Facilitation for Healthy Communities Toolkit

CONTENTS

Introduction

Good facilitation is an essential component to achieving success as a group. A facilitator helps a group of people accomplish their objectives by ensuring comfort, fairness and good participation from everyone, maximizing their ability to come up with ideas and solutions, and keeping them on track to move towards the group's goals.

Facilitation is "an art" that takes a lot of practice. Those who call themselves facilitators usually have a lot of training and/or experience in planning and facilitating group/community processes, meetings or events. Still, learning to facilitate is an ongoing process and no matter how long someone has been doing it, there is always something new to be learned.

This toolkit is meant to provide a quick and easy reference guide to facilitation using a handful of techniques, rather than a comprehensive review of how to facilitate groups effectively, or each of the techniques covered. The material within is adapted from the information and examples presented in an HC Link blog series about various facilitation approaches and techniques, written by several HC Link staff. Thanks goes to Lisa Tolentino, Andrea Bodkin, Kim Hodgson, Gillian Kranias and Lorna McCue for sharing their wisdom and experience.

HC Link
Your resource for healthy communities

CHOOSING A FACILITATION TECHNIQUE

The selection of an approach for facilitation should be based on a variety of things, including: the current context of the community, the individuals or groups who will be participating, the overall purpose and desired outcomes of the event, and goals and expectations of those involved. This requires not only speaking in advance to those who are organizing the meeting or event, but also gathering information on who will be participating and what sorts of things they will be looking to get out of the event.

> Facilitation is the art of guiding groups of people through processes to help them reach agreed upon goals in a manner that encourages participation, ownership and creativity from all involved, while fostering respect and trust.[1]

Choosing the right approach, technique and tools means asking a series of questions to determine what is suitable for the group and situation. In order to answer these questions, you also have to be sure to involve the right people in the planning process – those who are well-informed and/or have access to the necessary information.

▸ What is the purpose of the session (e.g., sharing information, gathering information, getting feedback on something, and/or making decisions)?

▸ Is it a one-time event or part of an ongoing process?

▸ Are you working with an established group, a newly created one, or individual participants who do not know each other?

  – If they know each other, how well?

  – What is the level of trust that exists?

  – Are there any group dynamics that you should be aware of?

▸ What is the participants' previous level of experience with facilitated processes?

  – Is this experience likely to be positive for them or will there be any resistance?

▸ Are there any other issues you should consider?

SEVEN FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

There are a variety of facilitation techniques that you can use depending on whether you want to gather information, create shared understanding, identify possible solutions, set priorities, take action, and so on. Experienced facilitators will often use and combine numerous techniques and approaches in a single session in order to meet a range of goals and objectives. This toolkit offers brief descriptions and instructions for a number of techniques that HC Link consultants frequently use. All of these techniques were created by others and varied ways of facilitating them have evolved over time.

1. **Ice Breakers –** to allow people to get to know each other and/or network
2. **Visioning –** to generate ideas for the future
3. **1-2-4-All –** to gather ideas and information from a group
4. **Wise Crowds –** to draw upon the wisdom in the room
5. **Appreciative Inquiry –** to uncover a group's assets and create a shared vision for change
6. **Generating & Prioritizing Ideas –** to assist strategic planning and decision-making
7. **Popular Theatre –** uses dramatic play as a tool for social transformation

Other popular approaches in HC Link's toolbox include:

▸ **World Café & Community Conversations –** to explore current and pressing topics

▸ **Open Space –** for participants to identify the topics of interest themselves

▸ **Naming the Moment –** to plan for political action

▸ **Results-Based Accountability (RBA) –** to develop plans by starting with the desired outcome

To learn more or get support with any of these and other facilitation techniques, contact us at: info@hclinkontario.ca or 1-855-847-1575.

TOOL KIT
TECHNIQUES

HC Link

Your resource for healthy communities

HC Link
Your resource for healthy communities

Facilitation Technique: Ice Breakers

With a bit of planning and preparation, icebreakers and active games can be meaningful as well as fun. There are a number of things to consider:

Be clear on the purpose for including icebreakers or active games into your community process, meeting or event. While fun is definitely one reason, an icebreaker can actually help to deepen the participant experience, through exploration and reflection of ideas.

Know the personality and preferences of the group. Some groups are formal and like to get down to business, other groups like to have fun and enjoy experiential learning. In selecting the activity, consider the questions outlined on page two.

Always make participation optional and provide other options to allow those with different preferences or levels of mobility to be involved.

An effective debrief makes the difference between a game being fun and being a part of the learning experience. If you are using the activity to further an objective of the session, you will need to debrief with the full group.

> **Three core purposes of icebreakers and games:**
>
> 1. To get to know the group, or for individuals within the group to get to know each other.
> 2. To introduce, demonstrate or apply concepts that will be explored in the meeting.
> 3. Physical activity and fun!

In Action

Below are three favourites, but there is no shortage of icebreakers and active games posted online. See "Learn more about it!" below for additional ideas.

Get to Know You Game – Inner-Outer Circle

1. Divide participants into two equal groups and have them arrange themselves into two circles, one inside the other, facing each other.
2. Allow one minute for each person to talk with the person directly in front of them. Sample discussion topics:
   ‣ What do you hope to get out of today?
   ‣ Discuss a challenge that you're currently experiencing in your work.
   ‣ What do you love about the work that you do?
3. After each person in the pair has shared, the people in the outer circle rotate two people to the left and repeat the exercise with their new partners.
4. Repeat 5-8 times using the same discussion topic for each round.

Reflective Activity – The Object Game

This game can be used as a way for participants and the group as a whole to reflect on their work, but it also makes a great introduction activity.

1. Place a variety of ordinary household/office objects on a table such as: roll of tape, salt and pepper shakers, stapler, oven mitts, lint roller, sticky notes, coffee cup, computer mouse, etc. Be sure you have one for each person plus a few extras and avoid repeats.

2. Have each person select an object. Usually people will pick the object that resonates with them in some way.

3. Activity options – Ask each person to:

   ▸ Introduce themselves and use the object to describe the work that they do.

   ▸ Use the object to describe something that the group has accomplished over the last year or a barrier that's been overcome.

   ▸ Use the object to describe a hope for the future or a vision for the group.

Physically Active and Fun Game – Musical Chairs

This variation of musical chairs is a way for individuals to introduce themselves to the group.

1. Arrange chairs in the center of the room. Make sure there are fewer chairs than people.

2. Play music and have people move around the chairs.

3. When the music stops, participants try to find a chair. Those left standing introduce themselves to the group, sharing their name and one other thing (e.g. what they love about their work, what they hope to get out of the day, etc.).

4. Remove a chair and repeat until everyone has introduced themselves.

Learn more about it!

Ice Breakers: Easing group contribution – https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_76.htm

The best icebreaker ideas: How to play – http://www.icebreakers.ws

Group activities, games and initiatives – http://wilderdom.com/games

Original blog post: Breaking the Ice: putting a little fun into working with groups, Andrea Bodkin

Facilitation Technique: Visioning

Visioning is a creative way to bring together community members with diverse perspectives to generate joint ownership and commitment for taking action toward change. Used in many sectors and spheres of life, this tool can be very effective in assisting with problem-solving, inspiring hope and building confidence.

Visioning is different than traditional problem-solving in that it offers hope, encouragement and the possibility of fundamental change by generating a common goal. With traditional problem solving, a group can become bogged down in details and even disagree on how to define the problem. It also focuses on the negative, whereas visioning allows a group to move away from this toward something more positive. With visioning, passion and creative thinking are spawned, and people are given a greater sense of control.

In a community visioning session, the vision is often expressed using pictures and symbols to convey an ideal community. It allows participants to travel beyond the current political, economic, social and/or environmental challenges being experienced, to articulate what they would like to see occur in the future. The result is an idea, dream, mental image or picture that is shared by many people in a community.

What is needed to hold a successful visioning session?
- Involvement from a large number of people from a defined geographic area, community of interest and/or affiliation.
- A diverse cross-section of people who are able to participate in a meaningful way, such as those who are representative of various ages, incomes, ethnicities, abilities, etc.
- Multi-sector participation (e.g., from education, government, business, health, media).
- A location that is familiar, inviting and physically accessible for participants.
- Ideally, access to transportation, refreshments and childcare should be available or provided.

In Action

In a community visioning session, participants are asked to envision the kind of community that they would like to be a part of in the future. The objective is to allow people to dream and collect as many ideas as possible; no concept is too small, big, or "out there" to be included.

1. Ask participants to make themselves comfortable, close their eyes and spend a few minutes quietly thinking their own thoughts. You could have them take a hot air balloon ride above their community and into the future or take a walk and imagine a newspaper headline 20 years from now. In each case, ask them something along the lines of: "What would your community be like if you had the power to make it the way you wanted?"

2. Have participants formulate pictures in their minds as they travel through the physical space. Ask questions that are quite detailed, for instance, "How are buildings and public spaces arranged? What do they look like? Where are the people? What are they are doing? How are they interacting?" The goal is to help participants actually "see" what they hope for.

3. Following this exercise, slowly bring participants back to the present day and into the room again, asking them to keep the features that they just saw in their minds. Then, in small groups, participants will be asked to talk about what they saw using key words or phrases that capture their image of a Healthy Community. The facilitator may even provide some guides or categories like housing, health care, crime rates, and/or public engagement.

4. Ask group members to record short, clear and positive statements about how the community will be in the future. The statement should be in the present tense, like a newspaper headline. Statements may include things like: "There are lots of bike trails"; "You can walk safely at night" and "Transportation is efficient and affordable". These statements will be generated until they run out of ideas or time.

5. Have each group read their statements aloud to the large group and ask participants to highlight the major differences between the present and the future that they have created. People may express that some things are impossible to achieve. Remind them that 50 years ago it was difficult to imagine some of the changes that have taken place today, such as the existence of the internet, and that anything could be possible.

6. Work with participants to gather elements of the vision under common themes, and find areas of consensus. These vision statements could then be made into a list of ideas or even presented in a graphic form. Some communities have had the ability to hire a graphic recorder to draw images as participants spoke, such as the community vision for Haldimand and Norfolk counties pictured below.

Simply articulating a vision can be a powerful tool for making a Healthy Community a reality. The next step after any visioning process is to develop a plan to achieve that vision, often through priority-setting and decision-making.
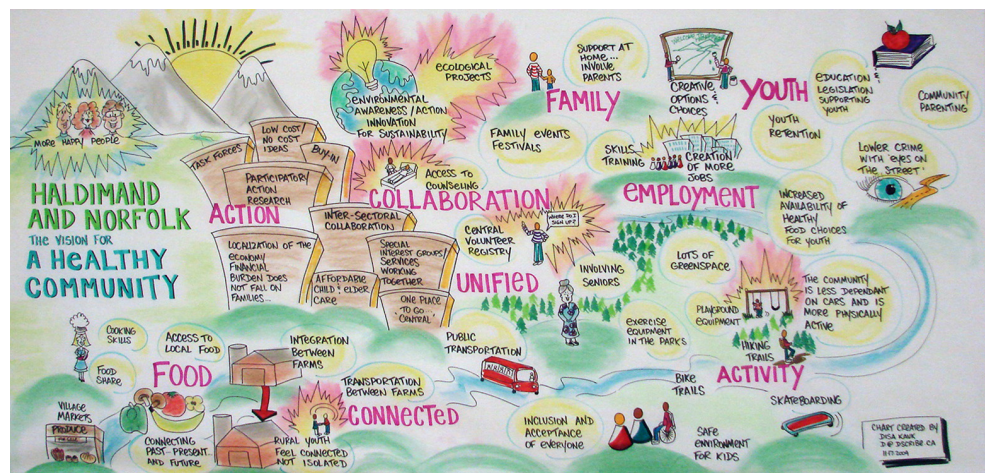
Created by: Disa Kauk, Dscribe (photo courtesy of Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit

Learn more about it!

"Visioning", Tools for Development. A handbook for those engaged in development activity.
(Department for International Development. London, 2003)

Original blog post: Using "Visioning" as a Facilitation Technique, Lisa Tolentino

Facilitation Technique: 1-2-4-All

1-2-4-All is a useful technique to ensure that everyone is able to participate and have their ideas heard. Used to gather ideas and information from the group, 1-2-4-All is a flexible approach that can be used for a variety of purposes: to brainstorm ideas, gather input on preference for a series of options, establish a vision, or facilitate strategic planning sessions.

The technique begins with a very broad and open-ended question so that the information gathered from participants is not directed in any way. The strength of 1-2-4-All is that everyone is engaged in the conversation (even people who don't normally participate in group conversation), and when the groups become larger (4 and All), themes can emerge. Ideas and solutions come from the participants in the conversation, which facilitates buy-in.

In Action

The exercise is meant to be done rapidly. As a facilitator, it's important to explain this so participants share their ideas briefly and stay focused on the precise question.

1. Spend time defining the precise question for the 1-2-4-All exercise. Generally speaking, a broad question works best. You may also need some prompts to illustrate the question for your group. For example:

‣ In an exercise on identifying planning tools, you might ask "What is the ONE thing that you need in order to be able to accomplish your work? (other than more time and staffing resources)". The prompt could be "I wish I had something that helped me to..."

‣ For a strategic planning discussion, the question could be "What are the possibilities for this group?" and prompts "What could we accomplish if we worked together?" or "If we could make anything happen, what would it be?"

2. Ask the question to the group. It's a good idea to display the question on a flip chart or screen to keep it front and center as the groups work on it. The activity proceeds in this way:

1 – Each person has a couple of minutes to reflect on the question and write down their thoughts on an index card or sticky note. (*2 mins*)

2 – Participants get into pairs to share and discuss their thoughts. (*2 mins*)

3 – Each pair joins with another pair to talk about their ideas. Provide each group of four with a piece of flipchart paper to document their ideas. (*4 mins*)

All – The large group comes back together to report back on their ideas. (*8-12 mins*)

3. During a break (mealtime or coffee break), theme the groups' ideas and begin to organize the information. For example, in the case of a strategic planning discussion, individual reflections tend to work out to be vision and mission statements, reflections from pairs tend to be objectives or strategic directions, and when people get into groups of four they tend to get more specific and action-oriented. Transferring the information onto sticky notes for this portion (colour-coding according to theme/category) is helpful for comprehension and makes it easy to move things around.

4. After the break, present the information back to the group to validate it, further organize/synthesize the information and make decisions about how to proceed. (See *Generating & Prioritizing Ideas*)

Learn more about it!

The Liberating Structures website (www.liberatingstructures.com) contains detailed instructions for 1-2-4-All as well as a variety of other techniques.

Original blog post: 1-2-4-All: Engage everyone in group conversation, Andrea Bodkin

Facilitation Technique: Wise Crowds

Wise Crowds is a technique that was developed by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless, who are the authors of a book and website – www.liberatingstructures.com. The purpose of the Wise Crowds technique is to:

▸ Uncover solutions to common problems/challenges;

▸ Tap into the intelligence of the diverse opinions available within a group;

▸ Generate results without using "outside" expertise;

▸ Actively build learning, mutual support, and make peer connections;

▸ Refine one's ability to give, receive, and ask for help;

▸ Liberate the wisdom and creativity that exists across sectors and disciplines; and

▸ Create the conditions for unimagined solutions to emerge.

Wise Crowds enables you to engage a group of people in helping one another. You can use it with a large group, simultaneously with small groups, or even with a group as few as four. In a short amount of time, participants find solutions to real-life challenges, and also increase their capacity for problem-solving. Individuals referred to as "clients" ask for help and draw on the knowledge and experience of those in the group.

In Action

Before

1. Determine in advance the desired outcome of the activity (i.e. to facilitate networking and/or to gather feedback or ideas).

2. Know your participants. What are their similarities and differences? Do they already know one another?

3. Make decisions about the topics to be discussed. You may decide to define the topics or establish parameters, or poll participants in advance to understand their areas of interest and expertise and help define the conversations.

4. Determine your group sizes and how "clients" will be selected. To save time, you could identify clients in advance or at the beginning of the session to allow them time to think about a challenge that they are dealing with, and advice or help that they are looking for.

During

5. Have clients pose their situations to their small groups and request input. Group members serve as "consultants", drawing on their own skills and experiences to offer advice to the clients.

6. After a set amount of time, each client then moves onto a different table of consultants to repeat the process and further gain from different groups of expertise. Not only do clients receive suggestions and ideas for addressing their challenges, but the consultants also gain by learning from and connecting with the other consultants in the group.

After

7. Allow time at the end to debrief the activity with the entire group and further allow participants time to connect with the people that they have just encountered.

Learn more about it!

The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures: Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation
(Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless. Liberating Structures Press. Seattle, 2013)

Liberating Structures website - www.liberatingstructures.com/13-wise-crowds

Original blog post: Peer Sharing: The Wise Crowds Technique, Lisa Tolentino

Facilitation Technique: Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) focusses on creating a shared vision of a preferred future, developing asset-based strategies, and undertaking collective action. It was developed in the mid 1980's by David Cooperrider and his colleagues at Case Western Reserve University. AI is a powerful vehicle for setting in motion a wave of positive change. It is based on a very simple premise: that organizations/groups/communities grow in the direction of what they focus their attention on. The practice of AI is grounded in an exploration of questions that will uncover best practices and innovations, and the conditions that allow it to thrive. It then applies these findings to daily activities and practices and for these reasons is also often used for strategic planning.

Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry

▸ In every society, organization or group, something works.

▸ What we focus on becomes our reality.

▸ Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.

▸ The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.

▸ People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).

▸ If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.

▸ It is important to value differences.

▸ The language we use creates our reality.

In Action

AI is an ongoing, iterative cycle consisting of five phases: define, discover, dream, design and destiny. The "define" phase is sometimes excluded, as it may happen only once within a particular AI process, while the other phases may be repeated several times.

1. Define an Affirmative Topic

Reframe a challenge into a positive topic of inquiry and identify questions for participants to ask each other. For example, rather than exploring the barriers to community belonging, focus on the examples of community belonging that currently exist.

2. Discover "The Best of What Is"

Ask participants to pair up and interview each other to discover new insights into the strengths of the community/organization and what contributions its members can make. Questions are usually focussed around why they were attracted to the community/organization, past successes, peak experiences, or what they value about the community/organization. Moving from pairs into small groups of four, each person shares their partner's "story". Listening for key themes, each group then identifies and makes note of conditions and assets that support success.

3. Dream "What Might Be"

Participants share these conditions/assets for success as a large group, discuss additional insights, and summarize the key conditions/assets on a flipchart. Together, they then extrapolate from "the best of what is" to envision "what might be" and create images of what life in the community/organization would look like if these conditions became the norm. The "dream" state should focus not just on incremental changes (i.e. more of the same) but in creating provocative, transformational images of the future. Once the visual image is complete, participants write one or two statements that capture the essence of the "dream" (e.g. "Our community will have realized community belonging when its members…").

4. Design "What Should Be"

As a large group, have participants identify the high-leverage changes the community/organization would have to make in its systems, processes, roles and metrics to support the common dream. This phase is more than just breaking down the dream into short-term actions; it requires figuring out how to align systems, process and structures with the dream. Move participants into small groups for further dialogue on how to make this happen.

5. Destiny "What Will Be"

Together participants identify the challenges, innovations and facilitating forces to create the desired change. Ask: What projects or initiatives are needed in order to deliver on those action plans and achieve the end goal? Who will initiate the next steps?
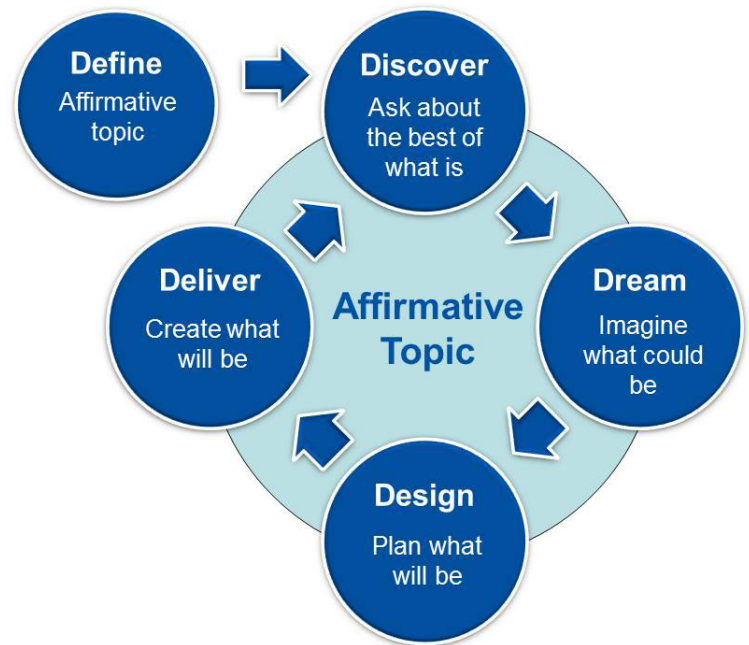
Source: Sustaining Community, https://sustainingcommunity.wordpress.com/2013/11/21/what-is-appreciative-inquiry/

Facilitation Technique: Generating & Prioritizing Ideas

Planning and priority-setting can be both exciting and challenging activities for groups. A clear and transparent decision-making process is invaluable in comparing and prioritizing ideas and allows groups to justify and document their decisions. There are various facilitation techniques that can be incorporated into priority-setting (and even strategic planning); Appreciative Inquiry and 1-2-4-All are referred to in the steps outlined below as examples. Following the steps below will allow you to craft a priority-setting exercise that gives the group clear direction for moving forward.

In Action

1. Determining Focus and Direction

The first step is to determine the purpose and approach for the priority-setting exercise. New partnerships and collaboratives may approach priority-setting somewhat differently than those groups that have a long history and a list of initiatives and activities completed and underway.

▸ In the case of a new group trying to decide which activities support their newly crafted vision, mission and strategic plan, it is helpful for them to determine which strategic directions (i.e. communications, fundraising, partnership development, etc.) to focus on first, in the short-term and long-term.

▸ In the case of existing groups that have a history of planning and implementing activities, it can be helpful to take stock of what's working well or not (i.e. through Appreciative Inquiry) and determine directions/ objectives prior to generating new ideas and prioritizing future activities.

2. Generating Ideas

The next step is for participants to generate a list of activities that will support each of the strategic directions/ objectives. Several methods or processes work well for generating ideas, including 1-2-4-All and Appreciative Inquiry. Regardless of the approach, the intent of this process is for the group to generate as many ideas as possible and record them on individual index cards or sticky notes.

Participants can break into smaller groups to generate possible activities for each strategic direction, or you can take an open floor approach where everyone suggests any and all activities that come to mind.

Some groups like to generate activities by doing a mini-visioning exercise around the question: If we are successful in what we are doing, what will be in place in three years? What do we need to do to get there? What activities need to be put into place? Are these activities the same activities that we are doing now? If not, what should we be doing?

3. Analyzing & Organizing Ideas

Next, have participants present their ideas to the rest of the larger group, and visually group like ideas together on a wall or whiteboard. The group decides which strategic direction each activity supports and posts the index card or sticky note with the name of the activity under the relevant strategic direction heading.

In many cases, the group will come up with new ideas and activities that aren't directly related to their current strategic directions or objectives. It's important to capture these ideas in a way that shows that they are innovative, but don't fit easily into previously agreed upon areas of focus. The group can then decide if it's worthwhile to broaden their objectives to include the suggested activity, or put it in a "parking lot" for consideration at a later time.

As ideas come forward, it's common to find that one idea is a discrete activity within a larger activity e.g. "social media" and "webpage development" are components of a "communication plan." In other cases, discrete activities support a common initiative (like "communication plan") but one activity naturally occurs before another, e.g. development of key messages likely happens before writing media releases etc. **The clearer a group can see how the possible activities relate to each other, the easier it is for them to do the final prioritizing.** This will help them compare, rank and choose from very different suggestions, e.g. "encourage more non-organized sports for youth" vs. "establish a Twitter account".

4. Selecting Priorities

Only when you have the ideas/activities visually pieced together so that it makes sense to everyone, should you proceed with having people cast their votes. The Health Communication Unit (now the Health Promotion Capacity Building Services at Public Health Ontario) outlines three elements for setting priorities that should be discussed and confirmed before you begin:

1. **Identify criteria –** Determine what criteria you'll use to compare options and make decisions about what activities the group will move forward with.
2. **Select voting/scoring processes –** The tool or combination of tools you select will depend on the nature of your work, the type of group you're working with and the time you have for the exercise. Possible options include Dotmocracy, Paired comparisons, Quadrant analysis, and Grid/matrix analysis (described in this article).
3. **Clarify roles and processes to make the final choice –** Is the group making the decision, or are they making a recommendation that is going to another power authority? Is there someone in the group that has decision-making power?

Priority-setting can be a tricky and messy process. It is best to acknowledge this with the group and create an open space for people to share their opinions and ideas. Having an external and neutral facilitator can be very helpful.

Learn more about it!

Priority Setting- Four methods for getting to what's important, *OHPE-bulletin feature article, 2010*

Priority Setting Process Checklist, *Public Health Ontario, 2011*

Blog posts: Facilitating a Priority-Setting Exercise, Kim Hodgson & Setting Priorities: How do we decide what to do?, Andrea Bodkin

Facilitation Technique: Popular Theatre

Popular theatre activities can be used in community learning, community development and social change settings for groups to explore attitudes and social problems and imagine a range of potential solutions. These activities all value equity and inclusion, as well as a holism that engages creativity, non-verbal communication and full body awareness in our analysis, learning and organizing efforts.

To choose games appropriately for your group, consider the lightness or seriousness of the gathering, how well people know each other, as well as physical ability and language differences among group members.

In Action

Centering Activities[2] *(5 minutes)*

There are hundreds of theatre and improv games that can help "center" members of a group together, build listening skills, and exercise people's timing in response. Here are two:

Name and motion

▸ Engages group members to listen, observe, and move
▸ Requires only limited "theatrical risk-taking"
▸ Generates lots of smiles and breaks down inhibitions

Instructions:

1. Have everyone stand up in a circle.
2. Each individual, when they are willing, takes one step towards the center of the circle and makes a motion (preferably large) while calling out their first name. Everyone else must then together repeat the person's "name and motion" two times (like an echo response).
3. Allow time for each person to introduce their "name and motion" and be welcomed by the group through their echoed "name and motion".

Pass the clap

▸ Engages group members to listen, observe, and move
▸ Focuses group members attention to one collaborative challenge
▸ Encourages a lighthearted approach to mistakes

Instructions:

1. Seated or standing in a circle, clap in the direction of someone next to you. That person then passes the clap to the next person in the circle, and it continues from person to person around the circle.
2. Allow the clap to pass around the circle several times. Then, while the clap is passing on the opposite side of the circle, begin a second (and later a third) clap that will travel in its own timing around the circle (so several claps will be circling at once).
3. After a while, gather the claps (by not passing them) to close the activity.

Personal Style Reflection: What animal am I most like in a group? *(5-20 minutes)*

This activity allows each individual in a group to share their uniqueness and offer insight into the qualities of their "animal" which creates an appreciative and collaborative dynamic.

▸ Engages group members to reflect on what they bring personally to the group

▸ Uses metaphor to convey complex ideas in a non-restrictive way

▸ Provokes laughter – being lighthearted about the strengths and challenges of our unique personalities

Instructions:

1. Post pictures, or a list, of 6-8 different types of animals.

2. Ask people to reflect on which animal they behave most like, when working in a group setting.

3. Invite each participant to share which animal they identified with most, and why.

4. With larger groups, the same question can be explored more dramatically/playfully by asking people to act out their animal, find others acting like them, and then sit together in their animal group to create a list of what they see as the significant qualities of their animal in groups.

Image theatre[3] *(10-90 minutes)*

Image theatre is less intimidating than roleplay, and can be used on its own or as a warm-up activity before roleplaying. This technique is also known within popular education groups as "human sculptures".

▸ Engages group members in holistic thinking, analysis, and learning

▸ Works equally well for multilingual groups

▸ Helps groups analyze patterns within shared issues or experiences

▸ Great for experiential learners

Instructions:

1. In small groups, on a given theme/question, share stories or jump right into identifying patterns or key elements of a problem. Ask the group to create a frozen image/sculpture (no words) to convey their perspectives.

2. Each group takes turns "exhibiting" and "viewing" the sculpture of other groups. Encourage people to explore all sides of the sculpture by touring around it. After the sculpture has been viewed, point to the people one at a time and ask each of them to say a few words about "what is your character thinking/feeling?"

3. Another variation is to ask people to return to their groups and develop an evolving series of 3-5 images that brings about a positive change. When these image series are being shared, clap your hands to signal the group to change from one image to the next.

Learn more about it!

Companies in Ontario who work with communities and are using theater as a tool for positive change: Mixed Company Theatre, Sheatre, In Forma Theatre, Branchout Theatre

Games for Actors and Non-Actors, 2nd edition. (Augusto Boal. New York: Routledge, 2002). https://geraldkeaney.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/augusto_boal_games_for_actors_and_non-actorsbookfi-org.pdf

Original blog post: Using Popular Theatre as a Facilitation Technique, Gillian Kranias

REFERENCES

[1] David Sibbet. *Principles of Facilitation: The Purpose and Potential of Leading Group Process.*
(The Grove Consultants International, 2002).

[2] Augusto Boal. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors, 2nd edition.* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
https://geraldkeaney.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/augusto_boal_games_for_actors_and_non-actorsbookfi-org.pdf

[3] Theatre for Living (Headlines Theatre), Vancouver (http://theatreforliving.com/) and Mixed Company, Toronto
(http://www.mixedcompanytheatre.com/).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HC Link Blog Series on Facilitation Techniques, HC Link, 2016.
http://hclinkontario.ca/blog/entry/hc-link-facilitation-blog-series-wrap-up.html

Group Facilitation & Problem Solving, Community Tool Box, University of Kansas.
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation

Liberating Structures – http://www.liberatingstructures.com/

HC Link *Your resource for healthy communities*

HC Link helps community groups, organizations, and partnerships drive change by providing consulting services, webinars, workshops, resources and other learning opportunities in both English and French. We provide groups with expertise in a wide range of healthy community topics and health promotion approaches. Our services are funded by the Government of Ontario and are provided free of charge where possible.