitches.

... had a crush on a friend's parent.

Eaten a bug

... fallen in love at first sight.

... been awake for two days straight.

... taken part in a talent show.

... had a paranormal experience.

... thrown up on a roller coaster.

... broken something at a friend's house and then not told them.

Lied when someone asked how an outfit looked on them

... snuck into a movie.

... snooped through a friend's bathroom or bedroom without them knowing.

Jumped out of an airplane

... accidentally sent someone to the hospital.

... jumped from a roof.

Returned an item after using it

... dyed my hair a crazy color.

... seen an alligator or crocodile in the wild...

... hitchhiked.

... had a physical fight with my best friend.

... gone surfing.

... been trapped in an elevator.

... fallen in love at first sight.

Never Have I Ever Prompts

... had someone slap me across the face.

... worked with someone I hated with the burning passion of a thousand suns.

... danced in an elevator.

... cried in public because of a song.

... texted for four hours straight.

... chipped a tooth.

... gone hunting.

... had a tree house.

... thrown something into a TV or computer screen.

... been to a country in Asia.

... been screamed at by a customer at my job.

... spent a night in the woods with no shelter.

... read a whole novel in one day.

... gone vegan.

... been without heat for a winter or without A/C for a summer.

... worn glasses without lenses.

... gone scuba diving.

... lied about a family member dying as an excuse to get out of doing something.

... bungee jumped.

... been to a country in Africa.

... been on a fad diet.

... been to a fashion show.

... been electrocuted.

... stolen something from a restaurant.

... had a bad allergic reaction.

... been in an embarrassing video that was uploaded to YouTube.


... thought I was going to drown.

... worked at a fast food restaurant.

... fainted.

... looked through someone else's phone without their permission.


Twenty Questions

Objectives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will improve teamwork skills 2. Participants will utilize critical thinking skills 3. Participants will practice communication and social skills 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	None
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces, <i>"Each participant will take turn being "it." This person thinks of a person, place, or thing and the rest of the participants take turns asking "yes" or "no" questions to figure out what it is. You must guess what the person is thinking of in 20 questions or less."</i> 2. Participants take turns being "it". 3. Non-It participants try to figure out who, what, or where the person is thinking.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person</p>
Notes	
Reference	<i>Twenty Questions</i> (2021). Group-Games. https://www.group-games.com/stationary-games/twenty-questions.html

Two Truths and a Lie

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Paper, pen/pencil, clipboard
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants are asked to think of two things that are true about them and one thing which is not true. 2. Participants take turns sharing their two truths and a lie and the group must guess which statement is the lie.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person</p>
Notes	Optional to have participants write down their responses
Reference	Peterson, D. (2020, July 31). <i>How to play 2 truths and a lie</i> . ThoughtCo. https://www.thoughtco.com/2-truths-lie-idea-list-1-31144

Snowman

Objectives

1. Participants will improve teamwork skills
2. Participants will challenge their vocabulary skills

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper or whiteboard, marker

Activity Instructions

In person

1. If group is large enough, have participants split up into teams.
2. Participants and/or the facilitator take turns choosing words or phrases for teams to guess.
3. Draw the snowman set up and denote each letter of the word/phrase with a dash. Teams take turn guessing letters until someone figures out the word/phrase or until the group has run out of guesses.
4. For each incorrect guess, the facilitator draws a portion of the snowman. The goal is to guess the word before the snowman is complete.

Virtual

1. Facilitator uses the whiteboard feature to draw out their word or phrase and the snowman set up.
2. Participants take turns guessing letters until the word/phrase has been guessed or the group has run out of guesses.

Notes

There are also websites with generated hangman(snowman) word/phrases that can be used.

Reference

Osmanski, S. (2020, April 7). *It's a digital showdown: 8 virtual games to play with your friends over Zoom*. Parade. <https://parade.com/1021595/stephanieosmanski/virtual-games-to-play-over-zoom/>

Who am I?

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will improve social communication skills
3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper or poster board, markers

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator makes name tents with the names of famous people. The name tents are placed on the table in front of each participant or on their lap during their turn. The tents should be placed so that the participant cannot see the name on their name tag.
2. Participants will ask “yes” or “no” questions to the group to figure out who they are.

Virtual

1. Facilitator can use the chat to provide the name of the famous person to all participants except the guesser.

Notes

Hints can be provided to the guesser, as long as they don't completely give away the answer.

Reference

Who Am I. Icebreakers Ideas Games Activities. <https://www.icebreakers.ws/medium-group/who-am-i.html>

Would you Rather?

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

List of “Would you Rather” Questions

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator reads “Would You Rather” questions aloud.
2. Participants share which activity they would rather do.
3. Facilitator asks the person to elaborate on their response.

Virtual

Same as in person

Notes

Questions may be customized to suit the needs of the group.

Reference

Brightful. (2020, August 8). *33 deep would you rather questions*. <https://www.brightful.me/blog/deep-would-you-rather-questions/>

Would You Rather Questions

If you were reborn in a new life, would you rather be alive in the past or future?

Would you rather eat no candy at Halloween or no turkey at Thanksgiving?

Would you rather lose the ability to lie or believe everything you're told?

Would you rather Be the funniest person in the room or the most intelligent?

Would you rather Reverse one decision you make every day or be able to stop time for 10 seconds every day?

Would you rather Rule the World or live in a World with absolutely no problems at all?

Would you rather Speak all languages or have the most beautiful singing voice in the world?

Would you rather read minds or accurately predict the future?

Would you rather visit 100 years in the past or 100 years in the future?

Would you rather explore space or the ocean?

Would you rather always say everything on your mind or never speak again?

Would you rather be in charge or follow the most creative, fair and moral leader?

Would you rather pet a tiger or pet a dolphin?

Would you rather talk to animals or see into the future?

Would you rather go back in time to talk to members of your family or famous historical figures?

Would you rather have all the world's knowledge or be able to solve one major world problem? (assume that you cannot solve the problem with your knowledge)

Would you rather be in love or be perfect?

Would you rather be all powerful or all knowing?

Would you rather see all the movies ever made or read all the books ever written?

Find the Person BINGO

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Bingo Cards- one per participant, pens/pencils/marker

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator will provide each participant a BINGO card.
2. Decide as a group before the game begins what a completed Bingo will be. A lot will depend on the number of players and the ages of the players.
Here are some examples of Bingos:
 - Five boxes in a row – going across, down, or diagonally
 - X diagonally through the Free space
 - Box shape – around the Free space making a square
 - Picture frame – all of the outside boxes filled in
 - Blackout – with every box completed
3. Participants will have to mingle with others to find a person who matches each characteristic on the card.

Virtual

Facilitator reads out list of characteristics and group members who have that characteristic can share. Or facilitator places group members into breakout rooms and they share characteristics.

Notes

Online templates are available or personalized templates can be created.
Depending on group size, more than one box can be used by participants

Reference

Mann, S.B. (2019, April 9). *People bingo rules and cards*. Icebreakers Ideas. https://icebreakerideas.com/people-bingo/#Get_To_Know_You_Bingo

B	I	N	G	O
Is left-handed	Loves horses or dolphins	Does not drink soda pop	Made a New Year's Resolution and kept it	Loves to sleep-in
Loves to read books	Keeps spare change in a container	Is a twin or has twin siblings	Has 2 or more pets	Knows answers to all of the times tables
Has never played Monopoly or Twister	Has been scuba diving	FREE	Wears contact lenses	Cuts their own hair
Speaks 2 or more languages	Has played a sport	Hates spiders	Plays a musical instrument	Washes their own car
Knows every word of the "Star Spangled Banner"	Has been in a parade	Has seen the same movie 5 or more times	Is the oldest or an only child	Has played a "prank" on someone else


Mann, S.B. (2019, April 9). *People bingo rules and cards*. Icebreakers Ideas.
https://icebreakerideas.com/people-bingo/#Get_To_Know_You_Bingo

Get To Know You BINGO

Likes cats better than dogs	Loves to watch sports	Checks Facebook daily	Sings in the shower or bathtub	Shops online
Never swears	Likes to do gardening	Likes Coke better than Pepsi	Decorates for holidays	Loves to hike or to walk
Has freckles	Has followed directions and built/made something	FREE	Went on a blind date	Can whistle loudly
Still watches the old black and white TV shows	Hates mice or snakes	Is the youngest child	Still knows their high school song	Votes every election
Loves to travel	Has caught a fish	Hates to watch the news	Likes to dance	Hates liver and onions

Mann, S.B. (2019, April 9). *People bingo rules and cards*. Icebreakers Ideas.
https://icebreakerideas.com/people-bingo/#Get_To_Know_You_Bingo

Pass the Story

Objectives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will utilize critical thinking skills 2. Participants will improve their team work skills 3. Participants will build connections with each other 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Random and/or humorous images, if desired. Paper or whiteboard
Activity Instructions	In person <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator begins, <i>"we are going to write a story. Stories can begin from images provided or participant's imagination."</i> 2. One participant begins telling a story. After a few sentences, they "pass" the story to the next group member, who then continues to tell story. This continues until the last person in the group concludes the story. 3. Facilitator may write the story on a whiteboard, or type it out, so that it can be read aloud to the group when completed.
	Virtual <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator may use the share screen function to display images. 2. Participants contribute to the story. 3. Facilitator may type and display the final story.
Notes	Using images can help get this activity going and members can use their imagination to create a story around a picture or person that is shown.
Reference	<i>Finish the story game.</i> (2019, December 29). Imagine Forest. https://www.imagineforest.com/blog/finish-the-story-game/

Random Word Stories

Objectives

1. Participants will engage in a creative activity
2. Participants will build connections through pleasant shared experiences

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Groups of random words on paper or random word generator (link in Reference)

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Participants are provided with 3-5 random words and asked to create a story using the words.

Virtual

1. Facilitator can display the random word generator using the share screen function.

Notes


May be played in teams with participants working together to create stories

Reference

Random Word Generator. <https://randomwordgenerator.com/>

SHARING AND SELF-DISCOLSURE ACTIVITIES

50 Questions

Objectives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will build connections with each other 2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	List of Questions, dried beans or pieces of paper with 'Yes' written on them
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator reads a question; participants place a bean on the table for each 'yes' answer. 2. Facilitator asks prompting and clarifying questions to spark conversation and sharing, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who wants to share specifics about their 'Yes'?
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person Participants use the reaction feature or hold up a 'Yes' sign.</p>
Notes	<p>Questions can be customized to meet the needs of the group.</p> <p>Alternative ways of indicating yes answers include raising hands and having pieces of paper or placards with 'Yes' written on them.</p>
Reference	<p><i>Developing friendships through intimacy and self-disclosure.</i> Penn State. https://sites.psu.edu/aspsy/2016/11/15/developing-friendships-through-intimacy-and-self-disclosure/</p>

50 Questions

1. Have more than 3 siblings
2. Have more than three children
3. Have no children
4. Have been to more than 3 countries
5. Have been to more than 4 states
6. Have lived in more than 3 states
7. Like horror movies
8. Love to read
9. Can speak or understand more than one language
10. Are afraid of snakes
11. Are afraid of spiders
12. Are an artist
13. Can trace your family back more than 3 generations
14. Love the beach
15. Love the mountains
16. Have ever met somebody famous
17. Have ever given up something for someone you love
18. Have ever been divorced
19. Have never been married
20. Have been married more than two times
21. Have gotten up early to see the sun rise
22. Like to dance
23. Sing in your car
24. Do crossword puzzles
25. Write poetry
26. Regretted a haircut or hair style
27. are the youngest of your siblings
28. are the oldest of your siblings
29. are an only child
30. Have ever regretted a break up
31. Have ever regretted getting back with someone
32. Stayed at the same job for more than 15 years
33. Stayed at a job for less than one month
34. Enjoy small talk
35. Are part of a twin set
36. Still have dreams about High School
37. Play a musical instrument
38. Ever sang a solo
39. Ever scuba dived
40. Ever sky dived
41. Climbed a mountain
42. Are still in touch with anyone from High School
43. Won an award
44. Broken a bone
45. Are comfortable eating unfamiliar food
46. Ever been in a band
47. Ever been helped by a stranger
48. Ever been in the military
49. Can name more than 5 state or world capitols
50. Sometimes have no idea how to work your phone (or other technology)

Beach Ball Toss

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level



Space

Participants are seated in a circle with enough room to toss a beach ball

Supplies/ Materials

Beach ball with questions written on it

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Participants toss the beach ball from person to person.
2. Participants answer the question or prompt closest to their right thumb when they catch the ball.

Virtual

1. Facilitator reads questions and prompts.
2. The participant who answers the questions chooses the next person to answer a question/respond to a prompt.

Notes

Participants must be physically able to throw and catch a beach ball.
This is a good activity to use as an icebreaker when group members don't know each other well or to start conversation in a more established group.

Reference

Icebreaker: Beach ball toss. Guide. <https://guideinc.org/2018/04/07/icebreaker-beach-ball-toss/>

Beach Ball Questions

If you could have any super power, what would it be?

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

What is your favorite hobby?

What is the nicest thing that someone has said to you?

If you could be in any movie, what would it be?

If you could be any animal, what would it be?

What cheers you up when you are sad?

Where would you fly if you had wings and why?

What is your favorite season. Why?

What do you look for in a friend?

Who taught you how to drive? How did it go?

What is your favorite family traditions?

Describe yourself in three words.

What is your favorite childhood memory?

If you could solve one of the world's problems, which one would you solve?

What was your most memorable Birthday?

What stresses you out?

What is your favorite vacation destination?

What was your favorite childhood toy?

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

What is your favorite song and why?


What do you do to relax?

What is your favorite movie and why?

Getting to Know You

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	List of Getting to Know You Questions/Prompts
Activity Instructions	In person <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator chooses a “Getting to Know You” question or prompt to begin discussion. 2. Facilitator can choose to go around the circle and have participants answer in order, or allow more fluid sharing from participants.
	Virtual Same as in person
Notes	Questions may be customized to meet the needs of the group. Consider your audience and what questions may be appropriate.
Reference	<i>Conversation Starters World</i> . YUL LLC website. https://conversationstartersworld.com


Getting to Know You Questions/Prompts

- Tell us about your first pet.
- What is the best vacation you have ever been on?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Tell us about the neighborhood in which you grew up.
- What did you do for a living?
- What is your favorite holiday and why?
- What is your favorite book?
- What is your favorite film?
- What is your favorite TV show?
- What teacher influenced you the most?
- Tell us about your favorite family photograph?
- What place have you always wanted to visit?
- How many cities have you lived in?
- What decade do you think had the best music?
- Would you rather live in the mountains or at the beach? Why?
- Do you prefer rainy days or sunny days?
- What do you like to do on rainy days? On sunny days?
- What's the best thing about getting older?
- What's not fun about getting older?
- What was your favorite job?
- Tell us something you are passionate about.
- Tell us something about your family.

If...

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	If... questions strips, basket/bowl
Activity Instructions	In person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator begins by asking participants to select an “If” question from the basket 2. Participants answer the “If” question. 3. Facilitator prompts and guides deeper answers and discussion. For example, “Why is this important to you?” 4. Participants take turns selecting and answering questions.
	Virtual
	Same as in person.
Notes	<p>Questions may be customized to meet the needs of the group.</p> <p>Questions can also be cut out on individual strips of paper and passed around for each person to draw and read aloud.</p>
Reference	<p><i>170 hypothetical questions.</i> Conversation Starters World.</p> <p>https://conversationstartersworld.com/hypothetical-questions/</p>

If Game Questions

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

If you could watch your favorite movie now, what would it be?

If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?

If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?

If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?

If you could have any question answered, what would it be?

If you could watch your favorite TV show now, what would it be?

If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?

If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?

If you could eat your favorite food now, what would it be?

If you could learn any skill, what would it be?

If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowed to bring three personal items with you, what would they be?


If you could buy a new car right now, what would you buy?

If you were famous, what would you be famous for?

If you could bring back any fashion trend what would it be?

If you could magically become fluent in any language, what would it be?

Bad Advice/Good Advice

Objectives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will explore how advice they received has shaped them 2. Participants will reflect on the experience of asking for and receiving advice 3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	None
Activity Instructions	In person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants share the best and worst advice they have ever received. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional discussion questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it feel to receive advice from someone else? • Anyone have any other comments related to advice giving or receiving?
	Virtual
	Same as in person
Notes	
Reference	Halvorson, H.G. (2011, May 2). <i>The difference between good and bad advice</i> . Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-science-success/201105/the-difference-between-good-and-bad-advice

Categorical Connections

Objectives

1. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves
2. Participants will build connections with others who share commonalities

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Categorical Connections Questions- one per participant, pens/pencils

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator passes out sheets of paper with the categories.
2. Participants choose their favorite items in each category.
3. Facilitator goes through each choice and asks people to raise their hand for the one they chose.
 - Favorite art form: poetry, music, dance, sculpture, painting
 - Favorite season: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall
 - Favorite type of movies: Drama, Romance, Comedy, Sci-Fi
 - Favorite personality trait in yourself: Good Sense of Humor, Smart, Dependable, Caring, Friendly, Honest
4. Facilitator encourages discussion to create connection when commonalities exist, and asks probing questions uncover connections which may not be readily apparent.

Virtual

Same as in person
Facilitator uses the share screen function to display categories

Notes

The visual of seeing someone else's hand raised can be exciting and comforting for participants who may feel isolated and different from others.

Reference

Optional Reading:
Apodaca, M. (n.d.) *7 ways self-disclosure helps you connect deeper with others*. Lifehack.
<https://www.lifehack.org/868293/self-disclosure>

Categorical Connections Questions


For each question mark the option that you most relate to.

1. Favorite art form: poetry, music, dance, sculpture, painting
2. Favorite season: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall
3. Favorite type of movies: Drama, Romance, Comedy, Sci-Fi
4. Personality trait you most appreciate in yourself? Good Sense of Humor, Smart, Dependable, Caring, Friendly, Honesty, Other
5. Favorite sport to watch: Basketball, Football, Baseball, Other, I don't like sports
6. I keep my home: Really neat, Messy, Somewhere in between the two
7. Favorite way to relax: Take a walk, take deep breaths, watch or read something funny, have a glass of wine, take a nap, other

Comfort Zone

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants are seated around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Comfort Zone questions, large piece of paper with a target graphic, game pieces to represent each participant
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place target on the table so that everyone can reach it. 2. Facilitator reads a question and participants place their game piece on the target indicating how comfortable they are with the topic or activity described in the statement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pieces close to the center of the target are more comfortable and pieces placed farther away from the center are less uncomfortable. 3. Facilitator encourages discussion by asking participants prompting and clarifying questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can anyone share more information about why they are comfortable or uncomfortable with this topic?
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator creates a poll for multiple Comfort Zone questions. Facilitator can also ask participants to write down their reaction on a piece of paper. Rate answers on a scale of 1-10, with 1 meaning not comfortable at all with the topic or scenario and 10 being very comfortable. 2. Participants respond to the poll or rate the question. 3. Facilitator encourages discussion by asking participants prompting and clarifying questions.
Notes	Questions can be customized for the needs of the group and can become deeper and more introspective as participants become more comfortable with the activity and with each other.
Reference	Henry, A. & Fishbein, R. (2019, September 26). <i>The science of breaking out of your comfort zone (and why you should)</i> . Life hacker. https://lifelacker.com/the-science-of-breaking-out-of-your-comfort-zone-and-w-656426705

Comfort Zone Questions

How comfortable are you with heights?

How comfortable are you with snakes?

How comfortable are you with new/spicy foods?

How comfortable are you with talking about yourself?

How comfortable are you giving advice?

How comfortable are you singing in front of other people?

How comfortable are you crying in front of other people?

How comfortable are you with other people crying in front of you?

How comfortable are you with dogs?

How comfortable are you with cats?

How comfortable are you talking about death?

How comfortable are you trying new things?

How comfortable are you are you doing math in your head?

How comfortable are you talking about yourself?

How comfortable are you at gatherings where you don't know anyone?

How comfortable are you asking someone you don't know if they want to go for lunch or coffee?

How comfortable are you speaking in public?

How comfortable are you in unfamiliar places?

How comfortable are you around clowns?


How comfortable are you around frogs?

How comfortable are you with a) anger in others? b) anger in yourself?

Highlights of Our Lives

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Materials for this activity are provided by the participants
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator should ask participants to bring a memento or photo to the next group meeting. 2. Participants bring in a memento or photo that represents an important event or aspect of their life. 3. Participants share and discuss items with group. <p>Discussion prompts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is that object important to you? • How did you come to own it? • For how long have you owned it? • Is it kept in a prominent place in your home?
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person</p>
Notes	Participants will need to be told beforehand about this activity. It may take more than one session to complete this activity.
Reference	Schubring, L. (2017, January 10) <i>Building trust through “show and tell”</i> . Leadership Vision. https://www.leadershipvisionconsulting.com/building-trust-through-show-and-tell/

Interviews & Introductions

Objectives

1. Participants will improve their social skills
2. Participants will build connections with each other
3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level



Space

Participants will break up into pairs or small groups with enough space to hear each other with many people talking at once

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pens/pencils

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Participants are paired off and asked to have a conversation with their partner so that the pair can get to know each other.
2. After 5-10 minutes, request that the interviewer switches within the pair.
3. After 5-10 minutes, stop the individual conversations and bring the group back together.
4. Ask each person in the pair share what they learned about their partner.
 - Report back one (or 2 or 3) things you have learned about your partner.
 - Report back one thing you and your partner have in common.
 - Report the following: where you partner was born, where they grew up, how many siblings they have, how many children (if applicable), what they did for a living? etc.

Virtual

Same as in person
Facilitator uses break out room function to create the pairings and allow for private conversations.

Notes

Participants may also be given specific questions to address or specific information to report back to the group. If time allows, ask the group what they thought about this activity.

Reference

Optional Reading:


Mayo Clinic Staff. (2019, August 24). *Friendships: Enrich your life and improve your health.*

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/friendships/art-20044860>


Name that Person

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	Note cards, pens/pencils, clipboards
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide the group into two teams. 2. Each person receives a blank card on which they write ~5 little known facts about themselves. The five things should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something people are comfortable sharing • Fun, funny, interesting or intriguing • Hardest to guess items at the top of the list and easier ones at the bottom 3. Collect the cards and keep them in team piles. 4. Draw one card and have opposing team try to name the person in as few facts as possible. Assign points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 pts for a correct guess on the first clue, • 4 pts for the second and so on... 5. Facilitator encourages discussion and connection among participants by asking for more information about the facts.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator provides instruction on how to privately chat with instructor 2. Participants send a chat to the facilitator with their ~5 known facts 3. Facilitator creates a document with everyone's 5 things listed, unidentified 4. The group guesses which 5 things belong to whom
Notes	<p>Activity can be done without breaking the group into teams, having the entire group guessing who the person is.</p> <p>The facilitator may also want to consider not keeping score, but just letting the group guess who each grouping belongs to and discuss items people shared organically.</p>

Speed Topics

Objectives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will build connections with each other 2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves 	
Level	
Space	Participants will break up into pairs or small groups with enough space to hear each other with many people talking at once.
Supplies/ Materials	List of Speed Topics
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator will split the group into small groups or pairs. 2. Pairs/small groups will be given a topic to discuss and things to ask each other. 3. After 3-5 minutes, facilitator will either mix up the groups and keep the same topic or keep the same groups/pairs and introduce a new topic.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person. Facilitator can split participants into Zoom breakout rooms to discuss topics.</p>
Notes	<p>Facilitator should walk around the room to monitor conversations, keep them on track, or assist if conversation stalls or participants have questions.</p> <p>Also consider physical abilities if people are expected to move around and/or move chairs. It may be easier to just turn to the person next to them. This activity can also be challenging in-person for persons with hearing impairment since the room can get loud.</p>
Reference	<p>Heathfield, S. (2019, November 22). <i>Speed meeting icebreaker</i>. The Balance Careers.</p> <p>https://www.thebalancecareers.com/speed-meeting-icebreaker-1918422</p>

Speed Topics

1. How does social media help us?/How does it not help us?
2. Using music to help get you through a hard time
3. Do you feel your age?
4. Do you prefer books/movies that are an escape or that are more emotional or deep? Why?
5. Do New Year's resolutions work?
6. What do you expect from a health care provider?
7. How comfortable are you with technology?
8. How important are pets/animals to your daily life?

Sentence Completion

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level



Space

Participants are seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Sentence Completion worksheet- one per participant, pens/pencils, clipboards

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator passes out sentence starter worksheet and gives participants approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete the worksheet.
2. Facilitator calls out sentence starter prompts and asks participants to share what they wrote or what comes to mind for them.

Virtual

1. Ask participants to gather a pen and piece of paper
2. Facilitator reads aloud the sentence starter.
 - Can use screen sharing function on Zoom to share the worksheet and entire set of questions at once.
3. Participants complete the sentence. Give participants about 5 to 10 minutes to complete.
4. Facilitator calls out sentence starter prompts and asks participants to share what they wrote, or what comes to mind for them.

Notes

Sentence starters can be customized to best suit the group.

Reference

Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Sentence Completion*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/self-exploration-sentence-completion>

Sentence Completion

I am (something about you other than your name)

I laughed really hard one time when _____

I have always enjoyed _____

I feel happy when _____

Something I am proud of is _____

Something I have always wanted to do is _____

Something people don't really know about me is

Things about Me Sentence Starters

I am _____

I have never _____

I love it when _____

I love to _____

I think I have the best _____

I would like _____

I would never _____

My idea of beauty is _____

The best way for me to relax is _____

The funniest thing that ever happened to me was

Shared Challenges

Objectives

1. Participants will become comfortable sharing difficult information
2. Participants will feel less alone and more connected with others
3. Participants will connect with participants who share similar challenges/struggles

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pens/pencils, clipboard

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Participants write on a piece of paper a challenge they have faced on a particular topic, such as:
 - A challenge they've overcome in their past
 - A difficult emotion
 - A challenge of getting older
 - A challenge of meeting people/making friends
2. Facilitator collects the answers and reads them out, inviting group members to share how they relate to each one.
3. Facilitator encourages discussion, and models and encourages providing support among the members.
4. Facilitator normalizes and validates struggles, challenges, and difficult emotions.

Virtual

Same as in person

Notes

Be sure that participants know beforehand that their answers, while anonymous unless they choose otherwise, will be read aloud so they can choose what they are comfortable sharing with the group.

It is helpful to repeat the exercise for each topic, if covering more than one. Topics may be customized to meet the needs of the group.

Reference

Introspection Activities



Guess My Talent

Objectives

1. Participants will recognize their strengths
2. Participants will share their talents with each other
3. Participants will recognize strengths of others

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pens/pencils, clipboard, bowl/basket/envelope

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Participants write down a special talent on a small piece of paper and place it in a basket or envelope.
 - It can be a simple talent. i.e., able to make your dog laugh, or the ability to fold bottom sheets
2. Facilitator draws from basket and reads the talent to the group.
3. Participants try to guess whose talent it is.

Virtual

1. Facilitator provides instruction on how to privately chat with instructor.
2. Participants share their talents via private chat to facilitator.
3. Facilitator organizes the talents and reads to the participants for them to guess whose talent it belongs.

Notes

Reference

Forsey, C. (2020, May 11). *17 fun (not cheesy) icebreaker games your employees will enjoy*. HubSpot. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/ice-breaker-games>

My Favorite Animals

Objectives

1. Participants will reflect on how they see themselves
2. Participants will build connections with each other
3. Participants will receive feedback on how they are perceived

Level



Space

Participants are seated around a table or in a circle with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pens/pencils, clipboard

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Participants rank their three favorite animals and note what they like most about each animal.
2. Participants share with the group.
3. Facilitator begins discussion by:
 - Inviting participants to consider their most favorite animal represents how they see themselves/want others to see them,
 - Their second favorite animal represents how people actually perceive them and,
 - The third favorite represents how they really are.
4. Participants are asked if they agree with these characterizations.

Virtual

Same as in-person


Notes

This exercise can be done in small groups or in breakout room.
Inform participants that the representations have not been scientifically researched and that the activity is meant to be an exercise in self-exploration.

Reference

Test: discover how people see you and who you are in reality. Bright Side. <https://brightside.me/wonder-quizzes/test-discover-how-people-see-you-and-who-you-are-in-reality-293660/>

Do you Believe...?

Objectives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will be able to articulate their beliefs 2. Participants will build connections with others who share their beliefs 3. Participants will appropriately interact with others who hold different beliefs 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	List of Do you Believe questions, bowl/basket
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person: two options</p> <p>Option 1: Facilitator reads a “Do you Believe” question to the group. Members take turns responding to each question.</p> <p>Option 2: Individual questions are placed in a bowl. Members pick a question out of bowl and read one out loud for the group to respond to.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator reads a “Do you Believe” question to the group. 2. Participants take turns responding to each question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator may need to call on participants to prevent multiple responses at once.
Notes	Questions can be customized for the needs of the group. It is ok to spend a few minutes allowing a discussion that spin off from the question prompt. Encourage different perspectives, but be prepared to close out comments from a question and move on to the next.
Reference	Schaffner, A. (2021, February 22). <i>Identifying and challenging core beliefs: 12 helpful worksheets</i> . Positive Psychology. https://positivepsychology.com/core-beliefs-worksheets/

Formatted for you to print and cut each question on one strip

Do You Believe Questions

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Do you believe that there is life on other planets?

Do you believe that absence makes the heart grow fonder?

Do you believe that happiness is possible?

Do you believe in fate?

Do you believe that each person has only one soulmate?

Do you believe that honesty is the best policy?

Do you believe that opposites attract?

Do you believe that experience is the best teacher?

Do you believe that children have it harder today than you did when you were young?

Do you believe that you gain wisdom as you get older?

Do you believe that it is okay to keep secrets for other people?

Do you believe that couples really shouldn't go to bed angry with each other?

Do you believe that people can be friends when they have very different beliefs?

Do you believe that talking about difficult things makes them easier to cope with?

Do you believe that we will ever colonize other planets?

Do you believe in karma (or that what goes around comes around)?

Do you believe in coincidences?

Do you believe that animals can reason?

Do you believe that technology makes our lives easier?

Do you believe that people can change?

Do you believe that people are basically good?

What do you believe makes someone a good friend?

Do you believe that anger can serve a purpose?

Do you believe that forgiveness is possible?

What do you believe makes a perfect day?

Do you believe that you can become more confident by acting more confident?

Do you believe that we learn from our mistakes?

Six Word Poems

Objectives

1. Participants will engage in a creative activity
2. Participants will express themselves through poetry
3. Participants will engage in life review through poetry
4. Participants will experience a sense of accomplishment through creative expression

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pens/pencil, clipboard

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator provides education regarding six-word poems or six-word memoirs.
"Can you tell your life story in six words? Smith Magazine asked writers to create six-word poems to describe their life. Some examples include: "we met, we talked, we laughed" or "handshakes are good, hugs are better".
2. Participants write a six-word poem about their life, how they are feeling today, important life lessons they have learned, or any topic chosen by the facilitator or the group.

Virtual

Same as in person

Notes

In addition to individual poems, group poems may be created.
Six-word poems do not have to rhyme or be difficult to read.
Other forms of poetry, such as haiku and acrostic, can be utilized as well.


Reference

Six Word Memoirs. The Kelly Writers House.
<http://writing.upenn.edu/wh/archival/documents/sixwords/Life>. Six Word Memoirs. <https://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/life/>

Things Like Me

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will be able to identify, examine, and articulate their values

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Random Objects (toys, office supplies, magazine images, etc.); basket/box
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces activity: People are often uncomfortable talking about themselves, especially when meeting new people. It can be hard to put into words how we see ourselves and what our activities, interests and experiences are most important. This activity will provide visual and tangible prompts to help it more comfortable to talk about one's self. 2. Facilitator passes a basket or box of random objects around. 3. Participants choose an object that represents them in some way. 4. Participants share their object and why they chose it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompts for the discussion can include questions like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why did you choose the object you did? ○ What object do you wish you could have chosen? ○ Would you have chosen something different 10 years ago? 20 years ago? ○ How hard (or easy) was it to find an object that describes you? 5. Participants return the object and pass the basket to the next participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are more objects than people, each participant can choose one, then share.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person</p> <p>Participants can be asked what every day object best represents them. They can decide to find and share an object in their surrounding area.</p>
Notes	Participants can choose objects based on their profession, hobbies, family life, experiences, personality, sense of humor, appearance, etc.
Reference	<i>Personal artifacts game.</i> Icebreakers Ideas Games Activities. https://www.icebreakers.ws/medium-group/personal-artifact-game.html

Three Compliments

Objectives

1. Participants will practice positive self-talk
2. Participants will recognize their strengths
3. Participants will improve their self-esteem

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pen/pencil, clipboard

Activity

Instructions

In person


1. Facilitator introduces activity: *"this activity is about getting and giving compliments. It can be challenging sometimes to give and receive compliments, especially to receive them. We don't know how to respond - we might be embarrassed or not like the attention or perhaps we don't believe it's true. When we open ourselves up to positive comments from others, we are more open to positivity and self-kindness within ourselves."*
2. Facilitator begins discussion by asking the group the following questions:
 - How do you feel when you receive a compliment?
 - How do you feel when you give a compliment?
 - Is it hard to receive compliments? Why?
 - What's the most memorable compliment you have ever received?
3. Participants are then given a sheet of paper to write their names in large letters in the middle. Then write on the paper three positive qualities they possess.
4. Participants pass the paper to their right. Each person adds at least one positive quality to each person's paper.

	<p>5. After each person receives his paper back, the following questions can be used to guide discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did doing the activity feel? • Which compliments surprise you? • Which compliments do you agree with?
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual:</p> <p>Instead of writing out the compliments, participants can share verbally. Facilitator will call on next participant, if someone does not volunteer.</p>
Notes	<p>Depending on the group size may need to adjust the number of compliments participants write down. Use of summary skills or repeating peoples' responses to the discussion question can encourage a conversation.</p>
Reference	<p><i>The ten things I like about myself.</i> Basic Counseling Skills. https://www.basic-counseling-skills.com/ten-things-i-like-about-me.html</p>

Three Likes/Dislikes

Objectives


1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will become comfortable sharing information
3. Participants will get to know and understand each other better

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	Paper, pens/pencils, clipboard
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants are instructed to write down three likes and three dislikes on a piece of paper. 2. Facilitator collects the paper from participants. 3. Facilitator reads each paper and the group tries to guess who it is based on the likes/dislikes. 4. Facilitator may choose to expand the discussion about a particular like or dislike based on the interest and feedback it generates, its relevance or therapeutic value. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilitator might respond with “what makes that difficult?” and may validate that this is something that might be a dislike or something uncomfortable for many people for a number of reasons.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator provides instruction on how to privately chat with instructor. 2. Participants send a chat to the facilitator with their likes and dislikes. 3. Facilitator reads responses to the group and the group tries to guess who it is based on the likes/dislikes. 4. Facilitator may choose to expand the discussion about a particular like or dislike based on the interest and feedback it generates, its universality or therapeutic value.
Notes	Game can be played in small groups. The facilitator should be ready for diverse comments. Responses in this activity can range from funny pet peeves to serious thoughts about relationships.
Reference	<i>Likes and dislikes.</i> Family Games Treasurehouse. https://www.family-games-treasurehouse.com/likes_and_dislikes.html

What Do You Value?

Objectives

1. Participants will be able to identify, examine, and articulate their values
2. Participants will build connections with participants who share similar values
3. Participants will learn how to appropriately interact with peers with different values

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	List of Values- one per participant, paper, pens/pencils, clipboard
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants are provided a list of values and asked to review and choose which 3 - 5 values they care most about and are important in their lives and belief system. 2. Participants rank their chosen values. <i>Optional step.</i> 3. Participants share the values they have chosen and why. 4. Facilitator guides discussion with prompting and clarifying questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have your values changed over time? • Why do you think our values change over time? • Are there any values you would like to cultivate? • What do you do when you encounter someone with values different from your own?
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person. Share List of Values on the screen with participants.</p>
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity can be done with participants sharing their values in small groups or break out rooms. • Number of values participants are asked to select can vary. • If using a ranking component, ask the participants what it was like to rank the values and how their values may be different now in their lives compared to when they were younger. This activity can help participants reconnect with themselves and get to know their peers. • This activity can help participants consider what they want to prioritize and engage in on a regular basis. It can support self-evaluation and goal setting for positive changes.

Reference	<p>College of Vermont (n.d.) <i>Values Assessment Worksheet</i>. Carleton University. https://carleton.ca/mentoring/wp-content/uploads/Values-Assessment-Community-College-of-Vermont.pdf</p> <p>Therapist Aid. (n.d.). <i>Values Clarification</i>. https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/values-clarification/values/none</p>
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List of Values

Achievement	Decisiveness	Gratitude	Love	Quality	Tradition
Acknowledgement	Discipline	Hard Work	Loyalty	Reliability	Trust
Adventure	Discovery	Harmony	Meaning	Resourcefulness	Truth
Authenticity	Diversity	Health	Wisdom	Respect	Unity
Beauty	Ease	Honesty	Money	Responsiveness	Vitality
Challenge	Efficiency	Honor	Openness	Safety	Well-being
Change	Equality	Humanity	Order	Security	
Collaboration	Excellence	Independence	Originality	Self-love	
Commitment	Expertise	Individuality	Peace	Service	
Common Sense	Fairness	Inner Peace	Perfection	Simplicity	
Communication	Faith	Innovation	Personal Growth	Skillfulness	
Community	Faithfulness	Integrity	Pleasure	Spirituality	
Competence	Family	Intimacy	Power	Stability	
Compassion	Freedom	Ingenuity	Practicality	Status	
Connection	Friendship	Joy	Privacy	Strength	
Cooperation	Fun	Justice	Progress	Success	
Courage	Goodwill	Knowledge	Prosperity	Teamwork	
Creativity	Goodness	Leadership	Purity	Tolerance	

What Would You Leave Behind Personality Quiz/The Desert Personality Quiz

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will identify, examine, and articulate their priorities

Level	
Space	Participants are seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	Desert Personality Quiz Script, paper, pens/pencils, clipboard
Activity Instructions	In person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator begins with: <i>"I'm going to ask you to Imagine you are walking through the desert with five animals, a monkey, a lion, a cow, a horse, and a sheep. You are running out of water and food. ...must leave an animal behind as you continue to travel."</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is helpful if participants make a written list of the animals they leave behind in the order in which they do so. 2. At the end of activity, participants are told what the animals represent. Each animal represents an aspect of a person's life and the desert represents hardship. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first animal left behind represents the thing in one's life that is least important; the one left at the end represents that which is most important. 3. Facilitator invites discussion and asks prompting questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What surprised them about their choices? • Do they agree with the results of the "test"? • Would they change any of their answers now that they know what the animals represent?
	Virtual
	Same as in person
Notes	Inform participants that this is not a scientifically valid personality test and that it is for introspection only.
Reference	<i>The desert.</i> Personality Quiz. https://www.personalityquiz.net/relational/thedesert.html

What Would You Leave Behind Personality Quiz/The Desert Personality Quiz SCRIPT

Imagine that you are traveling through the desert and that you have five animals with you – a monkey, a lion, a cow, a sheep and a horse. Now imagine that you are running out of water and you have to leave one of the animals behind. Think about which animal you would leave behind and write it down with a short note as to why.

As you continue to travel, you realize your food is running low and that you do not have enough for yourself and all the animals. You have to leave another animal behind. Again, think about which animal you would leave behind and write it down with a short note as to why.

You come upon an oasis, but it is mostly dry, and you have to leave another animal behind. Which one and why?

A few more days go by and you realize that you have to travel farther than you thought to reach your destination. Which animal do you leave behind?

You now have only one animal left. Which one is it?

After going through the narrative, and talking about which animals were left behind and which one kept, you reveal that the desert represents hardship and the animals represent different priorities and aspects of life.

The Monkey represents Children.

The Lion represents Pride.

The Cow represents simple pleasures/simple wants.

The Sheep represents Friends.

The Horse represents your life Passion.

What Color are you Personality Test

Objectives

1. Participants will learn more about their personality type
2. Participants will learn about their strengths and how they navigate life
3. Participants will learn how their personality impacts relationships

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Personality quiz (link in Reference), pens/pencils, clipboard

Activity Instructions

In Person

1. Facilitator passes out copies of personality quiz to each participant
2. Participants are given 5-10 minutes to complete quiz
3. Facilitator reviews and discusses with:
 - Ask, by a show of hands, who matches with each color
 - Have participants share whether they agree with their results and why or why not
 - Inquire as to how their personality traits have shaped their lives and relationships

Virtual

1. Participants will need a paper and pen
2. Facilitator shares personality quiz on Screen
3. Participants write down their answers on their own

Notes

Some participants may need assistance filling out the questionnaire.

Reference

Personality Test. ColorCode Personality Science. https://www.colorcode.com/choose_personality_test/

Worksheet download:

True colors personality test. <http://www.ira.esc14.net/upload/page/0255/True%20Colors.pdf>

Therapeutic Activities



Alphabet Gratitude

Objectives

1. Participants will practice gratitude
2. Participants will develop a more positive outlook
3. Participants will learn about what others are thankful for

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Letters of the alphabet on small, separate sheets of paper or index cards

Activity Instructions

In Person

1. Facilitator introduces the concept of gratitude and how research finds people who regularly practice gratitude have a lower risk for depression and anxiety. It helps us focus on the good even when bad things happen.
2. Participants pick a letter from a basket or envelope and share something they are grateful for that begins with the letter.
3. Facilitator guides discussion by asking:
 - *Could you share more about why you are grateful about that?*
 - *What kind of _____?*

Virtual

Same as in person.
Facilitator can choose letters for the participants.

Notes

Reference

Schwartz, S. (2015, November 16). *Play the alphabet gratitude game*. Medium.
<https://medium.com/@happysciencemom/play-the-alphabet-gratitude-game-6d640af295a3>
 Summer, A. (2018, May). The science of gratitude. *Greater Good Science Center*.
https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf

Collage

Objectives

1. Participants will express themselves creatively
2. Participants will build connections with each other
3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level



Space

Participants are seated around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Collage images, glue, paper

Activity Instructions

In person: two Options

Option 1

1. Participants will create collages that represent themselves using magazine clippings.
2. Participants share and discuss their chosen images and what they represent.

Option 2

1. Facilitator asks participants to select images based on prompts provided.

Virtual

1. Facilitator shares screen to display a collage of random images.
2. Participants are asked to select images which answer prompts provided by facilitator for discussion.

Notes

In the interest of time, collage materials should be pre-cut.
Collage materials can be laid out on the table for selection.

Reference

Mehlomakulu, C. (2012, July 16). *Collage art therapy*. Creativity in Therapy.
<http://creativityintherapy.com/2012/07/collage-art-therapy-part-1/>

Collage Activity

Choose an image that...

1. Represents you
2. Reminds you of your childhood
3. Reminds you of a family member
4. Reminds you of a dream you've had
5. Represents a quality you would like to have or are trying to cultivate
6. Represents your working self
7. Reminds you of a happy time in your life
8. Represents your family
9. Reminds you of a difficult time in your life
10. Reminds you of your favorite vacation
11. Represents something you are grateful for
12. Represents something you would like to remove from your life
13. Represents a hobby you have had
14. Says something about your values
15. Says something about your sense of humor
16. Represents the person you would like to be
17. Represents your experience of growing older
18. Gives you a sense of hope/Represents hope
19. Reminds you of a mentor you have had/someone you admire
20. Represents a problem you are dealing with
21. Represents how you would like to be remembered
22. Represents your family when they are together

Loving Kindness Meditation

Objectives

1. Participants will experience the benefits of loving kindness mediation
2. Participants will extend loving kindness to themselves and others

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Loving Kindness Meditation script (see Reference); Loving Kindness-Meditation Tips- one per participant

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator asks the group how it feels to extend love and kindness to other people, including people they don't like or don't get along with. Facilitator explores with the group their comfort level extending love and kindness to themselves, with supportive beliefs, thoughts, and actions that support their own well-being.
2. Facilitator then guides the group in a loving kindness meditation.
3. Participants are invited to discuss how the experience felt, challenges and thoughts that came up, etc.

Virtual

Same as in person.

Notes

- Research shows that regular self-love and loving kindness practices help reduce stress and bolster our immune systems.
- Some other proven benefits:
 - Less self-criticism
 - More positive emotions
 - Fewer self-destructive thoughts
 - Reduced pain
 - Easier management of anxiety and depression

Reference

Seppaia, E. (2014, September 15). *18 science-backed reasons to try loving-kindness meditation*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/feeling-it/201409/18-science-backed-reasons-try-loving-kindness-meditation>

LKM Script: There are a few scripts available from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs website. Google search *Loving Kindness Mediation Script*, several results will appear. We recommend the PDF from fresno.va.gov.

Tips for Practicing Loving-kindness Meditation

1. Make time in your daily schedule to commit to a meditation for a few minutes each day.
2. Try to practice at around the same time each day.
3. Practice in a quiet and comfortable place.
4. Wear comfortable clothing.
5. Start by setting a timer for two minutes and gradually increase the time.
6. Start by using yourself as the subject, then expand to a loved person, a neutral person, a difficult person and end with all beings as the subject. You can practice using yourself as the subject for a few days or a few weeks if necessary, before expanding out to others.

Some ideas of phrases to use:

May I be filled with loving kindness

May I feel connected and calm

May I be happy

May I have peace

May I accept myself just as I am

May I be strong

May I have the power to accept and forgive

May I live in peace

May I be safe

May I and everyone else be peaceful

May I and everyone else be happy

May I and everyone else be safe

May all beings everywhere be filled with lovingkindness

May all beings everywhere be happy


May all being everywhere have peace.

There are many possibilities; feel free to come up with your own.

Strengths Exploration

Objectives


1. Participants will identify their strengths
2. Participants will improve their self-esteem
3. Participants will identify how they can use their strengths in various situations

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	Strengths Exploration Worksheet (link in Reference), pens/pencils, clipboard
Activity Instructions	In Person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces the idea of focusing and acknowledging strengths as a way to support mental and physical well-being. Focusing on our positive qualities or strengths makes us feel more confident and accepting of ourselves and enables us to better overcome challenges when they do arise. 2. Participants complete the worksheet. 3. Facilitator guides a review and discussion of answers.
	Virtual
	<p>Same as in person.</p> <p>Facilitator uses the share screen to display the worksheet.</p>
Notes	<p>This can be a good activity to utilize a whiteboard to write down strengths people share. The visual of the group members' strengths can be uplifting and remind people of qualities they may be overlooking in themselves and others.</p> <p>The Facilitator may choose to omit portions of the worksheet, such as the section on professional life.</p>
Reference	<p>Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2009). Character strengths: Research and practice. <i>Journal of College and Character</i>, 10(4). https://doi.org/10.2202/1940-1639.1042</p> <p><u>Worksheet download:</u></p> <p>Therapist Aid. (n.d.) <i>Strengths Exploration</i>. https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/strengths-exploration</p> <p>Therapist Aid. (n.d.) <i>Strengths Use Plan</i>. https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/strengths-use-plan</p>

Using Self-Love Journal Prompts

Objectives


1. Participants will practice self-love
2. Participants will understand the benefits of journaling

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface
Supplies/ Materials	Paper; pens/pencils, clipboards
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces the activity: <i>“focus on practicing self-kindness and self-love. A practice that involves caring about our own well-being and supporting ourselves.”</i> 2. Facilitator asks participants to think about ways they can feel better about themselves using self-love journal prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What brings you peace? How can you add more to your life? • What do you need to say no to more often? • When do you feel your best? How can you do this more often? 3. Participants spend 5-8 minutes thinking and writing (optional) responses. 4. Participants share their reaction to the first prompt before moving on to the next ones. 5. Facilitator ends by praising the group for their openness and support of each other. Encourage regular practice of self-love and talks about the benefits of journaling. Journaling about what is going on in our lives, our current thoughts and feelings, goals we may have, things we are grateful for, challenges we may be facing, can boost brain health, help us find mental clarity, improve our mood and more.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person. Facilitator shares prompts verbally or using share screen function.</p>
Notes	Being kind and loving to themselves may be challenging for some. Facilitator may need to provide assistance with ideas for self-love, self-care and healthy coping.
Reference	<p>Harding, T. (2018, September 20). <i>32 self-love journal prompts</i>. Tia Harding. https://tiaharding.com/32-self-love-journal-prompts/</p> <p>Neff, K. (n.d.). <i>Definition of self-compassion</i>. Self-Compassion. https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/</p> <p>Ackerman, C.E. (2021, April 15). <i>83 benefits of journaling for depression, anxiety, and stress</i>. PositivePsychology. https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-journaling/</p>

Wellness Wheel

Objectives

1. Participants will learn about the various aspects of health
2. Participants will learn choices that lead to a more balanced life

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	Wellness Wheel graphic, Wellness Wheel worksheet, pens/pencils, clipboards, whiteboard
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator begins with: <i>“wellness is more than just the absence of physical or mental illness. It addresses the areas of our life that make us feel better and contribute to our health. Looking at the wellness wheel, each dimension is interconnected and the important for finding balance. Some people may be good in some areas, but have less strengths or awareness of how to engage in other aspects of the wheel.”</i> 2. Participants take about 5 to 10 minutes to fill out the worksheet. 3. Participants share and discuss what they wrote for each dimension. This can be a good activity to utilize a whiteboard to write down how people engage in wellness for each dimension. Writing down the comments on a board can give other people ideas that work for others and solidify goals in certain areas of their life.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Same as in person. 2. Facilitator uses the share screen function to show and explain the wellness wheel. 3. Share the worksheet on screen or it can be emailed to participants in advance.
Notes	There are a lot of variations of this psychoeducational activity. It can be split up by sections of the wheel into a two-part activity.
Reference	<p><i>The wellness wheel.</i> University of New Hampshire. https://www.unh.edu/health/wellness-wheel</p> <p>Myers, J.E., & Sweeney, T.J. (2007). <i>Wellness in counseling: An overview.</i> American Counseling Association. Retrieved from https://www.counseling.org/resources/library/ACA%20Digests/ACAPCD-09.pdf</p> <p><i>The diverse strengths of older adults.</i> Age Well. https://www.agewellcounseling.org/initiatives/wellness-and-resilience</p>

Wellness Wheel



Wellness Wheel Worksheet

Social:

I am satisfied with this area because:

I can improve in this area by:

Intellectual:

I am satisfied with this area because:

I can improve in this area by:

Physical:

I am satisfied with this area because:

I can improve in this area by:

Spiritual:

I am satisfied with this area because:

I can improve in this area by:

Emotional:

I am satisfied with this area because:

I can improve in this area by:

Safety:

I am satisfied with this area because:


I can improve in this area by:

Financial:

I am satisfied with this area because:

I can improve in this area by:


Where are You in the Pool?

Objectives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will get to know others' social behaviors and personalities. 2. Participants will identify and examine their behavior and tendencies in social situations 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Image of people in a swimming pool
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces activity: <i>"You are going to use your imagination to become present in the activity. Close your eyes, visualize yourself at a pool. It's a warm sunny day, the sounds of splashing, and people talking are all around. Where would they be in this scene?"</i> 2. Facilitator shows or provides a copy of the image of people in a swimming pool. 3. Participants share which person they most identify with and why. 4. Facilitator follows up with questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has where you are in the image changed from where you may have put yourself in the past? • Is there another person in the image you would like to be? • What would need to happen for you to be more like that person? 5. After sharing and follow-up questions have been completed, if time remains, ask participants what they thought of this activity.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person Facilitator should use the share screen function to display the image.</p>
Notes	Facilitator can Google alternative pool images for display. It is recommended to display an image with diversity of people as well as activities.
Reference	Exercise adapted from Silverstone, L. (2009). <i>Art Therapy Exercises: Inspirational and practical ideas to stimulate the imagination</i> . Jessica Kingsley Publishers



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Adversity and Role Models Discussion

Objectives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will explore the ways they have grown in adversity 2. Participants will identify strengths and coping skills in themselves and each other 	
Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	List of questions
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator will introduce activity: <i>“acknowledging times where we have overcome a challenge can help us overcome new challenges that come up in life. Reflecting on past challenges can bring up difficulties, but can also remind us of our resilience and will to keep going even when times get tough.”</i> 2. Facilitator hands out list of questions or writes them on a white board and invites discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your secret survival strategies? • What life lessons has adversity taught you? • Who inspires you?
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person.</p>
Notes	Questions may be customized to meet the needs of the group.
Reference	Quinn, A. (2017, August 14). <i>Strength in the face of adversity: Practicing resilience in daily life</i> . Good Therapy. https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/strength-in-face-of-adversity-practicing-resilience-in-daily-life-0814174

Baggage Claim

Objectives

1. Participants will identify positive and negative factors in their lives
2. Participants will identify ways to change or cope with negative factors
3. Participants will develop problem solving and coping skills

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Small paper bags, sticky notes or small pieces of paper, pens/pencils, flipchart or whiteboard

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Participants are given five minutes to write several positive factors in their life on the papers and place in one bag.
2. Participants are then given five minutes to write several “negative” factors in life and place in the other bag.
3. Participants are invited to share as desired. Peers are asked to assist with coping strategies for negative factors.
4. Facilitator writes the coping ideas on the flip chart or white board.

Virtual

1. Participants are asked to write the positive and negative factors down on their own.
2. Participants are invited to share as desired. Peers are asked to assist with coping strategies for negative factors.
3. Facilitator can use share screen function to display coping ideas shared by the group.

Notes

Group discussion may become heavy. Facilitator should be prepared to control conversation as needed.


Reference

Barth, D.F., (2019, February 10). *Do you look for the negative even when good things happen?*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-couch/201902/do-you-look-the-negative-even-when-good-things-happen>

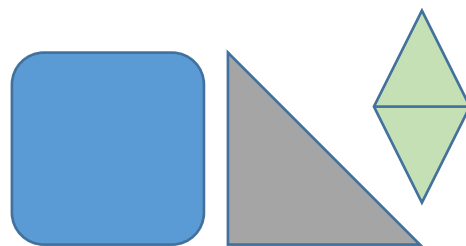
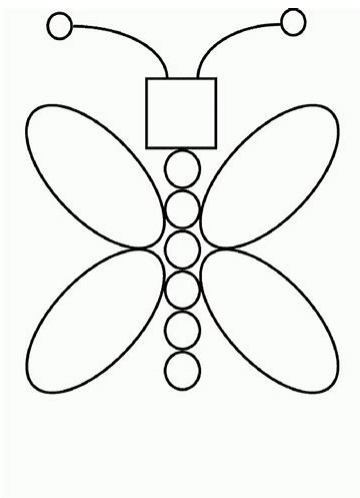
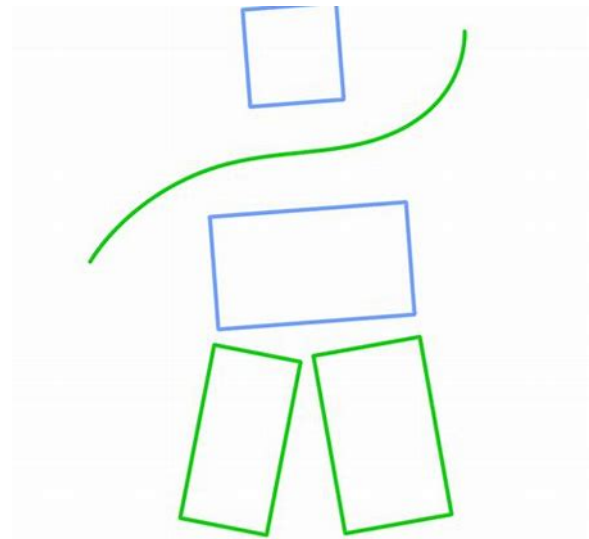
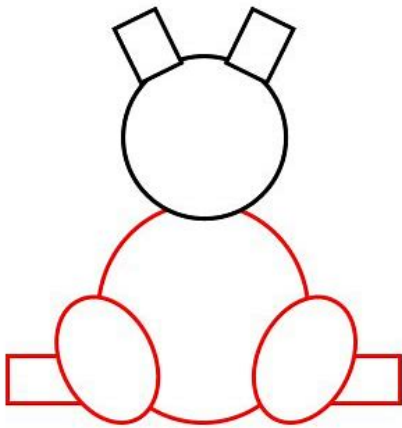
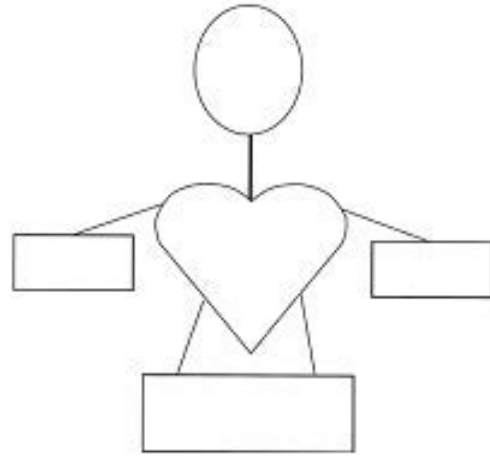
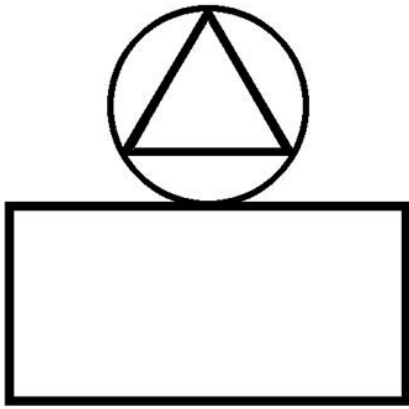
Blind Drawing

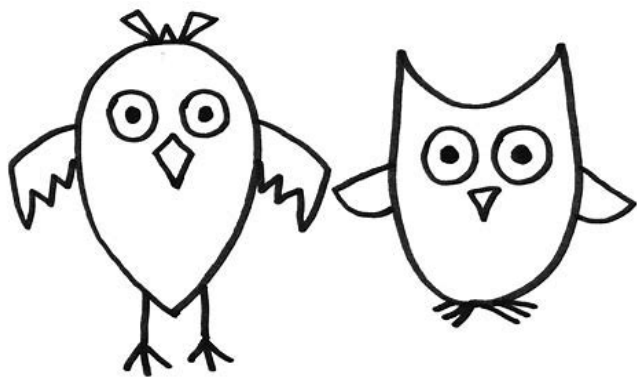
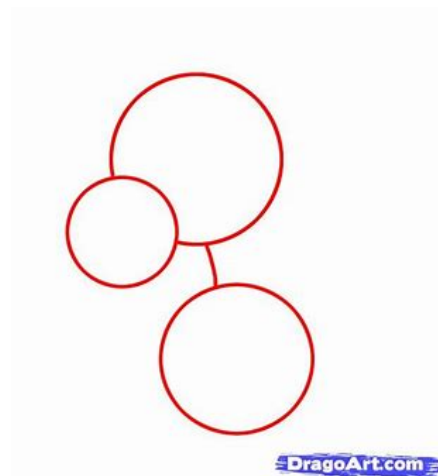
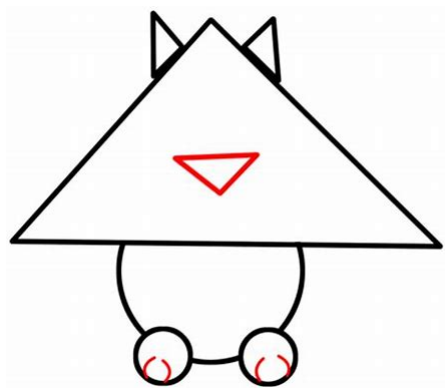
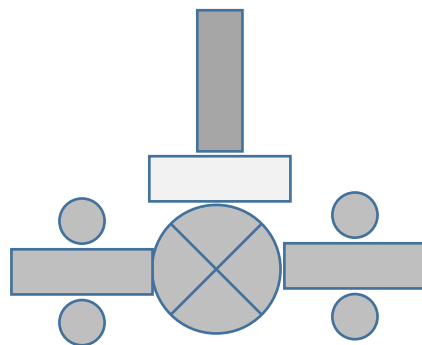
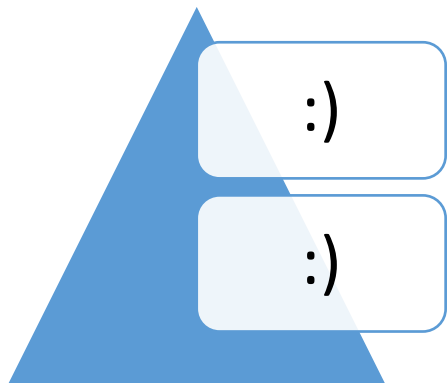
Objectives

1. Participants will work in teams
2. Participants will practice communication skills
3. Participants will gain insight on how they handle challenges
4. Participants will have an opportunity to think creatively

Level	
Space	Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface
Supplies/ Materials	Images or actual everyday objects to draw, paper, pens/pencils
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants are split into pairs. 2. Facilitator explains <i>“the purpose of the activity is to practice communication and teamwork.”</i> 3. Each pair is assigned to be the “artist” or the “instructor”. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “instructor” will describe their item without revealing what it is in 5 minutes. The “artist” will draw the object with the provided verbal description. Artist does not share their drawing. • The “artist” cannot ask any questions and can only draw based on the instructions given by their team. 4. The team closest to drawing wins. 5. Discuss and process the experience and any challenges that arose. Encourage discussion on the importance of clear communication and active listening.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person Participants can take turns being the “instructor” and “artist” Participants can share their drawings on the screen</p>
Notes	<p>It may be helpful to do two rounds to give the teams the opportunity to overcome challenges encountered in the first round.</p> <p>This may be done with members of the group taking turns as “artist” and “instructors” without breaking into teams and having a winner and a loser.</p>

Blind Drawing Images





Blob Tree

Objectives

1. Participants will articulate their feelings
2. Participants will reflect on their self-perception
3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information about themselves

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Blob Tree worksheet -one for each participant

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator asks each participant to choose which figure they feel best represents them today.
2. Participants share where they were on the tree and why they chose the figure.

Other possible questions for participant reflection include:

- a. Which represents what you would like to be in the future?
- b. How do you get there?
- c. Which represents a past you?
- d. How did you get to a different place?
- e. Is there a time in your life when you have been Blob # ____ or Blob # ____?

Virtual

1. Facilitator shares screen to display worksheet.
2. Participants share where they were on the tree and why they chose the figure.

Notes

This activity can bring up difficult emotions and vulnerable sharing about views of self.

Reference

Worksheet to purchase:
 Blob Shop. (2021). *Blob Tree*. <https://www.blobtree.com/>

Burden Release

Objectives

1. Participants will build connections with each other
2. Participants will learn strategies to cope with challenges
3. Participants will identify any “burdens” they would like to release

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

- Bowl of water (placed on the table or on a small table in the center of the circle)
- Wooden dowel or other object with which to stir the water
- Dissolving paper (can be purchased on Amazon)
- Pencils (pens do not work well with this activity)
- Small slips of paper with positive wishes pre-written on them
- Basket or bowl for positive wishes

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator introduces the concept of burdens or challenges that can weigh us down. Perhaps past regrets, negative beliefs about others that keep us stuck.
2. Participants are given a piece of dissolving paper and pencil.
3. Participants are invited to write on the dissolving paper something that doesn't serve them, or something they would like less of in their lives. They may share, but it is ok if they chose to keep their burdens to themselves.
4. Facilitator begins to pass the bowl of water around the table, or participants walk to the bowl if not seated at a table, place their burden in the water, use the dowel to stir the water (it will not dissolve well otherwise) and watch as the burden disappears into the water.
5. Participants are asked to replace the burden by selecting a positive wish from a basket. Examples of positive wishes include hope, laughter, peace, joy, friendship, love, healing, truth, forgiveness, happiness, etc.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces the concept of burdens or challenges that can weigh us down. Perhaps past regrets, negative beliefs about others that keep us stuck. 2. Participants are asked to write their burdens on a slip of paper and tear or crumple it up. Optional for participants to share their burden. 3. Facilitator can select a positive wish at random for them.
Notes	<p>This is a good activity to use at the end of a year or after a group session with emotionally heavy content.</p> <p>It may also be used if the group experiences the death of a group member to express their grief or to write messages to the person who died.</p> <p>Be sensitive to participants with mobility challenges if the bowl is not easy to reach.</p>
Reference	<p>Howard, E.G. (2020, November). <i>How to use a burning bowl ritual to release the past</i>. Unity. https://www.unity.org/resources/articles/how-burning-bowl-ritual</p> <p>Lester, R.J., (2020, May 19). <i>The importance of ritual</i>. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/anthropology-in-mind/202005/the-importance-ritual</p>

Year End Review

Objectives

1. Participants will reflect on the past year
2. Participants will build connections with each other
3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

List of reflection questions

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator asks the participants the following questions, one at a time:
 - What one word describes the past year?
 - What is one way I have grown this year?
 - What is an important thing I learned?
 - What is the best thing I did for someone else this year?
 - What did not go well this year?
 - What went well this year?
 - What I am most grateful for this year?
2. Each participant is given the opportunity to share before facilitator moves on to the next question.

Virtual

Same as in person

Notes

- Questions may be customized to suit the needs of the group.
- Questions may be provided to participants in advance to discussion.
- This activity may be paired with the Burden Release Activity.


Reference

Boyce, A. (2018, December 6). *20 enjoyable end-of-year review questions*. Psychology Today.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-practice/201812/20-enjoyable-end-year-review-questions>

Combating Negative Self Talk

Objectives

1. Participants will improve self-esteem
2. Participants will learn how to practice positive self-talk
3. Participants will learn how to separate themselves from their thoughts

Level	
Space	Participants seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.
Supplies/ Materials	Automatic Thoughts worksheet (link in Reference), pens/pencils, whiteboard
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces activity by stating, <i>“we are not our thoughts and even though thoughts may be automatic and beliefs that feel like truths, we can learn how to notice them, then change them to be more supportive to us. This can be a difficult, but like anything else, it gets easier with practice.”</i> 2. Participants complete the worksheet for about 5 to 10 minutes on their own to practice writing down automatic thoughts and changing them into something more supportive. 3. Facilitator can use a whiteboard to write shared negative thoughts. Make a column for negative and next to it a column for the positive reframed thought. 4. After everyone who wants to share has done so, facilitator asks the group what this exercise was like for them.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person Facilitator uses share screen to display worksheet. Participants are asked to write their answers on their own paper. Participants can share and facilitator can type shared responses to display during discussion</p>
Notes	Participants might need assistance turning a negative thought into a realistic positive thought. Ask the participant if they would like some assistance from the facilitator or from other group members to change their thought into something more positive.
Reference	Beck, J. S. (2011). Cognitive behavior therapy: Basics and beyond (2nd ed.). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press. <u>Worksheet download:</u> Therapist Aid. (n.d.). <i>Automatic Thoughts</i> . https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/automatic-thoughts

Finding Purpose

Objectives

1. Participants will reflect on what matters to them
2. Participants will identify how their purpose has changed over time
3. Participants will discuss the process of finding purpose

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

None

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator begins, *"Many times as we get older, particularly after we retire if we strongly identified with the work we did, or if we really identified with being a mom to our younger children, we may feel like we have lost our purpose or that our purpose has changed. It can help to define our values, our goals and our direction, which can enhance our overall well-being. It is important for us to have a sense of purpose in order to feel fulfilled. Let's talk about finding purpose and how our perception of our purpose changes over time."*
2. Facilitator invites discussion with the following questions:
 - How has your purpose changed over the course of your life?
 - What do you think your purpose is now?
 - Has there been a point when you struggled to find your purpose?
 - How does one go about finding purpose?

Virtual

Same as in person.

Notes

Questions may be customized to meet the needs of the group.

Reference

Schippers, M. C., & Ziegler, N. (2019). Life Crafting as a Way to Find Purpose and Meaning in Life. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 2778. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02778>

Grounding and Mindfulness

Objectives

1. Participants will develop mindfulness techniques
2. Participants will develop tools to use when anxious or experiencing stress
3. Participants will practice breathing techniques for relaxation

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Script for mindfulness exercise (see References)

Activity

Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator will introduce the concept of mindfulness as paying attention in the present moment.
2. Facilitator will lead the group through a breathing exercise.

Virtual

Same as in person.

Notes

Breathing technique used may be customized to meet the needs of the group as there are many available.

As a way to demonstrate and measure the effectiveness of the exercises done in the group, participants may be asked to scale how stressed or anxious they are prior to doing the exercise and again after the exercise has been completed. Note that breathing exercises may not be indicated for those with breathing problems or with recent trauma.

Reference

Optional Reading:

Mindful Staff. (2020, July 8). *What is mindfulness?*. Mindful. <https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/>

Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Grounding techniques*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/grounding-techniques>

Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Deep breathing*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/deep-breathing-worksheet>

Exercise scripts:

Guided meditation for anxiety: Calm place (2019, July 22). Orlando Counseling Blog.

<https://www.mindfullivingcounselingservices.com/blog/2019/7/1/guided-meditation-for-anxiety-calm-place>

University Counseling Center. (n.d.). *Relaxation exercises*. University of Notre Dame.

<https://ucc.nd.edu/self-help/anxious-try-this/relaxation-exercises/>

Werner. M. (n.d.). Practice #2: *Mindful breathing meditation*. SmithCenter for Healing and the Arts.

<https://smithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/files/downloads/mindful-breathing-meditation.pdf>

Letter to My Younger Self

Objectives

1. Participants will reflect on personal growth
2. Participants will identify insights from their past
3. Participants will improve self-esteem, self-kindness, and self-acceptance

Level



Space

Participants will be seated around a table or in a circle provided with a writing surface.

Supplies/ Materials

Paper, pens/pencils, paper, clipboard, tissues

Activity

Instructions

In person

2. Facilitator introduces activity by informing participants they will write a letter or some words of wisdom to their younger self. They can pick any time in their life and think about what they were going through and individual characteristics they possessed at that time. They can reflect on life experiences and offer advice and acceptance to their younger self. Participants should offer self-kindness to themselves as they reflect on their past.
3. Participants are given about 8 to 10 minutes for the exercise.
4. Participants are invited to share their letters with the group to facilitate discussion.

Virtual

Same as in person

Notes

This activity can bring up tough emotions for participants like regret and grief. It is recommended that this exercise is led by an experienced group facilitator, preferably one with a mental health background, who can support participants through difficult memories. Before starting this exercise and after it is completed take a moment to guide participants through some deep breaths to help them ground back into the present.


Reference

Rosenburg, M (2021). *A letter to your younger self*. Upsider Therapy.
<https://www.upsidertherapy.com/blog/a-letter-to-your-younger-self>

Life Review

Objectives

1. Participants will enhance their self-esteem and self-acceptance
2. Participants will identify meaningful life events and accomplishments
3. Participants will connect with each other through shared experiences

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Life Review Questions/Prompts
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces the activity: <i>“we will reminisce about meaningful life experiences. This can bring up a lot of different memories for people, and if difficult things arise please take time to take some deep breaths, get water, notice group members, feel present in the group here and now. When we intentionally revisit our past, it can allow us to recognize the uniqueness of our lives, find gratitude for people that have inspired or supported us, acknowledge pivotal moments.”</i> 2. Facilitator asks life review questions and invites discussion. Questions may be broken down by developmental stages (childhood, teen years, young adulthood, etc.) or be more broad and general.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person. Facilitator can use the share screen function to display questions/prompts</p>
Notes	<p>Be aware that life review may be triggering for individuals with a history of trauma. It can be an emotional exercise to revisit the past in such a focused way.</p> <p>This activity may be done in pairs or small groups or break out rooms. Participants may also be invited to write their answers and share with the group. This activity can be broken up into more than one day to revisit different life stages.</p>
Reference	<p>Adapted from Black, C. (n.d) Structured Life Review. Retrieved from: https://www.nacc.org/docs/conference/2010materials/Structure%20Life%20Review%20by%20Carla%20Black.pdf McDougall, G. J., Buxen, C. E., & Suen, L. J. (1997). The process and outcome of life review psychotherapy with depressed homebound older adults. <i>Nursing research</i>, 46(5), 277–283. https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-199709000-00006 Sharif, F., PhD, Jahanbin, I., MS, Amirsadat, A., MS, & Hosseini Moghadam, M., MS (2018). Effectiveness of Life Review Therapy on Quality of Life in the Late Life at Day Care Centers of Shiraz, Iran: A Randomized Controlled Trial. <i>International journal of community based nursing and midwifery</i>, 6(2), 136–145.</p>

Life Review Activity

Growing Up

What was your childhood neighborhood like?

What was your favorite subject in school?

Who was an important person to you as a teenager and why?

When you think about your teenage years what song or music comes to mind?

What was an important event that happened in your 20s?

Adulthood

What has been most enjoyable about your life?

What is the thing you are most proud of?

What were some of the turning points or life-changing events in your life?

What has stayed the same about you throughout your life? What has changed?

What is the hardest thing about growing older?

What is the best thing about getting older?

Reflection

What year or period of your life stands out as particularly good? Why?

Were there any times that held particular challenges?

If you could go back to a particular year or period, what would it be?

If you could erase the bad years, would you?

What is your philosophy about getting through tough times or dealing with hard memories?


What events do you use to mark periods of your life (eg. that was before I moved to Florida, or that was 2 years after my divorce)?

When you think about the best times of your life, what stands out? (the people involved, how you felt, places?)

Scribble Swap

Objectives

1. Participants will engage in a creative activity
2. Participants will build connections with each other

Level	
Space	Conference room, seated at table
Supplies/ Materials	Paper, pens/pencils
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each participant draws a scribble on their paper. 2. Participants pass their paper to the person next to them. 3. Participants then develop the scribble into a picture. 4. Facilitator guides a review and discussion of the new drawings. How the participants respond to this activity may reflect their responses, behaviors, and attitudes in their everyday lives.
Notes	Some feelings which might come up during this activity include: fear of being judged for lack of artistic ability, being annoyed that their scribble is being turned into something they dislike, being afraid of “messing up” someone else’s scribble, wishing they got a better or different scribble, fear that the scribble they gave to someone isn’t good enough, wanting their drawing to be perfect, believing that they are not creative or not good at art.
Reference	Mehlomakulu, C. (2016, April 4). <i>Scribble Swap: Art Directive for Group Therapy</i> . Creativity in Therapy. http://creativityintherapy.com/2016/04/scribble-swap-art-directive-for-group-therapy/

Self-Care

Objectives

1. Participants will explore ways self-care improves coping
2. Participants will identify self-care activities that help them cope with hard times

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Optional whiteboard, marker

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator provides information on the importance of self-care. *"Self-care is different for everyone. It is the actions we can take to maintain physical and mental health, it is the things we can do help us feel rejuvenated, rested, to help us manage stress and negativity, to help us feel connected to ourselves."*
2. Facilitator leads a discussion using the following questions:
 - What do you do to feel better when you are dealing with something hard?
 - What self-care activity has helped you in the past?
 - What about the above activity is helpful to you?
 - What is one thing you can do in the next week to take care of yourself?

Virtual

Same as in person

Notes

Questions may be customized to meet the needs of the group. This is a good activity to utilize a whiteboard to write down self-care activities that people share. The visual of the group members' self-care ideas can give others ideas to try, and emphasize the wide variety of self-care activities available.


Reference

Glowiak, M. (2020, April 14). *What is self-care and why is it important for you?*. Southern New Hampshire University. <https://www.snhu.edu/about-us/newsroom/2020/04/what-is-self-care>

Social Skills Pt. I – Small Talk

Objectives

1. Participants will enhance their social skills
2. Participants will build connections with each other
3. Participants will become comfortable sharing information through small talk

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Whiteboard or flip chart
Activity Instructions	<p style="text-align: center;">In person</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces the activity: <i>“Some people are good and comfortable at making small talk, but for many it can be challenging. Today we are going to talk about small talk and some of the different related factors that come up.”</i> Continue sharing the role of small talk in establishing friendships and in daily social interaction. 2. Facilitator asks the group what they think about small talk. 3. Participants brainstorm the strengths they possess as individuals that help them navigate small talk and social relationships. Facilitator writes these strengths on the white board or flip chart. 4. Following the brainstorm activity, discuss barriers, difficulties and obstacles that individuals perceive. 5. Brainstorm the characteristics of successful small talk. 6. If time permits, participants can role play a small talk scenario.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person.</p> <p>Facilitator can use the share screen function to display the shared strengths.</p>
Notes	In this activity, various aspects of small talk and building relationships are discussed and brainstormed with the group. Participants will likely share a variety of factors in this activity. As they share, normalize their responses and ask if others share the same concern.
Reference	<p>Raitsin, J. (2019, March 2). <i>10 effective ways to get better at small talk</i>. Leisure hacker. https://leisurehacker.com/small-talk/</p> <p>Pegler, L. (2019, October 20). <i>The importance of small talk and how to perfect it</i>. Medium. https://medium.com/swlh/the-importance-of-small-talk-and-how-to-perfect-it-5685fb611083</p>

Social Skills Pt II – Small Talk to Conversation

Objectives

1. Participants will continue to hone their social skills
2. Participants will learn the importance of nonverbal communication
3. Participants will reduce anxiety around small talk and social interaction

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/Materials

White board or flip chart

Activity

Instructions

In person


1. Facilitator introduces activity: *“This is part 2 of the social skills activity. Let’s discuss nonverbal communication. Nonverbals, such as facial expressions and body language are a huge part of communicating with others.”*
2. Participants share thoughts on the importance of body language in communication with others.
3. Facilitator uses the white board to document their comments.
4. Facilitator shares open body language, such as, facing a person you are speaking to, uncrossing arms, communicates to others that you are interested and open to connecting with them.
5. Facilitator opens discussion on the following aspects of conversation:
 - Open-ended questions encourage someone to share more than just a yes or no response. *What are some examples of open-ended questions?*
 - Focus on the other person. Pay attention and be curious (which helps us stay present) about the other person- their nonverbals, their accent, the content of what they are saying. This will show you care and you will learn more about them.
 - Simple compliments can be a good way to focus on another person and initiate conversation. For example, ask about the sports team that is on someone’s hat or make a positive comment about their jewelry or shoes. *How does it make the group members feel when others ask them about themselves?*
 - Ask clarifying questions. Clarifying questions help take small talk to a deeper level and open the doors to get to know someone. It shows that you are listening and care to learn more.

	<p>For example, “Oh, you’re from Tampa, how does Tampa differ from Tallahassee in your opinion?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use self-disclosure or purposeful information about self to another. When appropriate, share something about yourself that is related to what the other person is sharing. <i>How does it feel to share more personal information or opinions with other people?</i>
Notes	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtual</p> <p>Same as in person. Facilitator can use the share screen function to display the shared thoughts.</p>
Reference	<p>Park, C. (2015, March 30). <i>An introvert’s guide to small talk: Eight painless tips</i>. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/christinapark/2015/03/30/an-introverts-guide-to-small-talk-eight-painless-tips/?sh=6e624c9e574a</p> <p>Sander, V. (2021, January 22). <i>140 great small talk questions (for every situation)</i>. SocialPro. https://socialpronow.com/blog/small-talk-questions/</p> <p>Frost, A. (n.d.). <i>The ultimate guide to small talk: Conversation starters, powerful questions, & more</i>. HubSpot. https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/small-talk-guide</p>

Social Skills Pt. III – Technology & Social Media

Objectives

1. Participants will examine the role of technology in establishing and maintaining relationships
2. Participants will engage in discussion about the challenges of using technology and social media

Level	
Space	Participants seated in a circle or around a table.
Supplies/ Materials	Passive aggressive texts video or other example of the challenges of texting Whiteboard or flipchart
Activity Instructions	In person
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator introduces activity: <i>“When using social media and texting as a communication method, some of the context clues and tone can get lost leading to miscommunications. This activity will focus on the advantages and disadvantages of using these modes of communication in relationships.”</i> 2. If available, show a short video (link in Reference) to demonstrate how miscommunication can occur in text-only communication. 3. Participants think about times when they have had communication challenges or successes using texting or social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on texting. Participants share cons and pros of texting and examples of personal experiences without naming names. • Address social media communication. Participants share thoughts and experiences with social media, such as Facebook.
	Virtual
	<p>Same as in person.</p> <p>Facilitator can use the share screen function to display the shared thoughts.</p>
Notes	Adding humor into this subject can help put participants at ease before discussing a subject that may bring up some defensiveness or remind them of communication challenges they have had.

Reference

Burch, K. (2020, March 16). *How social media affects relationships, from partners to friends*. Insider.

<https://www.insider.com/how-social-media-affects-relationships>

Yang, S. (2021, March 5). *Your guide to being a good friend in the age of social media*. The Thirty.

<https://thethirty.whowhatwear.com/social-media-friendships>

Shared Video:

Jimmy Kimmel Live. (2016, January 7). *Jimmy Kimmel Explains Passive Aggressive Texts* [Video]. Jimmy Kimmel Live.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07TinrpKG6o>

Strength Stories

Objectives

1. Participants will gain an appreciation of their strengths
2. Participants will practice giving positive feedback to their peers
3. Participants will practice being comfortable hearing others reflect on their strengths

Level



Space

Participants seated in a circle or around a table.

Supplies/ Materials

Strengths Exploration- one per participant (link in Reference)

Activity Instructions

In person

1. Facilitator passes a list of strengths to participants and introduces the concept that each of us possesses unique strengths and positive qualities.
2. Facilitator asks participants to share a story about a time when they accomplished something they were proud of in a relationship, at work, or in general. As others in the group listen the sharer's story, they should make notes on any strengths the person showed.
3. After the person finishes sharing, other members give strengths-based feedback to the speaker. They should read out loud each strength they heard the person exhibiting and why they chose it.
4. Go back to step 2 and 3 to allow each person in the group to be the storyteller while others give feedback on the strengths they are sharing.
5. When everyone who wants to share has done so, ask the group what it was like to go through this exercise and get feedback from others.

Virtual

Same as in person.

Facilitator can use the share screen function to display the list of strengths.

Notes

The facilitator can step in and reflect on strengths they hear the storyteller share as a way to model how to do this and mention any that other group participants have missed.

Reference

Howe, L. (2016, May 24). *A self-improvement secret: Work on strengths*. Scientific American.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-self-improvement-secret-work-on-strengths/>

Worksheet download:

Therapist Aid. (n.d.) *Strengths Exploration*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/strengths-exploration>

Here is a list of alternative games for purchase.

Optional Games for Purchase	
Activity Game	Level
Boggle	
MadLibs	
Scattergories	
Taboo	
Trivia	
Outburst	
Chat Pack	
How do you see the world?	

Appendix





Friends Connection Guidelines

1. Please keep people's identities and anything of a personal nature that is shared in this group in confidence so that it can be a safe place for everyone.
2. Respect the feelings, opinions and experiences of the other group members even when they are different than your own.
3. Members have the right to pass on an activity or a discussion. You may not want to talk or participate on a particular day and that is okay. Keep in mind, though, that you will get more out of the group if you do participate.
4. Share the airtime of the group. Allow others to finish speaking and be mindful of how much airtime you are using. The facilitator may interject from time to time in order to allow others to speak, keep a discussion or activity on track, or in the interest of time.
5. Every effort will be made to start and end the group as scheduled in order to be respectful of everyone's time and outside obligations.
6. Remember that this group is here for you to meet new people, engage in meaningful and thoughtful conversation, share thoughts and ideas and have fun! In the event that the group is not a good fit for you, we will do everything we can to find something that will meet your needs.



Friends Connection Chat Group Evaluation

Your feedback is confidential and important and will help us improve.



Name (optional): _____ Date: _____

	Yes	Sometimes	No
I felt welcomed in this group			
I felt listened to			
I made friends in this group			
I am more socially active because of this group			
I feel less isolated because of this group			
I felt comfortable sharing thoughts and ideas			
I was able to engage in meaningful conversation			
I had fun in this group			
The facilitator encouraged discussion			
The facilitator was open to feedback			
The group was well-organized			
I enjoyed the activities and topics			
I would recommend this group to someone else			
Are you satisfied with Friends Connection?			

What do you like most about attending this group?

What suggestions do you have for improving the group?

Thanks for taking a moment to fill out this evaluation!

UPSLIDE POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you so much for your interest in the UPSLIDE program. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions about how you are feeling. Your answers will help us learn how we can best help you and if the UPSLIDE program is right for you.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Phone: _____

	Yes	Sometimes	No
1. Do you have access to grocery stores, banks and other services?			
2. Is it difficult for you to arrange transportation to social activities?			
3. Do you have enough social contact in your day to day life?			
4. Do you get out of the house more than twice a week?			
5. Do you connect with people by computer or other device?			

5. Do you feel you have people to talk to?			
6. Do you miss having people around you?			
7. Are you satisfied with your friendships and relationships?			
8. Do you feel connected to other people?			

9. Have you dropped many of your activities and interests?			
10. Do you feel optimistic and hopeful about the future?			
11. Do you feel that your life is empty?			
12. Do you ever wish you were dead?			

UPSLIDE POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How long have you been in the UPSLIDE program? _____
2. What have you participated in? _____ Assessment Meeting _____ Counseling _____ Chat Groups
_____ Zoom Activities _____ Drive-By Lunches _____ Resource Referral _____ Phone Buddy Program
_____ Technology Assistance
3. Have you received resource information or referrals from UPSLIDE or TSC staff? _____ Yes _____ No
If Yes, what did you receive? _____ Referral to counselor/physician/organization _____ Resource Card
_____ Links to websites _____ Other
How did you receive it? _____ Mail _____ Phone _____ Email _____ Website _____ In-person _____ Other
Did you find the resource information you received helpful? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Are you spending more time at the Senior Center, in the community, or online with friends because of
UPSLIDE? _____ YES _____ NO If yes, what activities are you participating in? _____
5. Has participating in UPSLIDE activities made a positive difference in your life? _____ YES _____ NO
6. Do you have new friends or feel more socially connected because of UPSLIDE? _____ YES _____ NO
7. Do you feel that the quality of your life has improved through UPSLIDE? _____ Yes _____ No
8. How satisfied are you with the UPSLIDE program? _____ Not at all _____ Moderately _____ Very
9. What are some of the helpful things you have learned from the program?
_____ Ways to make new friends _____ Importance of social activities _____ Interests of my own
_____ Ways to connect with others _____ Improved communication skills _____ New resources
_____ Improved technology skills Other: _____
10. Do you have any suggestions or comments about the UPSLIDE Program?

Thank you for your participation!

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