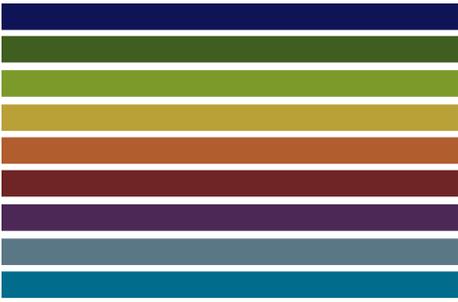


Older Adults Strengthening  
*communities*  
Team Building Guide

Developed by UNH to support and empower  
teams of older people working to strengthen their  
communities





## ABOUT

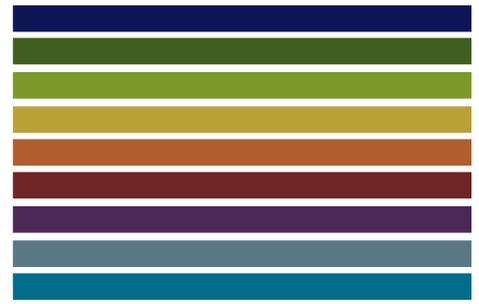
As a membership organization of 39 settlement houses and community centers in New York City and two upstate affiliates, United Neighborhood Houses of New York [UNH] promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need. Our network of non-profit organizations serves over 750,000 people each year, and we support this work through advocacy for budget and policy change, customized professional development and peer learning, and promotion of innovative practices, particularly those that deepen civic and community engagement.

For the past five years, UNH has been promoting a strength-based and purpose-driven approach to aging throughout its network of member organizations through an initiative called Older Adults Strengthening Communities. UNH believes that the skills, talents, and knowledge of older people are a tremendous resource for the greater good. Older people who mobilize in teams can identify the need for community change and act in ways that strengthen communities for all ages while also improving their own health and wellbeing. This Team Building Guide is an important tool in developing and sustaining this valuable work.

TERRY KAELBER, UNH Director for Community Engagement Projects, has been leading this initiative for UNH since its inception in 2008, when he led UNH's involvement in a national initiative that demonstrated the impact that older people could have when engaged, supported and positioned to be drivers of community change.

ALISA DEL TUFO has been the lead consultant on the Older Adults Strengthening Communities initiative. She is the founder of Threshold Collaborative, which uses narrative and participatory practices to strengthen individual and community wellbeing. She is the author of this Guide.

AMY ANSELMO is an artist and designer who also works with Threshold Collaborative. She is the designer for this Guide.



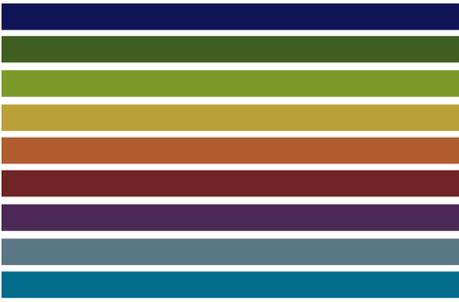
## INTRODUCTION

This suite of activities are designed to develop and strengthen your team as it works to implement projects through Older Adults Strengthening Communities. It's aim is to support what you are doing as a self-directed volunteer team, giving you opportunities to practice the core competencies of that process while implementing a project or program in your community.

In every case someone on the team needs to facilitate these exercises and/or do a small amount of prep work prior to the exercise itself. Make sure that you look at the sections entitled: INTRODUCTION, WHAT YOU WILL NEED, and INSTRUCTIONS a few days before you are the facilitator.

You might need a little time to get things ready.

We recommend that the role of facilitator be shared and rotated each time you do an exercise. One way to determine who facilitates each session would be to put everyone's name in a hat and pick them out, another would be to have the facilitator of one meeting pick the facilitator of the next one (although someone has to be brave and volunteer for the first session!) . This will help share the responsibility and strengthen a sense of shared leadership amongst participants. Some exercises take a little planning and others require a few props. All of them are simple and fun and will help you to build a strong team that works well together.

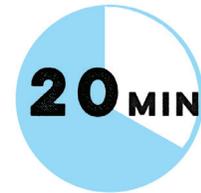


## INTRODUCTION

Each exercise in the Team Building Guide is organized in the following way:

### **TIME NEEDED**

It will tell you approximately how much time you will need to do the exercise.



### **INTRODUCTION**

This will give you and your group an overview of the value and goals of the exercise as well as at what stage of your team's development it might be best for.

### **WHAT YOU WILL NEED**

This section describes any materials, props or preparation needed.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

This section describes the steps or process you will use to do the exercise

The exercises are organized by theme, although none of them fit into hard and fast categories. Our hope is that you go through the guide step by step. Your group will have many opportunities to get to know each other, develop a sense of shared goals and responsibilities, express and share their leadership abilities and build a strong team.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	PURPOSEFUL AGING.....	5
II	GROUND RULES.....	11
III	GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER.....	15
IV	FINDING COMMON VALUES.....	23
V	COMMUNICATION.....	29
VI	LEADERSHIP.....	37
VII	TEAM BUILDING.....	39
VIII	STAYING ON TRACK.....	43
IX	CELEBRATION.....	45

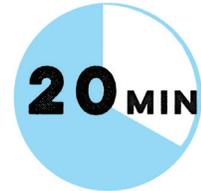
We hope that you enjoy the guide and that it helps you work together with as much effectiveness and enjoyment as possible!

# PURPOSEFUL AGING

## EXERCISE: UN-PACKING AGEISM

### TIME NEEDED

This exercise should take 15-20 minutes.



### INTRODUCTION

To begin your time together as a group of older adults it is important for people to get to know each other and to learn about how they feel about aging. This exercise is a facilitated conversation that gets people to talk about aging in our culture. People are living longer and are more healthy and active as they age. As older adults we are able to enjoy our lives and contribute to our communities in diverse and meaningful ways. The goal of the Self Directed Volunteer Team approach is to support older adults in finding their passion and providing enjoyable and productive ways to continue to grow, find meaning and give back to their community. We call this Purposeful Aging.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

You will need a facilitator to help your group get started and wrap things up.

Questions: Write the questions below on a board in the front of your room or on a piece of paper.

A white board, paper or flip book.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Set Up: Depending on the size of your group either have a whole group conversation or divide people into smaller groups. The facilitator can give one question to each group or have people come up front one at a time and pick a question out of a hat.

### QUESTIONS

Some of the questions we think are good for discussion are:

What is it like to get older in this society?

Do people feel valued?

Are they lonely?

Are they active?

Do they feel fulfilled? Wise?

Do they feel that their experience is valued?

What older person(s) did they admire when they were younger?

What did they admire about them?

Do they have connections with youth? In their family? Outside of their family?

What are those relationships like?

### CONCLUSION

Bring people together again to share their thoughts on the question(s) they discussed. See where people agree/disagree.

Thank everyone for sharing and developing some common ground.

# PURPOSEFUL AGING

## EXERCISE: RIVER OF LIFE



### TIME NEEDED

You may need about an hour: 10 minutes to have a group conversation about aging (see below); 15 minutes to fill out the River; 30 minutes to share with the large group

When To Do This Exercise: At the beginning of your time together



### INTRODUCTION

Here is an exercise to help you to reflect on your life, important events and the values and dreams that brought you here today. It involves drawing and is a nice alternative to using words for everything. Some people may feel that they are not “artistic” but assure them that their River will be a lovely expression of their life. This is a good exercise to do near the beginning of your time together.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

You will need someone to facilitate this process. Make a copy of the drawing for each person in your group. Give everyone a copy of the River of Life, a blank piece of paper and crayons and/or markers.

# PURPOSEFUL AGING

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## EXERCISE: RIVER OF LIFE

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pair people up and give each pair one of the example “Rivers of Life”. Have the pairs talk about them between themselves for about 5 minutes. Do the rivers tell a story about the people who filled them out? What did they learn about the creators of the rivers? Do they think that they understand something important about those people without ever meeting them?
2. Hand out a blank piece of paper, crayons, markers, pencils. This is for each person to draw the river that runs through their life. It can twist and turn, be rough or wide and smooth and it can change over time. Does your river run through the countryside or the city? Is it clear or churning? These are just some words to help prompt people to think about their lives in visual terms.
3. After about 10 minutes everyone should have made their river. Bring people together and ask for volunteers to come up front and share their River of Life. Ask as many as are willing to share. Hang the rivers up on the wall or take photos with people holding their river.
4. Ask the group to comment on the rivers. Are they different or similar? Are there themes that keep coming up? Have you learned things about each other that you did not know before?

*Draw your river of life*

## **PURPOSEFUL AGING**

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Where have you been?  
Where are you going?  
What kind of leader are you?

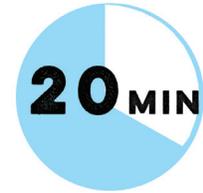
EXERCISE: RIVER OF LIFE

# GROUND RULES

## EXERCISE: GROUP NORMS

### TIME NEEDED

This exercise should take 15-20 minutes. Keep it practical, quick and positive. If there are strong disagreements about certain rules try to stay with it until you work it out and come to an agreement



### INTRODUCTION

Ground Rules are an important part of group process. Sometimes rules are set prior to people getting together by someone who is in charge. In our case we want to develop those rules as a group. By going through this process everyone will contribute to and understand all the rules. This will promote better group cohesion. The Ground Rules may help your group deal with conflicts as they work together over time

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

This requires a facilitator, handouts (on the next page) for each participant, writing implement, stickies and a large board where the facilitator has written out all the Rules.

### WHEN TO DO THIS EXERCISE

Choose the instructions that fit your group process.

(OPTION 1 OR OPTION 2)

It is good to do this exercise at the very beginning of your work building your team. It will give you a way to discuss HOW you want to work together and your group values/norms. You can do it again after you have been working for a while as a team. It will help your group discuss issues that may have come up without it being “personal”. Do rules need to be changed? Are there some additions needed? Are there certain people in the group that do not follow the rules? This exercise will help your group stay on track and develop a process that is mutually respectful!

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Hand out a copy of the Rules for each participant
2. Lead a discussion with the whole group about why Ground Rules are important. Have they ever been part of a group where the rules were unspoken? Or maybe where someone in charge kept changing the rules? How did that work out?

# GROUND RULES

## EXERCISE: GROUP NORMS

### OPTION 1

If you are meeting for the first time:

Go through the rules and see if anyone wants to add or delete any from the list. You will end up with a list of the rules from the page provided here plus some additions or deletions.

Tell the group that each person is going to rank the rules on the page in order of how important they feel they are. They can write a number next to each rule:

**1 for Most Important**

**2 for Important**

**3 for Not that Important**

Give people 3 minutes to rank their rules

Each person takes their stickies ( six stickies all together) and marks two with the number 1, two with the number 2 and two with the number 3

Each person comes up to the board and puts their #1, 2 & 3 stickies next to the Rules they ranked. No one should discuss it yet

Once everyone has had a chance to rank the rules, have people talk about what rules they ranked high and low. See how much agreement there is in the group. If there is a lot of agreement note that. If there is a lot of disagreement you will need to have a longer discussion about ways to bring the group to some consensus about the most important rules for the group.

### OPTION 2

If the team has been meeting for a while:

a. If the group is already functioning, have participants use stickies to rate how well they think the team is doing in keeping to the Ground Rules. Is there a rule that seems unimportant now? Are there rules that the group is ignoring? Why? Discussing the rules periodically will help keep your team from having conflicts.

b. Go through the same process as above with ranking the rules with stickies.

# GROUND RULES

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## EXERCISE: GROUP NORMS

1. Respect everyone's ideas.
2. Use "I" statements... [speak for yourself, not others]
3. What is said in this room, stays in this room.
4. Time is important; start on time, be on time, end on time.
5. Step up/step back...let everyone participate and have no one dominate.
6. Support each other's growth.
7. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. (there is no right or wrong!)
8. Practice teamwork; we will have a bigger impact together than we can alone.
9. Be vulnerable— do not be afraid to share your ideas, your doubts or your questions.
10. Do not be afraid to be frustrated or confused... This is all part of the process! Sometimes things take longer than you think they will.
11. Always practice empathy; work to understand the feelings and views of others, even if you disagree with them.
12. If you make a commitment to do something DO IT or let others know you can't.
13. Be fully present with each other, really listen.
14. Turn your cell phone on SILENT.
15. Other Ideas/Rules



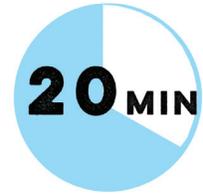
# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: MY HERO / HEROINE

This exercise requires planning and contact with participants a few days prior to the session.

### TIME NEEDED

This takes a while but is a powerful way to get to know about each other. You will need at least 20 minutes for the pairs to share with each other and then another 5 minutes per person to share back to the group. The facilitator needs to keep time and to try to keep people moving. They can also participate. Do this early in your time together building your team.



### INTRODUCTION

This session is called My Hero/Heroine. It is a process that is based on the idea that we can learn a lot about a person by the people that they respect and admire. Sometimes the people we consider our Heroes/ Heroines actually embody many of the qualities that we have or that we strive for but maybe we are unaware of those similarities. This is a powerful exercise that will help everyone get to know each other (and themselves) in some very meaningful ways.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

The facilitator plans this exercise a few days in advance.

Each participant is asked to bring in a photo of or an object that represents someone who has inspired them. This can be a personal acquaintance, a family member or a famous person.

People will also need a piece of paper and pencil/pen.

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: MY HERO / HEROINE

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Everyone has brought their photo or object to the session.
2. With photo/object in hand, pair everyone up with a partner.
3. Taking about 6-8 minutes each, both people share with their partner.

They should talk about why this person is their hero/heroine. What is it about this person that inspired you? Are there some essential qualities that you see? Was it compassion? Maybe it was bravery or creativity? Ask the speaker try to focus on the simplest way to describe the qualities of this person. Try to really focus on the core qualities and not the window dressing.

When you are the listener, listen carefully. When the narrator is finished you (the listener) should write 3 simple words that best describes what they have said. Keep them to yourself for now  
Reverse roles and repeat.

When both partners have finished telling their story and listening to the other person they should share the 3 words they wrote down with each other. Build in about 5-10 minutes for people to share and discuss in their pairs.

Now it is time to share with the full group - When everyone has done the exercise have a few people share their thoughts with the full group. What did it feel like? Did your hero/heroine share any qualities with your partner's hero/heroine? Are there common themes in your group? What did you learn about your partner? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about the full group?

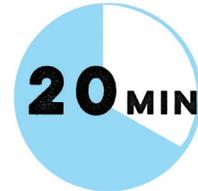
If people want, take photos of each person with the photo of their Hero/ Heroine.

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: LIFE BINGO

### TIME NEEDED

It should only take 15-20 minutes.



### INTRODUCTION

Life Bingo is a game that helps to break the ice, gets people out of their seats and is a fun way to get to know each other. It is good to do early in the group process. You can re make the Bingo sheet with any questions you want! Although a facilitator needs to prepare and explain the rules they can play too.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

A BINGO sheet for each person and a pencil/pen.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Hand out a Bingo Sheet to each participant. Make sure everyone has a pen/pencil.
2. Everyone stands up. Take your BINGO sheet and go around the room and ask the questions in the boxes until you find a person who agrees with a statement in a square. Put that person's name in the appropriate square.
3. Each participant can only sign your card once. So if I have Joe sign his name in the box, "I am a vegetarian" he cannot also sign my card for "I was born in another country."
4. You can only sign your card once.
5. Call out BINGO when you fill a row on your card (up/down/diagonal).
6. When you are done bring everyone back and talk about the experience. What did they learn about each other?

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: LIFE BINGO

I speak more than one language	I eat out most of the time	I go to a movie every week	I have more than 3 children	I have a cat
I want to make my community a better place	I live in the same neighborhood I did when I grew up	I have been part of a committee in the past year	My favorite color is GREEN	I was born in another country
My parents were born in another country	I have a dog	I have gone swimming in the past 6 months	I enjoy speaking in front of groups	I cook most of my own food
My favorite color is RED	I want a paying job	I am a vegetarian	I am a twin	I love to travel
I grew up on a farm	I live with a grandchild	I play a musical instrument	I go to the gym regularly	My neighborhood is better now than 10 years ago

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: BECOMING ME

### TIME NEEDED

You will need about 1/2 hour for this exercise.  
This exercise can be used at any time but is good for the early stages of your team building.



### INTRODUCTION

This is another exercise that will help people get to know each other and to highlight their unique qualities. It is also designed to help people strengthen their listening skills and to build deeper connections with each other.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

A facilitator.  
A copy of the Blue & Green charts for each person.  
Something to write with.

### INSTRUCTIONS

The Blue chart gives people a way to talk about the influences in their lives by themes:

Family/Mentors/Community/Friends  
Work/Education/Hobbies/Interests  
Faith/Values/Beliefs  
Socio-economics/Environment/Culture

The idea is to describe who you are by putting keywords into each segment of the circle. So if I was a teacher, that would go in the Work section. Learning might be a word that I would put into Values. We are creating a list of words that gives a snapshot of who we are.

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: BECOMING ME

### INSTRUCTIONS (cont'd)

1. Have each participant fill out the Blue chart on their own. Give everyone 5-7 minutes to do this
2. Pair everyone up.
3. Use the Blue chart tell your partner the story that is represented by the words you wrote on the Blue chart.
4. At the same time your partner has a Green chart. The Green chart is for your partner to write down words/ideas/qualities that they hear you talking about but you did not write down. What words and phrases are unique and special about the other person? The Green chart is what YOU see in them that they do not have said about themselves. Keep your Green chart to yourself for now
5. When both people are done sharing their Blue chart and have completed the Green chart they verbally share the Green chart with each other. What can you tell your partner about the qualities that they may not have been aware of?
6. When both people in the pair have finished, bring the group back together. Each person introduces their partner (not themselves) to the whole group by sharing the special qualities from the Green chart

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

## EXERCISE: BECOMING ME

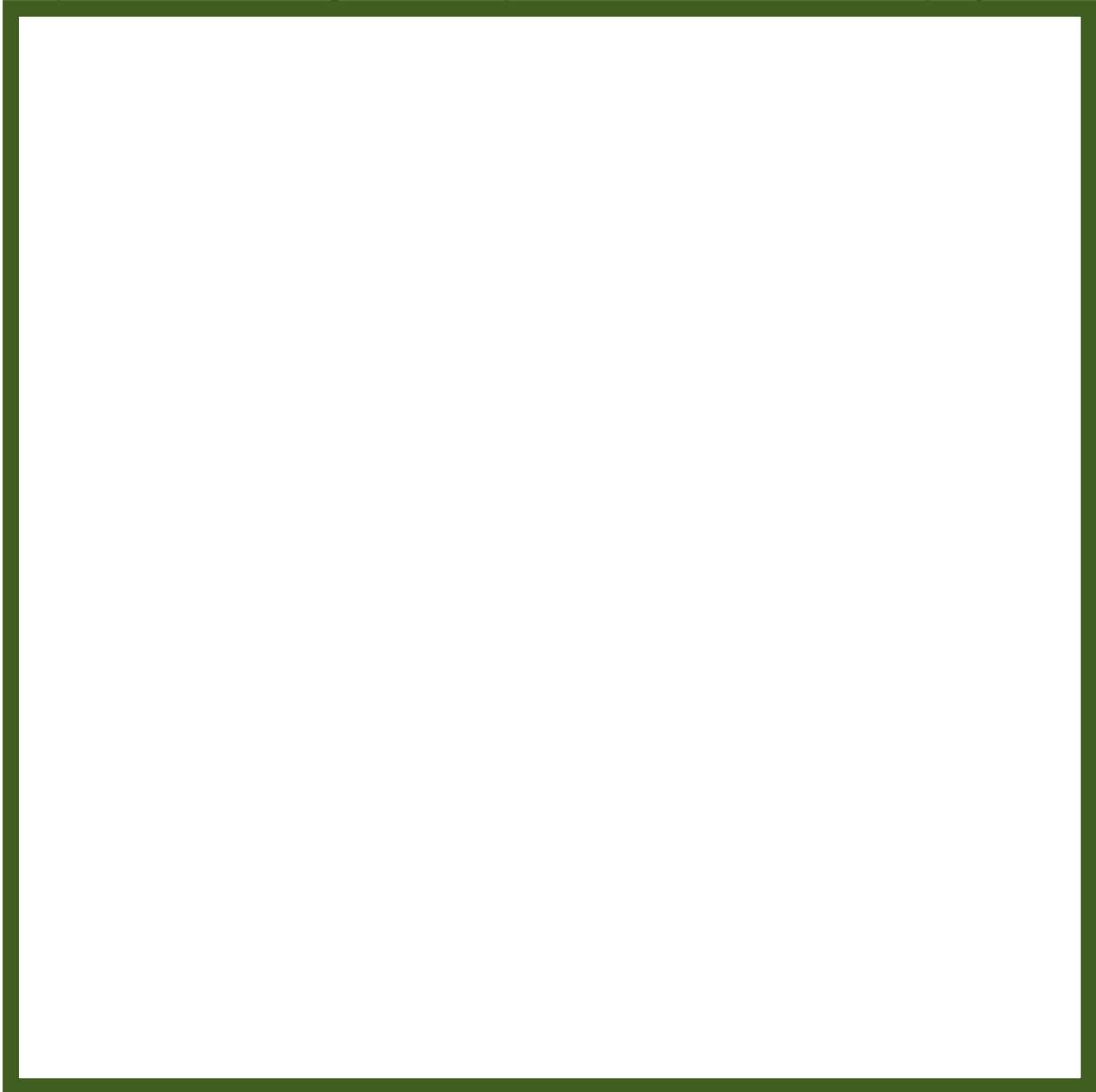


# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

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## EXERCISE: BECOMING ME

UNIQUE QUALITIES: What seems completely unique about this person? How might these qualities contribute to this project?

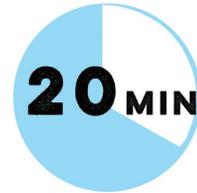


# FINDING COMMON VALUES

## EXERCISE: JUST ONE QUESTION

### TIME NEEDED

You will need about 20 minutes to do this exercise. It is best done after you have been working together for a little while.



### INTRODUCTION

This is an exercise that helps people focus on core questions. It is a way to uncover what is at the heart of a bigger issue. This exercise will help the group understand how to hone in on that core value and to communicate what is at the center of the work they are doing together.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Slips of paper and a bowl, hat or box:

Before you start you will need a list of “situations” written on slips of paper.

(see below for examples of the situations)

The facilitator can do this ahead of time or you can start the group session by brainstorming them as a group.

Write the situations on slips of paper and fold them up.

Put them in a box or bowl.

Provide some options: some funny, some important.

# FINDING COMMON VALUES

## EXERCISE: JUST ONE QUESTION

### INSTRUCTIONS

Take the list of “situations” that you have made up and put it into a bowl. They should be situations that people think are funny or important.

The facilitator picks a situation from the bowl. Examples include: babysitting, leading the team, being married/in a long term relationship, having a dog. Use one situation for the entire group.

Pair up participants and pose this question: “If you could ask just one question to discover a person’s suitability for the situation that was chosen, what would your question be? Say the situation was “babysitting”. That means that each team would come up with just one question that would help them discover whether or not someone was suitable to babysit their child.

The pairs have to find one question they both agree is the best single question.

Everyone comes back together and shares their one question. The group talks about the questions people came up with, which are the best and whether it was easy or hard to come up with just one question!

# FINDING COMMON VALUES

## EXERCISE: RATING YOUR VALUES

### TIME NEEDED

It should take 20-30 minutes.

It is good to do this after you have been working together for a while.



### INTRODUCTION

This is another exercise that will help your group to clarify its goals and values. It also helps people to articulate what they believe in and why they think it is important.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1. a copy of the list below for each person and
2. a pencil/pen board to write on or stickies
3. a board to write on

# FINDING COMMON VALUES

## EXERCISE: RATING YOUR VALUES

### INSTRUCTIONS

Hand out the list to each participant.

Each person selects the 4 things they value the most and marks them: 4-5 minutes

Everyone pairs up. Give your list to your partner who reviews your choices, 2 minutes

Begin to bargain...each pair has 5 minutes to select 2 values total (that's one from each person) from their lists that they agree are **THE MOST IMPORTANT.**

Then they come up in front of the group to say how they came to agree that these are the most important. They write their values on a board or use a stickie to post it up front.

See if there are common values or very different ones.

See if there are any real conflicts in values.

What might this mean about your group and about how it works together?

Can all the values chosen support each other? How?

# FINDING COMMON VALUES

## EXERCISE: RATING YOUR VALUES

Accountability	Efficiency	Inquisitiveness	Resourcefulness
Accuracy	Elegance	Insightfulness	Restraint
Achievement	Empathy	Intelligence	Results-oriented
Adventurousness	Enjoyment	Intellectual Status	Rigor
Altruism	Enthusiasm	Intuition	Security
Ambition	Equality	Joy	Self-actualization
Assertiveness	Efficiency	Justice	Self-control
Balance	Elegance	Leadership	Selflessness
Being the best	Empathy	Legacy	Self-reliance
Belonging	Enjoyment	Lifelong Learning	Sensitivity
Boldness	Enthusiasm	Love	Serenity
Calmness	Equality	Loyalty	Service
Carefulness	Excellence	Making a difference	Shrewdness
Challenge	Excitement	Mastery	Simplicity
Cheerfulness	Expertise	Merit	Soundness
Clear-mindedness	Exploration	Obedience	Speed
Commitment	Expressiveness	Openness	Spontaneity
Community	Fairness	Order	Stability
Compassion	Faith	Originality	Strategic
Competitiveness	Family-oriented	Patriotism	Strength
Consistency	Fidelity	Justice	Structure
Contentment	Fitness	Leadership	Success
Contribution	Fluency	Legacy	Support
Control	Focus	Love	Teamwork
Cooperation	Freedom	Loyalty	Temperance
Correctness	Fun	Making a difference	Thankfulness
Courtesy	Generosity	Mastery	Thoroughness
Creativity	Goodness	Merit	Thoughtfulness
Curiosity	Grace	Obedience	Timeliness
Decisiveness	Growth	Openness	Tolerance
Democratic	Happiness	Order	Traditionalism
Dependability	Hard Work	Originality	Trustworthiness
Determination	Health	Patriotism Perfection	Truth-seeking
Devoutness	Helping Society	Piety	Understanding
Diligence	Holiness	Positivity	Uniqueness
Discipline	Honesty	Practicality	Unity
Discretion	Honor	Preparedness	Usefulness
Diversity	Humility	Professionalism	Vision
Dynamism	Independence	Prudence	Vitality
Economy	Ingenuity	Quality-orientation	Wholesomeness
Effectiveness	Inner Harmony	Reliability	Zest for Life

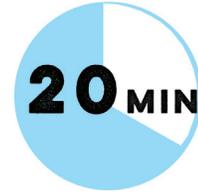


# COMMUNICATION

## EXERCISE: WHAT I BELIEVE

### TIME NEEDED

You will need about 15-20 minutes. It is best to do this exercise after you have been working together for awhile.



### INTRODUCTION

This is an exercise that gives people the opportunity to decide on a value they believe in and to come up with a communication strategy that tells others why they think it is very important.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

If you can prepare for this exercise ahead of time you can ask people to bring in quotes that they find particularly meaningful. You can add them to this list, just use them or just use this list.

You will need a copy of the list below for each person or write the statements on a board up front.

People will need a pencil/pen.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide people up into small groups of 3-4 people. Give each group one of the statements below or use your own quotes.
2. Give the groups a few minutes to talk about the significance of their statement. Why is it important? What does it mean to you? How is it relevant to the work you are doing?

### INSTRUCTIONS (cont'd)

3. Assign one person from each group to be the spokesperson for their groups thoughts/feeling about the importance of the statement

4. Ask the spokesperson from each group to stand in front, read their quote and tell the full group WHY it is the most important statement.

5. After each group has presented their quote have the group vote on which quote they now think is the most important. It may be that the quote they think is most important has as much to do with the way it is presented as the quote itself. Talk about this with the full group.

### SOME QUOTES

a. "What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." — Jane Goodall

b. "Step out of the history that is holding you back. Step into the new story you are willing to create." — Oprah Winfrey

c. "When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." — Malala Yousafzai

d. "The critical question is not what I can achieve but rather what can I contribute." – Peter Drucker

e. "Well done is better than well said." Benjamin Franklin

# COMMUNICATION

## EXERCISE: WHAT I BELIEVE

### TIME NEEDED

This exercise will take 15-20 minutes.



### INTRODUCTION

This is an exercise that helps to strengthen interpersonal communication. Rather than a group presentation, here we are working to help people develop more clear ways to give and take instructions, understand details and translate those instructions into action. It is good to do this exercise once people are starting to do their project together.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

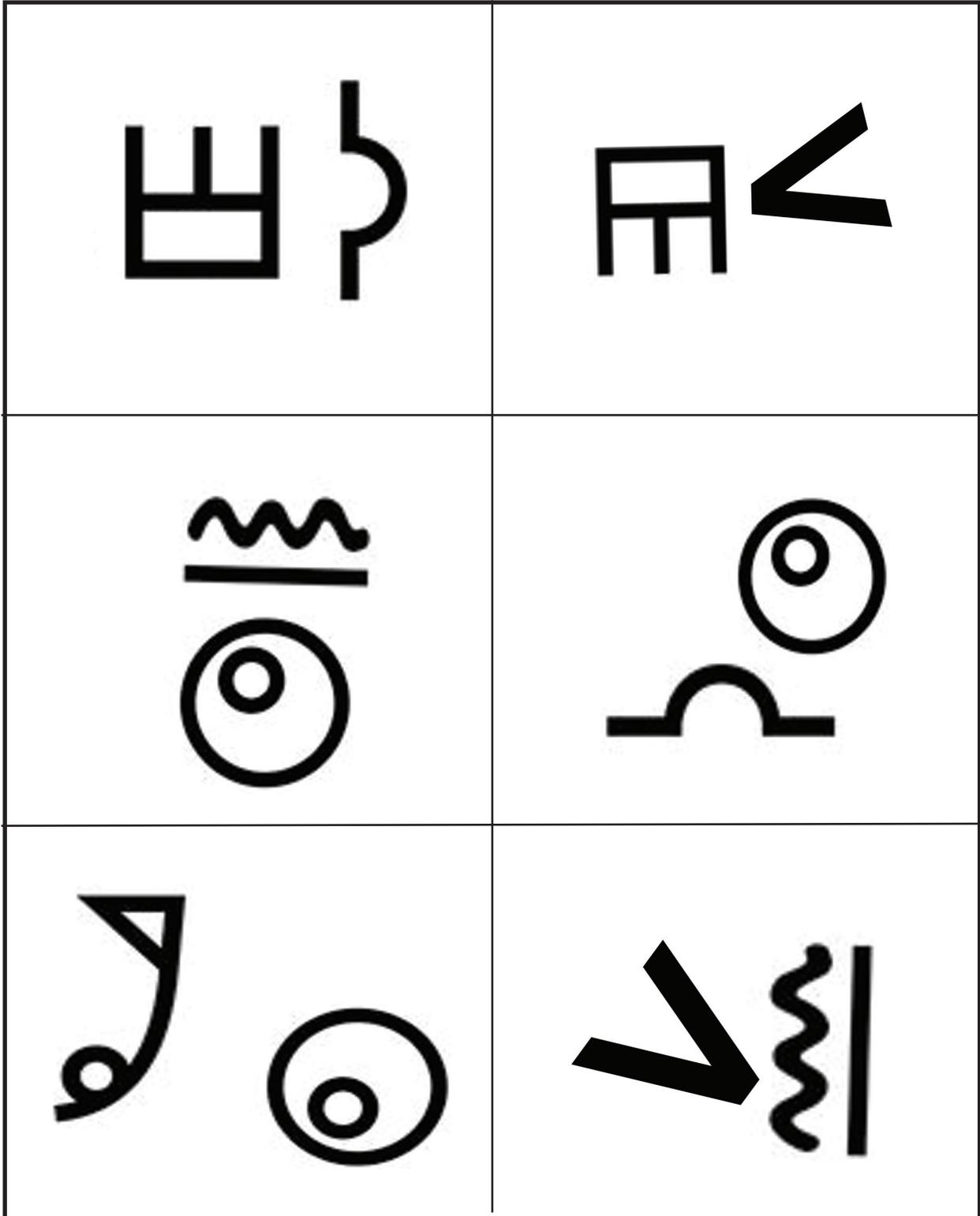
For each pair you will need: a copy of the drawings below, a piece of blank paper and a pencil/pen.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. The facilitator should cut each box containing shapes in preparation for the session
2. Pair people up. Have them sit back to back.
3. Give a cutout drawing to ONE PERSON in each pair. Do not let the other person see it. One person gets a picture of the shape and the other gets a blank piece of paper and pen.
4. The person with the cut out gives verbal instructions to their partner on how to draw the shape.
5. After 3-5 minutes, have each set of partners compare their images and see which team drew the most accurate replica of the drawing.
6. If you have time, reverse the participants and do it again with a new cut out.

# COMMUNICATION

## EXERCISE: CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS



# COMMUNICATION

## EXERCISE: THE STORY OF YOUR PROJECT

### TIME NEEDED

This exercise should only take about half an hour.



### INTRODUCTION

This is an exercise that helps your team develop a fun and powerful story about the project they are working on. It should be done once your participants have decided what they are working on and have done a bit of brainstorming on how it is going to develop. This exercise will help them to understand not only what they want to do but what impact they want it to have.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

You will need a copy of The Story Frame, some blank paper for each person and a pencil/pen

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Break the large group into small groups of at least 3 people.
2. Hand out a copy of the Story Frame for each small group along with paper and writing implements.

## EXERCISE: THE STORY OF YOUR PROJECT

### INSTRUCTIONS (cont'd)

3. Using the Story Frame as a guide. Ask each small group to write down their “story” using the statement in the Frame. Have the discussion be as fun and creative as possible. So for example, if a group was doing a food security project they might say:

“**Once Upon a Time** there were children in our neighborhood who went to school hungry. **And Every Day** they had a hard time concentrating in school. **Until One Day** the Veggie Van started parking outside their school entrance **and Because of That** kids were able to pick up a pack of food on their way into school. **Because of that** they not only got to eat something but the food was healthy and gave them the ability to focus on their classes. **Because of That** they started getting better grades. **Until Finally** the school took over the Veggie Van and everyone in the school started eating better and they were happier and enjoyed being at school. **And Ever Since That Day** the school has become the best school in the neighborhood and all the other schools want the Veggie Van to come to them too”

...Get it?

4. Once each group has completed their story one person from each group shares it with the whole group

# COMMUNICATION

## EXERCISE: THE STORY OF YOUR PROJECT

### THE STORY FRAME

In your group, discuss the ways that your project and the Big Idea for your work can be translated into a story...a story like you might have read in a book when you were a child.

This is the kind of framework that all good authors/filmmakers use to create a compelling story.

1. Once upon a time there was a...
2. And every day...
3. Until one day...
4. And because of that...
5. And because of that...
6. And because of that...
7. Until finally...
8. And ever since that day...



# LEADERSHIP

## EXERCISE: YOUR EXCELLENCE

### TIME NEEDED

This exercise will take about 20-30 minutes or so depending on the size of your group.

This exercise should be done after the group has gelled a bit and they are beginning to work on their project.



### INTRODUCTION

This is an exercise that helps people to see that different people excel at different skills and, that all of those abilities are part of being a good leader. No one person has all the skills and abilities that are needed to make a project move forward, it is a group process. This exercise helps people highlight what they are excellent at and the ways that their abilities are part of a strong team.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

You will need a large version of this list up in front of the group. Each person needs a piece of paper and a pencil/pen.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Each person picks one quality from the list that they feel they are best at.
2. Each person writes some notes about why they think they are the best at that quality. This should take about 5 minutes.
3. Each person tells the group how they excel at it. The group can discuss, ask questions or make suggestions.
4. Discuss the different/similar abilities that exist in the group. What tasks might be best for people with differing skills? Is the group “heavy” in one set of skills and “light” in another? What might this mean for working together?

# LEADERSHIP

## EXERCISE: YOUR EXCELLENCE

**EMPATHY** The ability to accurately recognize and understand another person's emotional state and use that understanding to influence your actions and the actions of those around you.


**FACILITATION** The ability to lead by creating opportunities for others to step up and exercise leadership.


**COLLABORATION** The ability to work effectively with peers from different groups/abilities/backgrounds & across different specializations.


**CONSENSUS BUILDING:**The ability to find common themes or ideas amongst people who have differences.


**CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING:** The ability to analyze problems & implement creative solutions.


# TEAM BUILDING

## EXERCISE: SEQUENCING

### TIME NEEDED

The exercise can be done at any time and will take at least 30 minutes.



### INTRODUCTION

This is a fun exercise that requires people to get up out of their seats and work together to create logical story line. This activity requires the wordless, picture book entitled, “Zoom” by Istvan Banyai. This book is made up of 30 sequential pictures that work together to form a narrative. The goal is to put the pictures back in the correct order.

Although there is a “right answer” ( the book is laid out in a particular order) there are many logical ways to have the sequence make sense and your group will probably have their own rationale as to how and why the story progresses the way it does.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

This exercise will need someone from the group to facilitate.

You will need 2 copies of the book ZOOM.

One of them has been taken apart and the pictures laminated to prolong their usage.

The other book stays intact with the facilitator.

### INSTRUCTIONS

The facilitator mixes up the pages of the book and gives one page to each participant. If you do not have 30 people in your group, give out multiple pages until they are all handed out.

Give everyone a few minutes to study their pictures because each picture contains important information that will help them solve the problem of putting them back into order.

Depending on your group and the time you have available you can use one of these instructions:

1. Explain that they can only look at their own pictures and must keep their pictures hidden from other participants.
2. Without sharing the pictures everyone can talk with each other about what is featured in their picture, trying to figure out what order they should be placed in.
3. The goal is for the each person in the group to place the pictures in the right order to tell the book's story

OR

1. Participants can look at all the pictures
2. As a group they decide what the correct order is of the pages
3. The goal is to place the pages in the correct order

The facilitator asks the group to take a look at how they did. Discuss their reasoning. Did they miss any clues? Did they put them in the same order as the book? How do they make sense of their "story"? How is it different than the original?

# TEAM BUILDING

## EXERCISE: THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

### TIME NEEDED

It will take approximately 20-30 minutes



### INTRODUCTION

This is a fun session that will help people to work together, create consensus and develop problem solving strategies. It takes a bit more preparation than other sessions but is worth it!

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

For each small group of 3-4 people you will need:

A marshmallow, 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string for each group.

A table for each group to work at.

Also have one computer with internet access to watch the TED talk at the end of the exercise.

# TEAM BUILDING

## EXERCISE: THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

### INSTRUCTIONS

The idea is to build the tallest tower possible with the materials you have been given.

1. Give each team their materials.
2. Give each team these instructions: in fifteen minutes, your team must build the tallest, free-standing structure you can out of the materials provided. The marshmallow needs to be on top. The tallest one wins.
3. After folks have finished watch the TED Talk below:  
Build a Tower, Build a Team by Tom Wujec: [shorturl.at/kwRTW](http://shorturl.at/kwRTW)
4. Have a discussion of what they learned from the exercise and from the TED talk.

# STAYING ON TRACK

## EXERCISE: CRITICAL FRIENDS

### TIME NEEDED

Depending on the size of your group, set aside an hour or more.

It should take about 12-15 minutes per person/subject of the circle.



### INTRODUCTION

This is a really powerful exercise that helps people discuss challenges in effective and concrete ways. It helps people say things that might otherwise seem personal and therefore make people feel uncomfortable. This is a great exercise to help the group take a look at and solve roadblocks or challenges it is facing. It does require a certain level of trust so use it after the group has gelled a bit.

It also requires the facilitator to insure that people are respectful of how they speak and of timing. It is good to do this regularly after the group has been working together for a while. Some organizations do this exercise monthly to help prevent issues from building up and breaking down communication.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

All you need is a quiet room with no distractions and chairs for everyone. Some paper cut into small pieces, pencils, a bowl/hat/box to put the papers in.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Chairs are in a circle with 2 empty chairs in the middle.
2. Everyone writes a few challenges the group is facing with its work on small pieces of paper. One idea per paper. This should take 2-3 minutes.
3. Place the papers in a bowl.
4. 2 people volunteer to have a discussion, they sit in the middle of the circle .
5. One of them pulls a challenge from the bowl, reads it to the other person. They have a timed, 5 minute conversation with each other about the issue and what could be done to fix it/make improvements. Those in the outer circle listen quietly. The outer circle cannot say anything during this stage of the session.
6. When the 2 have finished their discussion, the rest of the group can ask a few clarifying questions if needed. Then they discuss what the pair had to say. Now the people in the middle of the circle must be totally silent. They write down some of the suggestions made by the people in the outer circle. This takes 10 minutes
7. The people in the center then reply to the suggestions and select 2-3 ideas they think are the most valuable.
8. The whole group then decides how to implement those ideas.
9. The process can be done again with 2 new people inside the circle.

# CELEBRATION

## EXERCISE: CONVERSATION CARDS

### TIME NEEDED

This exercise can take 15-30 min depending on the number of cards you want to play with.



### INTRODUCTION

It is important that we celebrate our work together and milestones in our personal lives. Make sure you have conversations about how and when to do this. See the celebration questions for some conversation starters about this topic.

These questions are here to provide you with a tool that can be used in many situations. They are organized by color (mimicking the categories in this Guide) with each color representing a different topic. They can be used under many different circumstances and require very little preparation. So, if you want to have an “ice breaker” exercise you can have people paired up and pick a question. They can talk with each other by talking about their response to the question. If you want to help people get to know each other better you can use the questions. If you bring youth or other community members into your program/Team you can use the questions.

### INSTRUCTIONS

There is no right or wrong way to use the conversation cards. The only rule is to have people really listen to each other.

Other than that, the sky's the limit!

## **PURPOSEFUL AGING**

How would you describe the stage of life you are in right now?

What do I want out of life now?

How can I achieve the life I want now?

How would you like to be remembered?

What goals do you have for the next 10 years of your life?

What makes you feel valued?

What is your purpose?

What is your unique GIFT?

What is the most important thing you have learned in your life?

What are 3 things in your life you would like to change?

Are older adults valued in this community? Please share ways they are/are not

What are your goals for this stage of your life? How does this project fit in?

## **GROUND RULES**

What 3 ground rules do you think are most important for working together as a group?

How can problems be addressed when people do not honor the ground rules?

How do you know when there need to be some new ground rules added?

Who is responsible for enforcing Ground Rules?

What kind of support/training do people need to be better at sticking to Ground Rules?

What happens if there are no Ground Rules?

## GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

What is your name and why is it important to you?  
What key parts of your heritage do you carry with you?  
What aspect/value of your upbringing have you left behind?  
Where did you grow up and what important memories can you share about your early life?  
Who is your HERO and why?  
If you could do whatever you wanted to do, what would that be?  
When you feel blue, what keeps you going?  
What do your good friends know about you that others don't see?

## FINDING COMMON VALUES

What are you most proud of?  
If you had a million dollars how would you make your community a better place?  
What do you think your purpose is?  
What is the hardest thing you have ever done?  
What "issue" do you really care about and why?  
What gets you up in the morning?  
What can older adults do to make their community better?

## LEADERSHIP

Do you see yourself as a leader? Why or why not?  
What do you think makes a good leader? Which of those qualities do you share?  
What is the hardest thing about being a leader?  
What leader do you look up to and why?  
What is the connection between flexibility and leadership?  
What are 3 qualities of a good leader and why are they important?  
Please share a time that your leadership made a difference?  
How has your leadership style changed over time?  
How do you know if a leader is doing a good job?

## TEAM BUILDING

Can you share an example of a team you have been on and what was important to you about it?

Do you like working in teams? If so please explain. If not please explain  
What do you think a team is capable of?

Would you rather work alone or on a team and why?

What are the qualities of a team that helps them to work well together?

What is the hardest part of working in a team?

What 3 qualities do you bring to teamwork?

What are some ideas to help new team members feel included?

How can we honor everyone's contribution to a team?

Are team members different from friends? Please explain

What is the role of communication in teamwork?

What happens when there are barriers to good communication in teams?

Can you share 3 strategies to keep teams working well?

## STAYING ON TRACK

Is it important in this work to set goals? Why or Why not?

What are your personal goals in being on this Team?(such as making new friends, being more active)

What do you hope to achieve in this work? (such as helping kids learn better or feeding hungry people)

Do you think that it is important for your group to share the same goal/s?  
Please explain.

What would happen if your group does not share goals?

How can your group identify goals and stay focused on those goals?

How would you know if the goals of this group changed?

How do/can your personal goals support your project goals?

What are the biggest challenges you think you will face doing this work?

How can your team stay on track?

What are some ideas about strategies to keep your group on track?

# CELEBRATION



What kinds of events do you think your group should celebrate and why?

Do you think it is important to celebrate your group members and your work? Could you explain why it is/is not important?

What are some suggestions you have about ways to celebrate your work and other participants?

What happens if you do not celebrate your group members? What happens if you do not celebrate your work/project?

How can you find out what kind of celebration your community would most enjoy?

How will you best reach/ communicate your celebration to your community?

How will you follow up with your community after the celebration is over to stay in touch and get feedback?



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[www.unhny.org](http://www.unhny.org)

