



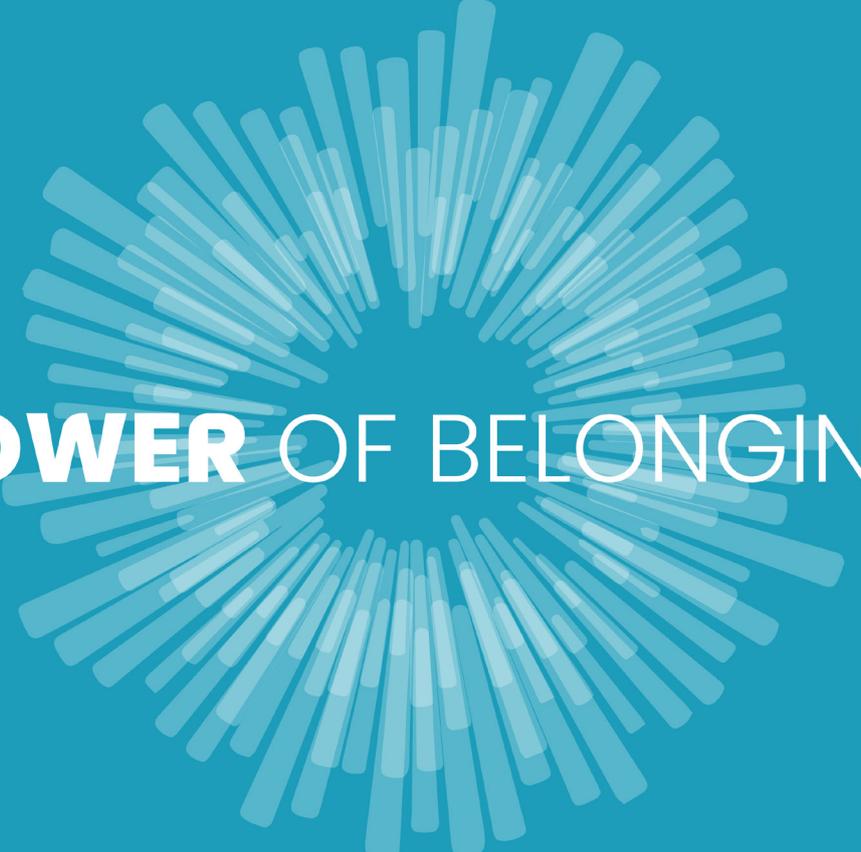
POWER

OF BELONGING

A mindfulness-based toolkit for youth work and community building

Expression with dignity, grounded in equity





POWER OF BELONGING

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Introduction to methodology

01 Why?

In today's world, young people, particularly young women with migrant and refugee backgrounds, face unique challenges. **Social inequality, limited access to education, and the complexities of integration often leave them feeling isolated and disempowered.** Mental health issues, compounded by these struggles, further hinder their ability to participate fully in their personal and professional life. **Addressing these barriers is critical for fostering inclusion, equity, and empowerment.**

The “Power of Belonging” methodology was born out of the **need to provide tools that build self-awareness, emotional resilience, and mindfulness among young people.** By nurturing a sense of belonging, we empower individuals to confidently navigate their lives, overcome challenges, and take their place as leaders and contributors within their communities.

02 What?

This methodology is a structured approach **to creating a safe space for self-discovery, mindfulness practices, and personal growth.**

It integrates mindfulness, self-awareness, and storytelling techniques to support individuals in understanding and reshaping their internal narratives. By fostering belonging as both a tool and an outcome, the methodology addresses the root causes of social and emotional barriers. **It is designed to be practical and adaptable**, providing youth workers with a powerful framework they can implement in diverse settings.

The necessity for such initiatives is underscored by global and regional statistics:

According to the World Health Organization, **over 25% of young adults experience mental health challenges annually**, with women being disproportionately affected.

A European Commission report **highlights that women with migrant or refugee backgrounds face unemployment** rates double that of non-migrant peers.

Research has shown that individuals with a strong sense of belonging are **22% more likely to achieve personal and professional goals and 32% less likely to experience severe mental health issues**.

03 Why belonging as a tool for empowerment?

Belonging is fundamental to human well-being and development. **When individuals feel connected and accepted, they are more likely to engage positively with others, pursue their goals, and contribute to their communities.**

For marginalized groups, such as young women with migrant backgrounds, **belonging is not just a psychological need—it is a tool for empowerment.** By fostering belonging, this methodology helps participants see themselves as valued and capable, enabling them to reclaim agency over their lives.



Why mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a proven practice for **building self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience**. By focusing attention on the present moment without judgment, individuals can develop clarity, reduce stress, and foster deeper connections with themselves and others. In the context of this methodology, mindfulness serves as the foundation for **creating safe spaces where individuals can explore their identities, address their challenges, and build the confidence needed to thrive**.

The “Power of Belonging” methodology offers a transformative framework that **combines mindfulness and belonging to empower young people**. By addressing both mental and social well-being, it not only supports individuals but also contributes to the broader goals of equity, inclusion.



How to use this methodology

This methodology is designed as a flexible and practical resource for youth workers, educators, and facilitators working with young people, especially those with migrant or refugee backgrounds. It combines essential theoretical foundations with a wide range of adaptable methods for use in workshops and training sessions.

To use this methodology effectively:

1. Familiarize yourself with the theory

Begin by reviewing the core theoretical sections on migration and refugee experiences, community building, youth worker competencies, and the role of mindfulness. For deeper understanding, consult the references provided at the end of the toolkit.

2. Identify your objectives and target group

Consider the specific needs, backgrounds, and learning goals of your group. Whether you’re focusing on integration, empowerment, or emo-

tional wellbeing, the toolkit offers adaptable tools to match your context. Use the keywords search in the end for the better navigation.

3. Select the methods that best suit your session's flow and desired outcomes.

This toolkit includes around 27 methods, categorized by:

Workshop position – icebreakers, main activities, reflection, or closing

Themes – awareness practices, community building practices, empowerment practices

4. Adapt as needed

Each method is designed to be flexible. Feel free to modify the duration, format, or language to fit your group's dynamics and cultural context.

5. Facilitate with intention

Mindfulness is not only a topic but a recommended facilitation approach. Stay present, inclusive, and responsive throughout the process, fostering a safe space for expression and connection.

6. Reflect and build on it

After the session, evaluate what worked well and what could be improved. The toolkit encourages continuous use and can support ongoing personal and group development.



Things to be aware of

When working with young people, especially those with migration or refugee backgrounds, it's essential to create a safe, respectful, and supportive environment. This toolkit includes **Remarks or Sensitive Moments** at the end of each method to help you prepare for potential challenges and navigate emotional or complex topics with care. Please read these notes carefully before facilitating. Check the guidelines for creating a safe space and hold space with care, listen with intention, and let this toolkit be your guide in fostering connection, safety, and transformation.

only

01 Theory of Migration

Migration is about people moving from one place to another—whether within their own country or across international borders. While experts define migration in different ways, the United Nations considers someone a long-term migrant when they live outside their home country for at least a year.

The Five Phases of Our Migration Journey

Psychologist Carlos E. Sluzki described migration as a deeply human experience with five distinct phases that unfold over time:

1. Preparing to Leave

When we decide to leave our home, it's often driven by powerful needs—escaping danger or seeking better opportunities for ourselves and our loved ones. This time involves practical planning but also emotional goodbyes to family, friends, and familiar places. Whether we're conscious of it or not, our sense of purpose—survival, fulfilling family dreams, or creating new possibilities—shapes our feelings and decisions during this difficult time.

2. The Journey Itself

The path to a new country can be long and challenging. We might face dangerous situations, difficult border crossings, fear, and sometimes humiliation. But many of us also experience unexpected kindness and support from strangers along the way. These mixed experiences profoundly affect how we feel when we finally arrive.

3. First Steps in a New Land (1-2 years)

In our first couple of years, we're focused on making it work and proving our decision was worthwhile. We often push aside negative feelings, accept compro-

mises, and show curiosity about our new surroundings. Though we might be in a state of shock, both we and the local community typically show greater patience during this time. We start noticing physical and cultural differences more clearly—from climate to social customs—and begin the process of adjusting.

4. Seeking Connection (2-3 years)

Once basic survival isn't our main concern anymore, we naturally start looking for connection and belonging. We want friendships, meaningful work, and community. This is often when we reconnect with our original values and may experience tensions between our home culture and the new one. If our social needs aren't met, frustration can grow into cultural misunderstandings. Community mediators can play a vital role in building bridges during this critical time.

5. Finding Balance and Belonging

True adaptation happens when we find a balanced way to integrate—keeping our cultural identity while embracing aspects of our new home. When there's mutual understanding, we can feel at home, achieve stability, and build peaceful lives. This balance is the heart of genuine integration.

Understanding these phases helps everyone—newcomers, community members, social workers, and policymakers—recognize the emotional, psychological, and social challenges of migration. With this awareness, we can create better support systems and foster smoother adaptation for migrants and their families, building stronger communities together.

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02

Theory about refugees

The Reality of Refugees, with a Focus on Women and Ukrainian Refugees

Theoretical Perspectives on Forced Displacement

Forced migration and refugee displacement have been widely studied within sociology, political science, psychology, and humanitarian studies. The refugee crisis is not only a humanitarian issue but also a structural and systemic challenge that involves political governance, international law, and socio-economic integration. Several theoretical frameworks help explain the challenges and experiences of refugees:

01. The Push-Pull Theory of Migration (Lee, 1966):

This theory explains forced migration in terms of push factors (e.g., war, persecution, economic instability) and pull factors (e.g., safety, employment opportunities, social networks in host countries).

Refugee women often face gender-specific push factors, such as gender-based violence, lack of rights, or forced marriages in their home countries.

02. Human Security Framework (UNDP, 1994):

Defines security beyond just military protection, including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security.

For refugee women, the lack of personal and economic security significantly impacts their well-being, limiting their autonomy and integration.

03. Intersectionality and Gendered Migration (Crenshaw, 1989):

Highlights how multiple identities (gender, ethnicity, legal status, socioeconomic class) intersect, creating unique vulnerabilities for refugee women.

Women fleeing conflict zones face double discrimination—as migrants/refugees and as women, increasing their risk of exploitation and marginalization.greater patience during this time. We start noticing physical and cultural differences more clearly—from climate to social customs—and begin the process of adjusting.

04. The Theory of Acculturation (Berry, 1997):

Describes how migrants adapt to new cultures through assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization.

Many refugee women struggle to integrate due to language barriers, cultural expectations, and socio-economic disadvantages, often leading to social isolation and dependency.

These theories provide a foundation for understanding why refugees flee, how they experience displacement, and what barriers they face in rebuilding their lives.

Global Refugee Crisis: Key Statistics and Realities

As of the end of 2023, an estimated 117.3 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution, violence, and human rights violations. Refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) represent one of the most vulnerable groups globally.

Children and Women at the Forefront: Around 47 million displaced individuals (40%) are children under 18. Due to gendered displacement patterns, refugee populations often consist predominantly of women and children.

Host Countries: 75% of refugees are hosted in low- and middle-income countries, with 20% in the least developed countries. The largest refugee-hosting nations include Iran (3.4 million), Türkiye (3.4 million), and Germany (2.5 million).

Major Challenges Faced by Refugees

Refugees face multiple barriers throughout their displacement journey, including:
Legal and Economic Uncertainty: Many struggle with lack of documentation, limited access to legal employment, and economic instability.

Health and Well-being: Poor living conditions, lack of adequate healthcare, and exposure to trauma exacerbate health issues, both physically and mentally.

Social Isolation and Integration: Language barriers, discrimination, and cultural differences often prevent meaningful integration into host societies.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Refugee women are at a heightened risk of exploitation, trafficking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence, both in transit and within refugee settlements.

Specific Challenges for Refugee Women

Women refugees face distinct vulnerabilities that require gender-sensitive policies and interventions:

- **Increased Exposure to Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Many have experienced sexual violence, forced marriages, or trafficking before, during, or after their displacement. Women in camps or urban settings often face unsafe conditions due to inadequate legal protections.
- **Limited Access to Healthcare:** Refugee women, particularly pregnant women and new mothers, often struggle to access maternal healthcare and reproductive services.
- **Caretaking Burdens:** Many flee with children, elderly relatives, or disabled family members, shouldering significant responsibilities without adequate support.
- **Barriers to Education and Employment:** Displaced women face higher unemployment rates, lower wages, and limited access to education, which further restricts their opportunities for economic independence.

Mental Health and Trauma Among Refugee Women

Refugee women are significantly more likely to develop mental health disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety due to their experiences of war, violence, and displacement. Studies indicate:

- PTSD rates among refugee populations range from 4% to 86%, with women more likely to suffer from severe symptoms.
- Limited access to mental health services, stigma, and cultural barriers prevent many from receiving proper psychological support.

The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: Women at the Forefront

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has led to one of the largest refugee crises in modern history, with more than 8 million Ukrainians fleeing their homeland.

Women and children constitute up to 90% of Ukrainian refugees, as martial law prevents most men from leaving the country.

Unique Challenges for Ukrainian Refugee Women:

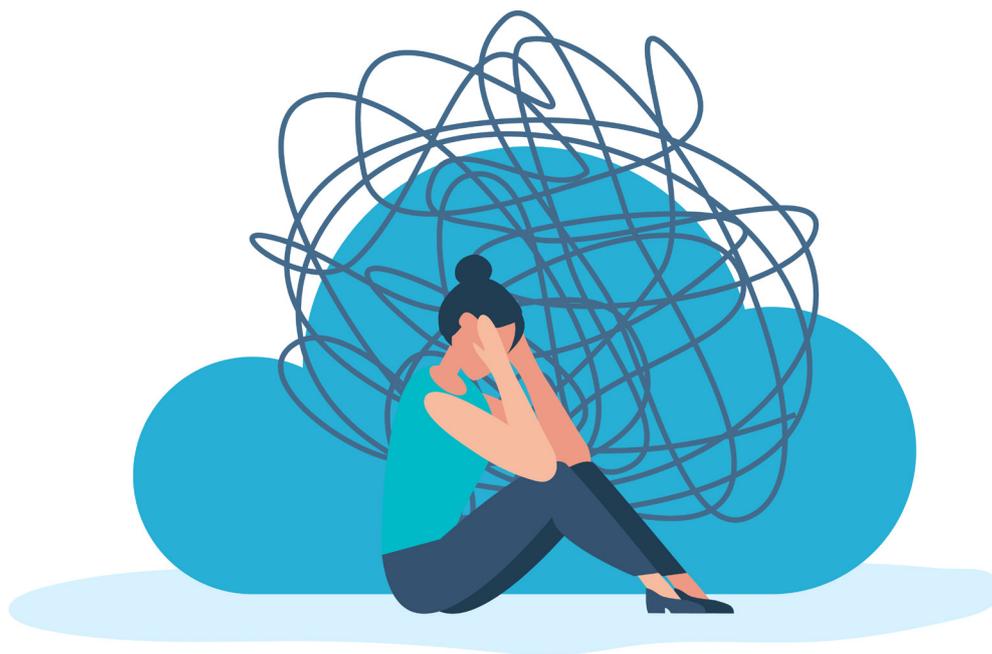
- **Legal and Labor Market Barriers:** Despite temporary protection policies in many host countries, Ukrainian women face language barriers, childcare difficulties, and employment restrictions.
- **Housing and Financial Instability:** Many rely on short-term accommodations, and as free housing programs end, vulnerable families are forced into overcrowded collective shelters.

- **Healthcare Access:** While Ukrainian refugees have access to healthcare services in many host countries, delays, bureaucracy, and language barriers hinder effective treatment.
 - **Mental Health and Trauma:** Prolonged uncertainty, separation from family, and the trauma of war have led to increasing cases of stress, PTSD, and depression among Ukrainian women.
 - **Gender-Based Violence and Exploitation:** Reports indicate a rise in human trafficking and sexual exploitation targeting Ukrainian refugee women.
- Sensitivity Considerations When Addressing Refugee Issues**

When working with refugee populations, especially women, it is crucial to adopt a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approach:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Recognize and respect different cultural backgrounds and social norms without imposing external views.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Acknowledge that many refugees have experienced severe trauma, and avoid re-traumatizing individuals during interventions.
- **Empowerment-Based Approaches:** Rather than viewing refugee women solely as victims, promote self-sufficiency through education, employment, and leadership opportunities.
- **Advocacy for Policy Change:** Advocate for policies that protect refugee women's rights, ensure access to healthcare, and create pathways for economic independence.

By understanding these challenges and addressing them through policy reform, community support, and empowerment initiatives, we can help refugee women rebuild their lives with dignity, security, and hope.



The Human Face of Displacement: the Refugee Experience

Journey Through Forced Migration

When we talk about refugees, we're talking about real people forced to leave their homes due to circumstances beyond their control. This isn't just a humanitarian issue—it touches on how our societies are structured, how countries govern, and how we welcome those seeking safety.

Several perspectives help us understand what refugees experience:

Why People Flee

People don't leave their homes without powerful reasons. Wars push us out, while the promise of safety pulls us toward new places. For women, these pressures can be especially intense—many flee not just conflict but also gender-based violence or situations where their basic rights are denied.

*Push-Pull Theory of Migration (Lee, 1966)** explains forced migration through push factors (war, persecution, economic instability) and pull factors (safety, employment opportunities, social networks in host countries).

What Makes Them Feel Secure

Safety isn't just about avoiding physical danger. It includes having enough to eat, access to healthcare, economic stability, and being part of a community. For women seeking refuge, personal and economic security often remain out of reach, limiting their ability to rebuild independent lives.

The **Human Security Framework (UNDP, 1994)** defines security beyond military protection to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security.

When Different Challenges Overlap

Being a refugee is difficult for everyone, but when combined with being a woman, belonging to a minority group, or having limited resources, these difficulties multiply. Women often face discrimination twice over—both as refugees and as women—increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and marginalization.

Intersectionality and Gendered Migration (Crenshaw, 1989) highlights how multiple identities create unique vulnerabilities for refugee women.

Finding Place in a New Culture

Adapting to a new country means navigating unfamiliar cultural expectations. Many refugee women struggle with language barriers, balancing their home culture with new customs, and overcoming economic disadvantages. This can lead to feelings of isolation rather than belonging.

The **Theory of Acculturation (Berry, 1997)** describes how migrants adapt to new cultures through assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization.

The Global Reality: By the Numbers

As of late 2023, about 117.3 million people worldwide have been forced from their homes due to conflict, persecution, violence, and human rights violations. Behind these numbers are individual stories of courage and resilience.

- **Children and Women Leading the Way**: Around 40% of displaced people (47 million) are children under 18. Many refugee groups consist primarily of women and children.

- **Who Opens Their Doors**: 75% of refugees live in countries with lower and middle incomes, with 20% in the least developed nations. Iran (3.4 million), Türkiye (3.4 million), and Germany (2.5 million) host the largest numbers of refugees.

Challenges We Face Together

The refugee journey involves numerous obstacles:

- **Uncertain Legal Status and Livelihoods**: Many struggle without proper documentation, cannot work legally, and face ongoing financial insecurity.
- **Health Concerns**: Difficult living conditions, limited healthcare access, and the effects of trauma affect both physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Finding Community**: Language differences, discrimination, and cultural barriers often make it hard to truly become part of a new society.
- **Safety Concerns for Women**: Refugee women face higher risks of exploitation, trafficking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence—both during their journey and after reaching relative safety.

Women's Unique Challenges

Women who become refugees face distinct vulnerabilities that require thoughtful, gender-aware approaches:

- **Staying Safe from Gender-Based Violence**: Many have survived sexual violence, forced marriages, or trafficking before, during, or after their displacement. Refugee camps and temporary shelters often lack adequate security and protection.

- **Accessing Healthcare:** Pregnant women and new mothers particularly struggle to receive the care they need for themselves and their babies.
- **Caring for Others:** Many women flee while responsible for children, elderly parents, or family members with disabilities, often without adequate support systems.
- **Building Independent Lives:** Displaced women typically face higher unemployment, lower wages, and limited educational opportunities, making economic independence difficult to achieve.

Healing from Trauma

The emotional toll of war, violence, and displacement is enormous. Women refugees are more likely to experience:

- Post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety, with PTSD rates ranging from 4% to 86% among refugee communities
- Limited access to mental health support due to availability, stigma, and cultural factors

Ukrainian Women and Children: A Current Reality

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has created one of the largest refugee movements in recent history, with over 8 million Ukrainians seeking safety outside their country. Women and children make up about 90% of Ukrainian refugees, as martial law prevents most men from leaving.

Ukrainian refugee women face particular challenges:

- **Finding Work and Legal Protection:** Despite temporary protections in many host countries, language barriers, childcare needs, and work restrictions create significant hurdles.
- **Securing Stable Housing:** As emergency housing programs end, many families face uncertainty or move to overcrowded collective shelters.
- **Accessing Healthcare:** While services may be available, navigating unfamiliar systems with language barriers can delay essential treatment.
- **Managing Mental Health:** The ongoing stress of uncertainty, separation from loved ones, and war trauma has led to increasing cases of stress disorders, PTSD, and depression.
- **Staying Safe from Exploitation:** Reports show rising cases of human trafficking and exploitation targeting Ukrainian women refugees.

Walking Together with Sensitivity

When supporting refugee communities, especially women, we need approaches that recognize their strength and resilience:

- **Cultural Understanding:** Respect different backgrounds and social customs without imposing outside perspectives.

- **Trauma-Aware Support:** Recognize that many refugees have experienced severe trauma, and create safe spaces that avoid triggering additional distress.
- **Building on Strengths:** Rather than viewing refugee women only as victims, support their self-sufficiency through education, employment opportunities, and leadership roles.
- **Advocating for Better Policies:** Work toward policies that protect refugee women's rights, ensure healthcare access, and create pathways for economic independence.

By understanding these challenges and addressing them through better policies, community support, and opportunities for empowerment, we can help refugee women rebuild their lives with dignity, security, and hope for the future.



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03

Trauma Theory

Trauma under “psychological trauma” means mental wound, it is a “normal reaction” to abnormal situations, events.

Traumatic experience (event)

“Traumatized” and “trauma” are often used broadly to describe a shock caused by a terrible event. In the medical sense, however, extreme events are defined as “traumatic” and are described as experiencing helplessness, extreme feelings of powerlessness, experiencing panic and fear of death.

For example:

- Attack on the integrity of the self
- Physical and life-threatening situations (e.g.: serious physical injuries or sexual violence)
- Having to watch someone else experience an extremely threatening situation.

Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. (<https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>)

The decisive factor in a trauma is not just the event itself, but how the person reacts to it. (Fischer/ Riedesser 2009 p.84)

Trauma can disrupt the hippocampus, making it difficult to store the traumatic experience in memory, especially short-term memory, and making learning harder.

Close to the hippocampus are the amygdalae, which store emotions linked to experiences—both positive and negative. In trauma-related disorders, the amygdalae may become overactive.

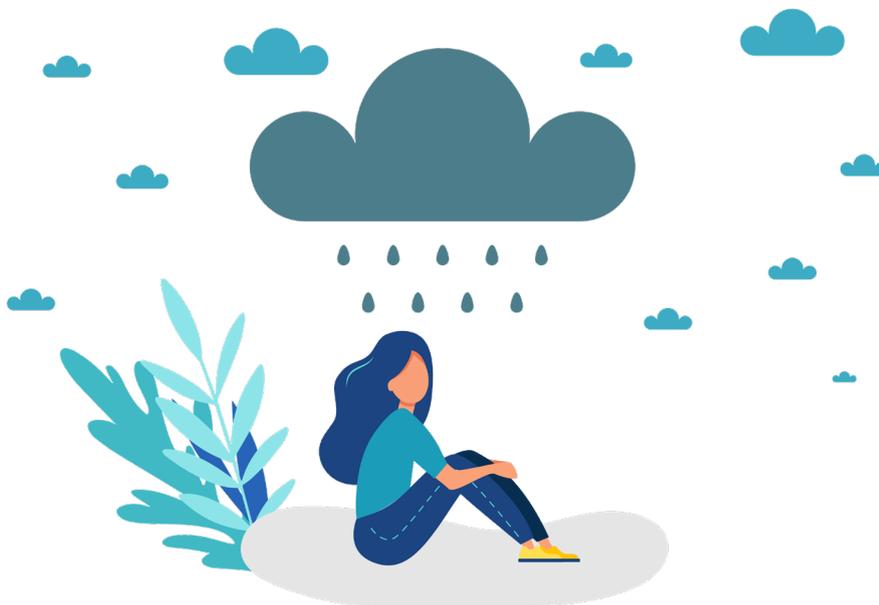
Sensory impressions, bodily states, and emotions connected to the trauma are stored in the amygdalae. After a trauma, these memories can fragment, like pieces of a broken mirror, making it hard to process them as a whole or integrate them as useful learning experiences.

These memory fragments can take on a life of their own, reappearing as intrusions—flashbacks, images, or sensations that overpower present reality. In these moments, some brain functions, like Broca’s area (responsible for speech), may shut down, making it difficult to put the experience into words. The brain also becomes hypersensitive to potential threats. The mix of fragmented memories, gaps, and recurring images and emotions can be overwhelming, making people feel like they’ve lost control over their own mind.

A traumatic experience can cause sleep disturbances, nightmares, emotional numbness, irritability, and intense fear for oneself and one’s health, as well as flashbacks. A flashback is the sudden reliving of the trauma.

People try to protect themselves from being overwhelmed. The urge to repeatedly confront the event often alternates with the desire to avoid talking about it. Those affected may try to avoid anything that reminds them of the trauma.

All these reactions can be seen as attempts to process the experience. They are normal responses to an extraordinary situation.



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04

Triggering Moments

A Trauma-Sensitive Response to Triggering Moments

A trauma-sensitive response to triggering moments—for both those affected and for moderators, social workers, and supporters—requires a mindful and respectful approach to convey safety and calm the nervous system. Here are some approaches that can help in such moments:

1. Conveying Presence and Stability

- **Stay calm:** Speaking in a calm and slow manner, along with gentle movements, helps create a sense of safety.
- **Anchor in the here and now:** Use soothing phrases like, “You are here now, everything is okay” or “I am here with you.”
- **Breathe calmly yourself:** Your own calm breathing can subconsciously encourage the person to regulate their own breathing.

2. Promoting Grounding

- **Breathing exercises:** Guide the person to take deep, slow breaths into their belly. Simple instructions like “Take a deep breath in and slowly exhale” can help.
- **Sensory exercises:** Ask them to name five things they see, four things they hear, three things they feel, two things they smell, and one thing they taste. This helps redirect the brain from the intense memory to the present environment.
- **Contact with the ground:** Standing firmly on the floor or holding a small object like a stone or ball can help anchor them in the present.

3. Allowing Space for the Experience

- **Do not push away emotions:** It is important not to dismiss emotional experiences but to acknowledge them without judgment. Say things like, “It’s okay that this is coming up right now.”
- **Validate feelings:** Sometimes, reminding the person that all emotions are allowed can be helpful. Phrases like “It’s okay to feel this way” or “Take the time you need” can provide reassurance.
- **No pressure to talk:** The person should decide what and how much they want to share. Triggering moments can be overwhelming, and they should not feel pressured to disclose more than they want to.

4. Releasing Physical Tension

- **Movement:** Gentle movement can help relieve tension—shaking out the hands, moving the legs, or taking a short walk around the room.
- **Calming body exercises:** Self-touch, such as gently holding one’s own arms (self-hug) or placing hands on the thighs, can be soothing.
- **Temperature awareness:** Running cold water over the wrists or sipping a cold drink can help calm the body.

5. Providing Structure Through Simple Instructions

- **Clear instructions:** In triggering moments, clear and simple instructions are helpful, e.g., “Please sit down” or “Take a sip of water.”
- **Step-by-step guidance:** Breaking tasks into small steps and guiding the person through them patiently can help the brain focus on simple actions and interrupt the intense emotional response.

6. Distraction and Distancing

- **Cognitive distraction:** Encourage the person to think of something neutral or positive, such as a calming image or a pleasant memory.
- **Questions about the surroundings:** Ask questions that bring the person into the present moment, such as “What color are the walls here?” or “What do you see outside the window?”
- **Engaging in calming activities:** Simple, soothing activities like drawing, writing, or doing a puzzle can help create distance from the distressing memory.

7. Allowing for Breaks

- **Offering breaks:** If someone is triggered in a conversation about trauma, it may help to actively offer a break: “We can take a break if you’d like.”
- **Giving back control:** Remind the person that they can pause or leave the conversation at any time—this strengthens their sense of control and safety.

8. Encouraging Professional Support (if needed)

- **Being available for further support:** If someone is frequently struggling with triggers, it may be helpful to suggest professional support (e.g., trauma therapists). It’s important to bring this up gently and respectfully.
- **Providing resources:** If appropriate, mentioning self-help groups or trauma recovery resources (such as books or websites) could be helpful.

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05 Community building theory

Community building is the process of creating and nurturing a group of people who share common interests, values, or goals. Whether through intentional development or the organic coming together of individuals, building a community is about forming connections, establishing trust, and creating an environment where members support each other. A deeper understanding of community building draws on several key theories, approaches, and principles that can help in its successful implementation.

1. The social systemic approach

Community building, at its core, is about creating systems of interconnection. Drawing from systems theory, a community can be viewed as a dynamic system composed of individuals and organizations that interact and work together. Systems theory, proposed by scholars such as Ludwig von Bertalanffy, theory U, Peter Senge and many others developing about community building, suggests that communities are more than just the sum of their parts, they are complex networks where the actions of one member can influence the entire system. When building a community, it is crucial to recognize that fostering cooperation and establishing open lines of communication across the system is vital for its long-term success. This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals and organizations within a community and suggests that to build a healthy community, one must address not only individual needs but also the needs of the system as a whole.

2. The empowerment perspective

An empowering approach to community building focuses on giving individuals and groups the skills, knowledge, and confidence to shape their environment. Empowerment theory, popularized by scholars like Paulo Freire, emphasizes that community members must actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives. In this view, community building is about creating opportunities for marginalized or less powerful groups to engage in collective action. Empowerment is a process where individuals increase their control over their lives, thereby improving their ability to contribute to society. By focusing on empowerment, communities become more self-sufficient, resilient, and better able to address their challenges.

3. The role of social networks and relationships

A key factor in community building is the establishment and strengthening of social networks. Social networks are the web of relationships that connect people, organizations, and groups within a community. Social capital theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Robert Putnam, argues that these relationships are essential for the functioning of a community. Social capital includes trust, reciprocity, and social ties that encourage cooperation and collective action. Communities with high levels of social capital tend to be more cohesive and resilient, as individuals rely on their networks for support, resources, and information. Strong social networks also provide a foundation for tackling community-wide issues, such as poverty or public health crises, through collaborative action.

4. Participatory and inclusive practices

Another key principle of community building is inclusivity. A community is most successful when it reflects the diversity of its members and allows for participatory decision-making. The theory of participatory democracy, as outlined by thinkers like Carole Pateman, suggests that community building should involve everyone in decision-making processes, ensuring that voices from all segments of society are heard. This approach leads to greater ownership, involvement, and satisfaction with the community's goals. By promoting inclusivity and democratic participation, community-building efforts become more equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of its members.

5. The importance of shared vision and purpose

For community building to succeed, members must share a common vision or purpose. Theories of collective action and shared goals emphasize that communities are strongest when they work together toward a common aim. This is especially true in communities formed around a particular issue, such as environmental sustainability or social justice. Community members may come from different backgrounds, but by uniting under a shared vision, they create a powerful force for change. Leaders play a crucial role in fostering this shared vision by providing direction and rallying support. When individuals align their goals with those of the community, they are more likely to invest time, effort, and resources into its success.

6. Addressing conflict and fostering cooperation

Conflicts are natural in any community, especially when it involve diverse individuals with differing perspectives. Conflict resolution theory emphasizes the importance of addressing disagreements in constructive ways. One of the most widely known conflict resolution models is the interest-based approach, which focuses on understanding the underlying interests of the parties involved rather than just the positions they hold. By focusing on mutual interests, communities can build understanding, reduce tensions, and foster cooperation. Communities that embrace constructive conflict resolution and seek win-win solutions are better equipped to deal with future challenges, whether they relate to resource allocation, policy decisions, or interpersonal dynamics.

7. Sustainability and long-term viability

Finally, an essential aspect of community building is ensuring its sustainability. Building a community is not just about bringing people together in the short term but also about creating a system that can evolve and thrive over time. Sustainability in community building means considering the long-term effects of community actions and ensuring that resources, whether human, social, or financial, are used wisely. It involves creating structures that can adapt to changing circumstances and ensuring that future generations can continue to benefit from the community's achievements. For a community to be sustainable, it needs to be flexible, resilient, and responsive to emerging challenges.

A process of community building is a multifaceted process that draws on diverse theories, principles, and strategies. It requires understanding the complex relationships between individuals, groups, and the broader system in which they exist. Developing empowerment, inclusivity, social networks, and shared goals, communities can develop the structures and relationships necessary for long-term success. Besides, considering fostering cooperation, managing conflict, and planning for sustainability ensures that a community can endure and grow in an ever-changing world. In the end, successful community building is about creating environments where people feel connected, valued, and empowered to shape their collective future.

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A stylized illustration featuring a large blue globe with a sunburst pattern of radiating lines emanating from its center. The globe is held up by two brown hands, palms facing up, positioned at the bottom of the frame. The text "POWER OF BELONGING" is overlaid across the middle of the globe.

POWER OF BELONGING

06

Youth worker qualities

Working with Migrants and Refugees: Qualities of a Youth Worker

Cultural competence and cultural sensitivity are essential skills to possess when working with people from different countries. These competences are especially crucial for youth work with refugees and migrant youth, as we may be called to work with young people with various backgrounds, experiences, cultures of origins, beliefs and understandings. Cultural competence in youth work today challenges us to understand refugees from a socio-cultural perspective and to be able to work with and respect differences and similarities in those who use our services.

Youth workers engaging with young women, particularly those from migrant and refugee backgrounds, require a unique set of skills and qualities to foster empowerment, self-awareness, and community building.

The essential qualities include:

Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity

Ability to understand and respect different cultural backgrounds and experiences. Awareness of the unique challenges faced by young migrant and refugee women.

Active Listening and Communication Skills

Creating a safe and open space for participants to share their thoughts. Encouraging storytelling and self-expression to help young women make sense of their internal narrative.

Trauma-Informed Approach

Recognizing the impact of past trauma and ensuring a supportive environment. Implementing strategies to avoid re-traumatization and providing mental health resources.

Leadership and Mentorship

Guiding participants toward confidence and self-empowerment.
Acting as a role model and encouraging leadership within the community.

Adaptability and Problem-Solving

Being flexible in responding to different needs and challenges.
Finding creative ways to engage young women in mindfulness and empowerment practices.

Mindfulness and Emotional Regulation

Familiarity with mindfulness techniques that can be shared with participants.
Ability to model emotional resilience and encourage self-care practices.

Advocacy for Women's Rights

Promoting gender equality and awareness of women's rights.
Encouraging discussions about leadership, labor market inclusion, and empowerment.

Facilitation and Community Engagement

Organizing and leading group activities that foster trust and solidarity.
Encouraging peer support networks and collaborative learning.

Given the barriers that young women, particularly those from migrant and refugee backgrounds, may face in accessing leadership and advocacy opportunities, we emphasize participation as active engagement with the community. This is closely linked to building social capital, fostering self-empowerment, and strengthening individual autonomy. Such engagement can be nurtured through youth work, which provides safe and inclusive spaces for young women to recognize and develop their own agency—the ability to make independent and informed choices. By creating supportive environments where their voices, experiences, and concerns are valued, youth work enables young women to express their perspectives and shape their sense of belonging. This approach shifts the focus away from narratives of struggle and trauma, instead emphasizing future-oriented growth, community participation, and pathways toward leadership. Particularly for those navigating empowerment and self-advocacy for the first time, these spaces encourage social engagement and integration, laying the foundation for broader participation in societal change.

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07

Peter Block

Peter Block's Six Conversations: A Framework for Community Engagement and Transformation

Peter Block is a thought leader in the field of community development and organizational change. His work focuses on the power of conversations to drive transformation, build trust, and create a sense of belonging. In his book *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (2008), Block introduces six key conversations that facilitate meaningful engagement and shift groups from passive participants to active co-creators of change.

Theoretical Background

Block's framework is rooted in dialogical and relational theories, which emphasize that transformation occurs through meaningful conversation rather than top-down directives. The key ideas underpinning this model include:

- **Social Constructionism:** Reality is co-created through language and relationships (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).
- **Transformational Leadership:** Effective leadership focuses on co-creation and empowerment rather than control (Burns, 1978).
- **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD):** Communities thrive by leveraging existing strengths rather than focusing on deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Block's approach integrates these perspectives into a conversational model that fosters ownership, accountability, and belonging.

The Six Conversations

Each of Block's six conversations serves a distinct purpose in shifting the mindset of individuals and communities from passive consumers to engaged citizens. The-

se conversations are structured yet open-ended, encouraging reflection, shared responsibility, and mutual support.

1. The Invitation Conversation

Purpose: To create a sense of voluntary engagement and personal commitment.

- Instead of coercion, people are invited to take part in shaping the future.
- Encourages a shift from obligation to choice.
- Example: “What is the possibility that excites you enough to participate fully?”

2. The Possibility Conversation

Purpose: To reframe challenges as opportunities and explore new potentials.

- Focuses on what could be rather than what is wrong.
- Encourages imagination and vision beyond current limitations.
- Example: “What is the future we can create together that we truly want?”

3. The Ownership Conversation

Purpose: To encourage individuals to take responsibility for their community’s well-being.

- Moves away from blame toward personal agency.
- Encourages the question: “How have I contributed to the current situation, and what is my role in changing it?”
- Example: “What part of the problem do you own, and what part of the solution can you commit to?”

4. The Dissent Conversation

Purpose: To create a safe space for honest expression and constructive disagreement.

- Acknowledges resistance and opposition as natural parts of change.
- Encourages authentic participation by allowing scepticism and concerns to surface.
- Example: “What doubts or reservations do you have about this initiative?”

5. The Commitment Conversation

Purpose: To move from abstract ideas to actionable commitments.

Encourages individuals to take small, tangible steps toward collective goals.

- Ensures that participation is active rather than passive.
- Example: “What commitment are you willing to make to move this forward?”

6. The Gifts Conversation

Purpose: To recognize and leverage the strengths and talents of each individual.

Shifts focus from deficits to assets.

- Encourages an appreciation of diversity and unique contributions.
- Example: “What gifts do you bring that can support this effort?”

Peter Block’s six conversations provide a powerful framework for fostering authentic community engagement and meaningful change. By shifting dialogues from problem-oriented to possibility-focused, these conversations empower individuals to take ownership of their communities and actively participate in shaping their futures.

Incorporating these conversations into community-based methodologies can lead to stronger relationships, deeper trust, and a shared sense of responsibility, ultimately transforming how communities and organizations function.

Application in Methodologies

Block’s conversations can be applied in various community-building and participatory methodologies, including:

- Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) – Uses positive questioning to drive change.
- World Café (Brown & Isaacs, 2005) – Facilitates large-scale dialogue through structured conversations.
- Open Space Technology (Owen, 1997) – Encourages self-organizing discussions based on participants’ interests.
- Participatory Action Research (Freire, 1970) – Engages communities in collective problem-solving through dialogue.
- Integrating these six conversations into facilitation processes, practitioners can create environments that foster trust, co-creation, and sustainable engagement.



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08

Importance of Morning

Awareness Sessions for Common Feeling and Community Building

There is a positive association between mindfulness and mental health (Enkema et al., 2020). Mindfulness involves an intentional, nonjudgmental focus on the present (Enkema et al., 2020). This practice reduces symptoms of depression, distress, stress, and anxiety (Enkema, et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2021).

Morning awareness sessions play a crucial role in fostering a sense of connection and unity among participants. By beginning the day with mindfulness practices, such as guided meditations or breathing exercises, yoga flows or conscious body scan, individuals are given a moment to ground themselves, set positive intentions, and acknowledge their emotional states.

These sessions create a structured rhythm that reinforces trust and belonging. When participants consistently come together in a safe space at the start of the day, they develop a routine that fosters security and emotional stability. This consistency is particularly important for young women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, who may have faced instability and displacement in their past. Knowing that they have a dedicated time each morning to focus on self-awareness and collective reflection allows them to develop stronger relationships with both their inner selves and the wider community.

Moreover, morning awareness sessions encourage open dialogue and vulnerability, allowing participants to express their thoughts and emotions without judgment. This process strengthens interpersonal connections and helps build a supportive network where individuals uplift one another. As a result, participants begin to view themselves not just as individuals but as part of a collective effort, fostering a deeper sense of accountability and empowerment.

In the context of community building, these sessions reinforce the idea that change and empowerment are shared responsibilities. When individuals engage in reflective practices together, they develop a shared language of resilience and self-care, which extends beyond the sessions into their interactions and collaborations. Ultimately, morning awareness sessions are not just about individual well-being but about creating a strong foundation of trust, unity, and empowerment that helps transform spaces into more inclusive and supportive environments.



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09

#IAmRemarkable: Empowering Confidence and Self-Advocacy

#IAmRemarkable is a global initiative designed to empower individuals, particularly those from underrepresented groups, to recognize and celebrate their achievements. The program focuses on breaking down social norms around self-promotion and fostering confidence in professional and personal spheres. This paper explores the key principles, impact, and significance of I Am Remarkable in creating inclusive and empowered communities.

Self-promotion is often perceived negatively, especially among marginalized groups who face cultural or societal barriers to advocating for their achievements. #IAmRemarkable, launched by Google, addresses this challenge by providing workshops that encourage participants to recognize their accomplishments and express them confidently. The initiative has impacted thousands of individuals globally by shifting mindsets and fostering an environment of self-empowerment.

Core Principles of #IAmRemarkable

The #IAmRemarkable methodology is based on three key principles:

- **Challenging Social Perceptions:** Many cultures discourage self-promotion, labelling it as arrogance. The program helps participants reframe self-advocacy as a tool for professional growth and personal empowerment.
- **Building Confidence through Reflection:** Participants engage in exercises that encourage self-reflection, helping them articulate their achievements without fear or hesitation.
- **Creating Inclusive Spaces:** By fostering discussions on diversity and inclusion, the program provides a supportive environment where participants can share their experiences and inspire each other.

#IAmRemarkable has been widely adopted in corporate settings, educational institutions, and community organizations. Companies use the program to enhance leadership development and inclusion efforts. Research indicates that self-advocacy contributes to career progression, salary negotiations, and overall workplace satisfaction (Kray & Kennedy, 2017). Furthermore, the initiative empowers women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups to challenge biases and advocate for equal opportunities.

#IAmRemarkable is a transformative initiative that encourages individuals to embrace their achievements and advocate for themselves in professional and personal contexts. By fostering a culture of confidence and inclusivity, it contributes to breaking down barriers and promoting equity in various spheres of life.



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10

Theory U:

A Framework for transformational change

Theory U, developed by Otto Scharmer, is a framework for transformational leadership and innovation. It emphasizes deep listening, collective presence, and co-creative action. This paper explores the core concepts of Theory U, its application in leadership, and its significance in fostering systemic change.

In an era of increasing complexity, traditional problem-solving methods often fail to address deep-rooted societal and organizational challenges. Theory U, introduced by Otto Scharmer (2009), provides an alternative approach by guiding individuals and groups through a process of sensing, presencing, and realizing innovative solutions. This theory is widely used in leadership, education, and community development to drive meaningful change.

Core Concepts of Theory U Theory U is structured around a three-phase journey:

Sensing: Involves suspending judgment and deeply listening to emerging patterns. This phase requires openness to different perspectives and an understanding of systemic forces at play.

- **Presencing:** A combination of “presence” and “sensing,” this phase encourages individuals to connect with their highest potential and future possibilities. It demands self-reflection and stepping beyond habitual ways of thinking.
- **Realizing:** The final phase involves co-creating innovative solutions by acting from an emerging future rather than past experiences. This requires prototyping and testing ideas in real-world contexts.

- Application in Leadership and Systemic Change Theory U has been applied in leadership development, organizational change, and community transformation. Leaders who follow this approach cultivate deep awareness, enabling them to navigate uncertainty and co-create sustainable solutions (Scharmer, 2016). Its application extends to education, where it enhances collaborative learning, and to business, where it fosters agile innovation.

Theory U provides a transformative pathway for individuals and organizations seeking to lead from the emerging future. By integrating deep listening, mindfulness, and co-creative action, it offers a holistic approach to tackling complex challenges.



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Metk

01

Opening Ceremony Activity:

The Circle of Commitment



30-40min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adult participants



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This activity is based on respect, openness, and inclusion. All contributions are welcome. Participants are encouraged to speak from the heart, listen actively, and honor the presence of others.



Position in the Workshop

This activity serves as the opening ceremony of the program. It sets the tone, fosters connection, and emphasizes personal and group commitment.



Keywords

#communitybuilding
#commitment
#symbolism
#belonging
#teambuilding

#connection
#sharedjourney
#ceremony
#empowerment
#participation
#activelisting

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To create a symbolic space of unity and shared intention
- ✓ To encourage self-reflection on personal contributions to the group
- ✓ To foster group cohesion and a sense of belonging
- ✓ To visually represent the interconnectedness of all participants

Previous Skills

No specific skills required. Participants should simply be open to sharing and engaging in the moment.

Materials

A large ball of yarn or thread (enough to form a visible web)

Scissors (for the ribbon-cutting moment)

Description of the Activity

Participants begin outside a yarn circle placed on the ground. One by one, they share what they bring to the group (e.g., enthusiasm, listening, curiosity, creativity).

After sharing, they step inside the circle while holding onto the yarn. As the process continues, a web of connection forms.

The ceremony concludes with a symbolic ribbon-cutting at the circle's entrance to mark the official beginning of the program.

Instructions

01. Place a yarn circle on the ground, leaving space for participants to stand outside.
02. Explain the meaning of the yarn: it represents the shared space of the journey ahead.
03. One participant begins by sharing what they bring (a strength, mindset, intention).
04. After sharing, they step into the circle, holding their section of the yarn.
05. The process continues with each participant doing the same, gradually forming a web.
06. Once all are inside and connected:
 - Highlight the symbolism:
 - "Each of us brings something valuable."*
 - "We are now part of this shared experience."*
 - "This web represents our connection."*
08. Cut the yarn at the entrance of the circle to symbolically open the program.
08. Celebrate with applause and a moment of recognition.

Examples

"I bring my curiosity and openness to learn."

"I bring my ability to listen and support others."

"I bring my creative energy and ideas."

Possible Variations

Instead of cutting the yarn, give each participant a piece as a personal reminder.

For smaller groups, use a single thread instead of a full circle.

If participants are shy, they may write their contribution and read it aloud.

Remarks or sensitive moments

Some participants may feel uncomfortable speaking — encourage short, simple sharing.

For those unsure what to say, suggest: *“I bring my presence and willingness to participate.”*

Adapt physical movement if needed for accessibility.

This ceremony creates a meaningful and inclusive start, reinforcing that everyone’s presence matters in the shared journey.

The Circle of Commitment

Community Speaks

“This activity made me feel truly connected and grounded in a shared purpose.”

“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much”

Helen Keller



02



Story of a name



30-60min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth



Number

Recommended for
10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

The space should be held with respect, active listening, and openness. Sharing is voluntary; all stories and silences are equally valued. No one is pressured to speak beyond their comfort.



Position in the Workshop

This activity functions as an icebreaker or getting-to-know-each-other exercise at the beginning of the workshop.



Keywords

#Identity *#migration*
#belonging *#teambuilding*
#storytelling *#connection*
#personalhistory *#diversity*
 #activelisting

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To encourage meaningful self-introduction
- ✓ To foster a sense of belonging and trust within the group
- ✓ To create space for personal storytelling and cultural exchange
- ✓ To set an open and inclusive tone for the workshop

Previous Skills

None required. However, the activity requires a medium level of facilitation to ensure everyone feels included and safe to share.

Materials

Chairs arranged in a circle.

Optional: name tags, markers, talking object (e.g., small ball or symbolic item).

Description of the Activity

Participants are invited to introduce themselves by sharing the story behind their name. This can include the meaning, origin, family connection, or personal anecdote.

The method balances lightness and depth and encourages reflection on identity, culture, and belonging.

Through storytelling, the group begins to connect and appreciate diversity within the room.

Instructions

01. Welcome the group and ask everyone to sit in a circle.
02. Explain the purpose: to introduce oneself through the story of their name.
03. The facilitator models the activity by sharing their own story first.
04. Participants take turns, sharing their name and its background, while others listen.
05. Offer guiding questions if needed:
 - What does your name mean?*
 - Were you named after someone?*
 - Have you ever wanted to change your name? Why?*
 - Is your name connected to migration or cultural identity?*
 - Do people mispronounce your name? How does that make you feel?*
06. Encourage participants to share only what feels comfortable.
07. After everyone has shared, reflect on common themes and the value of the diverse stories heard.

Examples

"My name means 'hope' in Arabic. I was named after my grandmother."

"People always mispronounce my name, but I've learned to laugh about it."

"I was named after a city where my parents first met as refugees."

Possible Variations

Use small breakout circles for large groups.

If time is short, participants can pair up and introduce each other based on the shared story.

Instead of sharing aloud, participants can write or draw the meaning of their name and post it in a shared space.

Remarks or sensitive moments

Be mindful that some participants may associate their name with painful memories or identity struggles.

Allow space for silence, emotion, or humor — all are welcome.

Avoid comparing or ranking stories; each story is unique and valid.

Ensure no one feels forced to share — the option to pass must always be available.

Name and background

Community Speaks

“Hearing everyone’s story made me feel seen and welcomed”

“A person’s name is to that person the sweetest sound in any language”

Dale Carnegie



03

Meditation for Mindfulness and Self-Awareness



15-45min.

(adjustable based on the session's focus and participants' experience level)



Target Group

Suitable for youth workers, social workers, and individuals seeking emotional balance and self-awareness.



Code of Conduct

The space should be held with calm, respect, and sensitivity. Participants are invited to remain silent, present, and attentive throughout the practice. Sharing after the activity is always optional and confidential. No judgments or expectations should be placed on anyone's experience.



Number

Recommended for 5-20 participants.



Position in the Workshop

As an opening practice to set intention and ground the group.

As a core exercise for developing mindfulness and emotional regulation.

As a closing practice for reflection, integration, and calm.



Age

18-30 years old.



Keywords

#mindfulness

#self-awareness

#stressreduction

#emotionalregulation

#breathing

#balance

#self-reflection

#empowerment

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ To develop self-awareness and observe thoughts and emotions without judgment
- ✓ To reduce stress and anxiety through breath and present-moment awareness
- ✓ To enhance emotional regulation and inner resilience
- ✓ To foster a sense of peace, presence, and personal belonging

Previous Skills

No prior experience required. Participants should be open to stillness, introspection, and reflection

Materials

Comfortable seating (cushions, chairs, yoga mats).

Quiet space with minimal distractions.

Optional: soft instrumental music or nature sounds.

Optional: guided meditation audio or script.

Description of the Activity

This guided meditation combines breath awareness, body scanning, and visualization to deepen mindfulness and emotional connection.

It offers participants a moment of stillness to observe their inner world, release tension, and re-connect with themselves in a supportive setting.

Instructions

01. Preparation (5 min):

Invite participants to sit comfortably with a relaxed posture

Encourage closing the eyes or softening the gaze

Introduce the purpose of the practice (e.g., grounding, presence, awareness)

02. Breath Awareness (5–10 min):

Guide attention to the natural flow of breath

Use prompts such as: “Notice the breath as it flows in... and out... without changing it.”

Optionally introduce breath counting (inhale 4, exhale 4)

03. Body Scan (5–10 min, optional):

Gently bring attention from head to toe

Example: “Notice tension in your shoulders... allow it to soften as you exhale.”

04. Guided Visualization (5–10 min, optional):

Lead participants through a calming image or symbolic scene

Example: “Imagine a quiet forest... each breath grounding you more deeply.”

05. Silent Reflection (5 min):

Invite stillness and non-attachment to passing thoughts

Optionally, repeat a soft affirmation like: “I am present, I am enough.”

06. Closing & Sharing (5–10 min):

Gently guide participants back: move fingers, stretch, open eyes

Offer space for optional sharing or journaling reflections

Examples

A session for young women dealing with anxiety, helping them build a personal mindfulness routine

A safe-space practice for migrant or refugee-background youth to calm their minds and foster belonging

Possible Variations

Themed Meditations – Focus on topics like gratitude, resilience, or self-compassion

Walking Meditation – Focus on breath while walking slowly in silence

Sound Meditation – Use bells, singing bowls, or calming audio as a meditative anchor

Partner Meditation – Explore breathing in synchrony to build connection

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may find stillness challenging — offer reassurance and allow movement or open eyes if needed

Be mindful that silence can surface deep emotions — check in afterward and provide support if necessary

Always acknowledge religious or cultural sensitivities around meditation practices

For trauma-sensitive groups, emphasize grounding (breath, physical contact with the floor) over introspection



Meditation for Mindfulness and Self-Awareness

Community Speaks

“

***“I learned to be present and listen
to myself without judgment”***

***“You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day,
unless you’re too busy; then you should sit for an hour”***
Attributed to Dale Carnegie



04

Power Pose Walk



10-20min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

Participants are encouraged to engage with openness, respect, and playfulness. All levels of comfort are welcome. Affirmations should be supportive and inclusive, and personal boundaries must be respected at all times.



Position in the Workshop

Ideal as an icebreaker, confidence-building activity, or energizer — particularly effective at the beginning of a session to set an empowering tone.



Keywords

#confidence
#empowerment
#bodylanguage
#teambuilding

#leadership
#emotionalawareness
#non-verbalcommunication

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To increase self-confidence through posture and physical movement
- ✓ To demonstrate how body language influences emotional state
- ✓ To foster group connection through positive peer interaction
- ✓ To energize participants and promote a positive group atmosphere

Previous Skills

No prior experience is needed. Participants only need openness and willingness to engage.

Materials

No materials required

Optional: upbeat background music to enhance energy

Description of the Activity

Based on Amy Cuddy's theory of power poses, this dynamic activity boosts confidence and group energy.

Participants begin by holding a strong, open posture (the "power pose") and transition into

walking confidently around the room, exchanging positive affirmations.

This method emphasizes the connection between body language and emotional empowerment.

Instructions

01. Introduction:

Explain the impact of body language on emotion and confidence.

Introduce Amy Cuddy's "Power Pose" theory — holding a strong, open posture can increase self-assurance and reduce stress.

02. Power Pose Practice (2 minutes):

Instruct participants to stand with feet grounded, chest open, hands on hips or raised in a victory pose.

Ask them to hold this position for 2 minutes while breathing deeply.

03. Power Pose Walk (5–7 minutes):

Invite participants to walk around the space while maintaining confident body posture.

As they meet others, they exchange uplifting affirmations, such as:

"I am powerful!"

"You are strong!"

"We've got this!"

Encourage them to speak with energy and authenticity.

04. Reflection & Closing (5 minutes):

Bring everyone together in a circle.

Facilitate a brief reflection: How did that feel? What did they notice in themselves or others?

Reinforce the takeaway: "The way we carry ourselves shapes how we feel — and how others experience us."

Examples of Positive Phrases

"I am powerful!"

"You radiate confidence!"

"You've got this!"

"I am strong, and so are you!"

"We are unstoppable!"

Possible Variations

Silent Version: Use eye contact, strong handshakes, or high-fives instead of words.

Mirror Version: In pairs, participants mirror each other's power poses before sharing affirmations.

Music Version: Add energetic music to enhance movement and group energy.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may initially feel shy or awkward. Encourage gradual participation and emphasize that all engagement levels are welcome.

Respect personal space — not everyone is comfortable with physical gestures like high-fives.

Create a playful, judgment-free space where all expressions of confidence are valid.

This energizing method offers a playful yet powerful way to activate confidence and group connection through movement and positive language.



Power Pose Walk

Community Speaks

“ I discovered a sense of inner strength and confidence I didn’t know I had”

***“With realization of one’s own potential and self-confidence in one’s ability, one can build a better world”
Dalai Lama***



05

Further Steps



20-30min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a reflective, personal moment. All sharing is voluntary and should be approached with respect and care. Participants are encouraged to be honest, open, and supportive while honoring each other's aspirations and boundaries.



Position in the Workshop

A reflection and closing activity, best placed toward the end of a workshop or training to support integration and forward planning.



Keywords

#futureplanning *#inspiration*
#reflection *#personaldevelopment*
#goalsetting *#empowerment*
#projectoutcomes *#engagement*

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To encourage participants to reflect on their learning and aspirations
- ✓ To support goal-setting for personal or professional development
- ✓ To provide a creative, visual, and interactive way to express next steps
- ✓ To reinforce direction, purpose, and continued motivation

Previous Skills

No prior skills needed. Basic reflection and writing abilities are sufficient. This activity is participant-driven and requires minimal facilitation.

Materials

Foot-shaped paper cutouts (1 per participant)

Pens or markers

Open space to lay the “path” of footprints on the floor

Description of the Activity

Participants reflect on their experience and write down their personal or professional next steps on foot-shaped paper.

Once everyone has completed their footprints, the group lays them out on the floor, forming a

symbolic path leading toward a “new door” — representing future action and continued growth. The group then walks this path, reading one another’s steps for inspiration.

Instructions

01. Distribute a foot-shaped paper and pen to each participant.
02. Give participants 10–15 minutes to write their future steps based on what they’ve learned.
03. Invite them to place their “footprints” on the floor, forming a clear path toward the door or an exit point.
04. Allow the group to walk along the path, reading the steps others have written.
05. Facilitate a brief reflection on what participants noticed, felt, or found inspiring.
06. Close the activity by highlighting the importance of action and continued development.

Examples

“I will start journaling to reflect on my emotions weekly.”

“I want to organize a safe space circle in my local community.”

“I plan to look for training in mindfulness and mental health support.”

“I’ll speak up more confidently in group discussions.”

Possible Variations

Creative Version: Let participants decorate or color their footprints to personalize them.

Group Path: Form a large shared circle or spiral of footprints instead of a line.

Digital Version: Use sticky notes or a digital whiteboard if the activity is held online.

Remarks or sensitive moments

Some participants may feel unsure about their next steps — offer gentle guidance without pressure.

Ensure all contributions are treated with respect and confidentiality if shared aloud.

Avoid judgment or comparison between goals — every path is unique and valid.

The visual element of a “path forward” can be emotional or symbolic for some — allow space for deeper reflection if needed.

Further Steps

Community Speaks

“ This helped me clarify how I want to move forward in my life and work”

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”
Lao Tzu



06

Heart on the Back



30min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a space for appreciation and kindness. All feedback should be positive, respectful, and inclusive. Everyone deserves to feel seen and valued. Participation is encouraged but not forced, and confidentiality of personal reactions should be honored.



Position in the Workshop

Best suited as a reflection and closing activity toward the end of a workshop or program, to leave participants with a warm, affirming experience.



Keywords

#appreciation *#teambuilding*
#positivefeedback *#reflection*
#encouragement *#empowerment*
#self-esteem *#non-verbalcommunication*

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To foster a supportive and positive group atmosphere
- ✓ To help participants acknowledge each other's strengths and contributions
- ✓ To provide a memorable and personal keepsake
- ✓ To strengthen self-esteem and promote group cohesion

Previous Skills

No prior skills required. The activity is intuitive and participant-driven, with light facilitation needed for setup and emotional framing.

Materials

Large heart-shaped paper cutouts (one per participant)

Tape or safety pins (to attach hearts to participants' backs)

Markers or pens

Description of the Activity

This non-verbal activity encourages participants to give and receive positive feedback through writing.

Each person wears a paper heart on their back, and others walk around writing encouraging, kind, or affirming messages on them.

The result is a deeply personal memento filled with warmth and appreciation from the group.

Instructions

01. Distribute one heart-shaped cutout to each participant and help them attach it to their back using tape or safety pins.

02. Explain the purpose of the activity: to share kind words and acknowledgments with others.

03. Ask participants to walk around the room and write positive comments, compliments, or encouraging words on the backs of others.

04. Ensure that everyone writes on multiple hearts and that each person receives several messages.

05. After about 15–20 minutes, invite participants to carefully remove their hearts and find a quiet space to read the messages.

06. Conclude with a short group reflection:

**Invite volunteers to share how they felt reading their messages
Highlight the impact of simple appreciation and acknowledgment**

Examples

“You radiate calm and kindness.”

“Thank you for always listening.”

“You have a beautiful energy that makes people feel safe.”

“I admire your creativity and openness.”

Possible Variations

Sticky Notes Version: Use sticky notes or folded papers instead of heart cutouts.

Tabletop Version: Place hearts on tables and rotate around the room to write.

Digital Version: In online workshops, participants can fill out a shared document or digital “message wall.”

Remarks or sensitive moments

Some participants may feel shy or unsure — encourage thoughtfulness, not pressure.

Ensure no participant is left out — the facilitator can contribute extra comments if needed.

Be mindful of emotional impact — receiving unexpected kind words can be deeply moving.

Leave space for participants to process privately or share only if they wish.

This gentle yet powerful activity leaves a lasting impression, creating a shared memory of kindness and reinforcing the sense of belonging within the group.

Heart on the back

Community Speaks

“It was emotional and affirming to receive appreciation from others”

“Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well”

Voltaire



07

Learning Journey



30-40min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

All contributions should be made with honesty, creativity, and respect for others. This is a shared space — each voice matters. There is no right or wrong way to express. Participants are invited to contribute freely while honoring the emotional safety of the group.



Position in the Workshop

This is an ongoing reflective method used daily, culminating in a final shared discussion and closure ritual on the last day.



Keywords

#reflection *#visualstorytelling*
#creativity *#emotionalexpression*
#learningoutcomes *#teambuilding*
#groupmemory *#empowerment*
 #arttherapy

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To encourage participants to reflect regularly on their experiences
- ✓ To provide a creative outlet for expressing key insights and emotions
- ✓ To build group cohesion through shared storytelling and memory-making
- ✓ To document and celebrate each participant's learning journey

Previous Skills

No specific skills are required. Participants need only a willingness to express themselves through writing, drawing, or symbolic contribution.

Materials

Large paper surface (e.g., multiple flipcharts or craft paper roll)

Markers, pens, colored pencils

Optional: magazines, glue, scissors (for collage elements)

Tape or pins for attaching items

Description of the Activity

This evolving visual activity supports ongoing reflection and group bonding. Each day, participants add drawings, words, symbols, or collaged pieces to a large communal poster — capturing insights, emotions, and highlights.

On the final day, the group reflects together on what was created, discusses themes, and closes the experience by dismantling the artwork in a symbolic way.

Instructions

01. At the beginning of the program, place a large piece of paper on the wall and label it with the project name.

02. Invite participants daily to contribute something that reflects their experience:

Key learnings

Emotional moments

Humor or surprises

Aha-moments or quotes

Visual or symbolic elements

03. Regularly remind the group to engage with the artwork and ensure inclusivity and respectful content.

04. On the final day, dedicate time for final reflections and additions.

05. Gather the group and walk through the shared artwork, highlighting recurring themes and giving space for personal sharing.

06. Close the process by ritually dismantling the piece — tear it, cut it, or ceremonially destroy it together. Participants may take a piece as a souvenir.

Examples

A participant draws a heart with the word “belonging” inside after a deep group sharing session.

Someone adds a quote they heard during a powerful moment: “I felt seen for the first time.”

A collage of images showing growth, connection, or laughter appears by the end of the week.

Possible Variations

Digital Version: Use a shared online board or collaborative document if the workshop is virtual.

Individual Journeys: In parallel, participants can create personal learning timelines or diaries.

Mobile Format: Instead of one central wall, use separate panels for each day or theme.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may feel shy or unsure — encourage thoughtfulness, not pressure.

Some participants may feel exposed — offer gentle encouragement but never force contributions.

The dismantling process can be emotional; ensure there is space to process and close in a respectful way.

Emphasize that the journey is individual and collective — every piece matters.

This method offers a powerful, visual way to capture growth, deepen connection, and bring a meaningful sense of closure to a shared experience.

Learning journey (drawing)

Community Speaks

“It allowed me to express my growth in a way words couldn’t capture”

“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time”
Thomas Merton



08

Recognition visual ritual



60min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a space for deep appreciation, respect, and presence. Participants are invited to speak honestly and kindly, focusing on the value of others. Active listening is essential. All sharing should be given and received with care and gratitude.



Position in the Workshop

This method is used as a final reflection and closing ceremony, ideally on the last day of the project, as a meaningful way to distribute certificates and affirm group connection.



Keywords

#appreciation

#recognition

#strengths

#communitybuilding

#reflection

#giftconversation

#PeterBlock

#empowerment

#ceremony

#activelistingening

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To recognize and celebrate each participant's strengths and contributions
- ✓ To foster a culture of appreciation, gratitude, and personal reflection
- ✓ To strengthen community bonds through meaningful, spoken recognition
- ✓ To provide a heartfelt, ceremonial way to distribute completion certificates

Previous Skills

No specific skills required, but emotional sensitivity and willingness to speak and listen from the heart are essential. The facilitator should be able to gently hold the emotional space and pace the process well.

Materials

Certificates (e.g., Youthpass or any final completion certificate)

Optional: a professional photographer to take portraits or candid moments during the process

Description of the Activity

Inspired by Peter Block's concept of the "gift conversation," this closing ritual transforms the distribution of certificates into a meaningful group celebration.

Each participant receives someone else's certificate and is asked to speak about that per-

son's unique strengths and contributions to the group.

After the recognition, the certificate is handed over, and the process continues until every participant is acknowledged.

Instructions

01. Randomly distribute certificates so that no one receives their own.

02. ne participant begins by describing the person whose certificate they hold, speaking about:

The unique strengths and talents this person brought

Their contribution to the project or group

Their qualities that positively impact the world

03. After the sharing, they hand the certificate to the person being described.

04. That person then continues the process, describing the participant whose certificate they now hold.

05. Continue in this way until every participant has received their certificate and been recognized.

Examples of reflections

"You brought such a calm, grounding energy to our group. Your presence helped others feel safe."

"I saw how you always noticed who needed support — your empathy is one of your greatest gifts."

"Your ideas were so creative, and you weren't afraid to express yourself. That inspired me."

Possible Variations

Circle Format: Have everyone seated in a circle to emphasize shared presence.

Partner Prep: If the group is very shy or emotional, allow short preparation time for notes before speaking.

Group Blessing: After one person is recognized, allow others to briefly add one word or sentence of appreciation.

Silent Option: If speaking is difficult, participants can write their reflections and read them quietly or give them in writing.

Remarks or sensitive moments

Some participants may feel shy or unsure — Some participants may feel nervous speaking in front of the group — create a safe and accepting atmosphere.

Emotions may arise — allow space for vulnerability and silence.

Ensure that everyone is recognized with care and attention, avoiding rushed or overly general statements.

If someone does not receive deep recognition, the facilitator can step in to affirm their contributions.

This activity is often remembered as the most meaningful moment of a project. It highlights the power of community, reflection, and the gifts we all carry — and it allows each person to leave feeling seen, valued, and empowered.

Recognition visual ritual

Community Speaks

“ A joyful moment of celebrating who we are and what we bring”

“The greatest gift you can give someone is your own personal development”

Jim Rohn



09



Touch of Appreciation



20-30min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a deeply respectful and non-verbal space. All actions should be carried out with gentleness, care, and consent. Participants are invited to express gratitude in silence, focusing on meaningful connections. Participation is always voluntary, and personal experiences should be held with confidentiality and compassion.



Position in the Workshop

This is a powerful reflection and closing activity, ideally placed at the end of the program to acknowledge personal impact and build emotional closure.



Keywords

#appreciation *#giftconversation*
#recognition *#PeterBlock*
#strengths *#empowerment*
#communitybuilding *#ceremony*
#reflection *#activelisting*

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To foster a sense of appreciation and connection within the group
- ✓ To create a quiet, emotional, and reflective space for mutual recognition
- ✓ To reinforce self-worth and highlight the impact of individual contributions
- ✓ To support closure by strengthening group bonds

Previous Skills

No prior experience is required. Participants only need a willingness to engage in silence and connection with others.

Materials

- Quiet space large enough for a circle
- A printed or digital list of phrases of appreciation
- Optional: soft background music for atmosphere

Description of the Activity

In this intimate, non-verbal ritual, participants sit in a circle with their backs to the center and eyes closed. Small groups take turns entering the middle.

As the facilitator reads appreciation phrases aloud, those in the center gently touch the

shoulders of participants to whom the phrase applies.

This continues until everyone has participated, creating a moment of shared empathy and unspoken affirmation.

Instructions

01. Set the Scene:

Ask participants to sit in a circle, facing outward with eyes closed.

Emphasize that no words will be spoken — only gentle touches are used to express appreciation.

02. Select the First Group:

Invite 4–6 participants into the center of the circle.

Instruct them to listen to each phrase and gently touch the shoulder of the person they feel it applies to.

03. Read the Phrases:

Slowly and clearly read appreciation phrases such as:

“Someone who made you smile.”

“Someone you trust.”

“Someone who inspired you.”

“Someone who always had positive energy.”

“Someone you will never forget.”

04. Rotate Participants:

After 5–6 phrases, invite a new group into the center and repeat the process.

Continue until everyone has had a chance to be in the middle.

05. Closing Reflection:

Invite the group to take a deep breath and slowly open their eyes.

Allow space for silent reflection or invite a few volunteers to share their thoughts or feelings.

Examples of reflections

(Those in the center respond silently with a shoulder touch.)

Someone who listened to you

Someone you trust

Someone who inspired you

Someone who shared a meaningful moment with you

Someone who has a warm and beautiful soul

Someone who you want to hug

Someone who made you change your opinion about their culture

Someone you will never forget

(Full list can be printed or projected if needed.)

Possible Variations

Themed Version: Focus the phrases on teamwork, leadership, or personal growth.

Writing Version: Allow participants to write anonymous appreciation notes instead of touching.

Music Version: Play calming or emotional instrumental music to enhance atmosphere.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may feel emotional or tearful — allow space for this and offer quiet support.

Ensure everyone receives touches; facilitators can join in if needed.

Be mindful of participants who may feel discomfort with physical contact — gentle taps on the back or the option to observe should be respected.

Close the activity with care, offering grounding if needed (deep breathing, stretching, gentle movement).

This gentle, emotional activity leaves a lasting sense of connection, affirming the impact each person has on the group — often remembered as one of the most touching moments of the entire experience.

Touch of appreciation

Community Speaks

“ I felt seen, valued, and deeply connected to others”

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it”
William Arthur Ward



10

The Village of Social Presencing Theater



20-30min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 5-40 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a space of embodied awareness, non-judgment, and collective exploration. Participants are invited to engage with curiosity, openness, and presence. Movement should remain gentle and intuitive. No movement is right or wrong, and everyone is encouraged to honor their own boundaries and comfort levels. Silence is respected.



Position in the Workshop

Ideal for building group cohesion, mindfulness, and awareness. It can be placed at the beginning of a workshop to establish presence and group dynamic, or at the end for collective reflection and integration.



Keywords

#embodiment
#socialfield
#teambuilding

#presence
#mindfulness
#non-verbalcommunication
#awareness

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ Develop awareness of self and group dynamics through presence and movement
- ✓ Explore how spatial relationships communicate inclusion, exclusion, leadership, and support
- ✓ Practice shifting from individual awareness (“ego”) to collective awareness (“eco”)
- ✓ Cultivate flexibility in leading, following, and responding within a shared space

Previous Skills

No prior experience is needed. Participants should be willing to engage with movement-based exploration and mindful group interaction.

Materials

Open space with a safe, clean floor (wooden, carpeted, or yoga mats)

Comfortable clothing for movement

Optional: soft background music or gentle drumming for rhythm

Description of the Activity

The Village of SPT is a non-verbal, movement-based practice adapted from Social Presencing Theater.

Participants gradually shift from individual exploration to collective movement, learning to

notice the social field and the unspoken ways we interact. Through simple gestures (standing, sitting, walking, lying down, turning, greeting), the group organically forms a “village” — an emergent, co-created space of presence and connection.

Instructions

Part 1: Grounding and Individual Awareness

Ask participants to spread out and stand quietly.

Guide them through body awareness cues:

Feel your feet on the ground

Breathe deeply and notice the space around you

Begin exploring four movements: stand, sit, walk, turn

Let participants move slowly, with closed or soft eyes if comfortable.

Part 2: Social Awareness in Small Groups

Form groups of 5 people.

Explore the same four gestures together.

Invite observation of:

Spatial proximity

How one’s movement influences the group

How awareness changes in the presence of others

Pause for brief reflection.

Part 3: The Full Village Dance

All participants now move freely in the space, incorporating:

Stand, sit, lie down (optional), walk, run, turn, greet

Encourage exploration of patterns:

Who leads? Who follows?

Are people clustering or mirroring each other?

How does the group flow shift?

Part 4: Noticing Others – The Greeting Gesture

Introduce the greeting gesture:

Make eye contact

Offer a small bow or nod

Return to movement

Let participants explore how greetings shift the group’s energy.

Part 5: The Final Village Dance

Now fully integrate all gestures.

Encourage fluid, natural movement.

Guide participants to shift from “doing” to “being” — sensing the group as one living organism.

Reflection & Debriefing

01. Open Reflection:

What did you notice in the Village?

What emotions or sensations arose?

Did you feel included or excluded?

02. Deeper Inquiry:

What role did imitation or clustering play?

Did you notice leadership or group flow?

How did the greeting gesture change your experience?

Optional: Journaling, pair reflections, or small group discussion

Examples of reflections prompts

"I noticed I hesitated to lead, but felt drawn to follow."

"I felt seen when someone greeted me."

"I realized how much I adapt to others' pace without even thinking."

Possible Variations

Silent Village: Skip verbal debrief and allow for internal processing.

Paired Reflections: Pair participants for post-activity conversations.

Soundscape Integration: Use natural or ambient music to support rhythm and flow.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Participants may feel vulnerable — remind them that awareness is more important than performance.

Allow for opt-out or seated participation for those uncomfortable with movement.

Encourage softness, presence, and non-verbal connection over activity or effort.

Key Takeaway

This practice cultivates embodied group awareness, moving from "I" to "We."

Participants experience how presence, space, and silent gestures shape the social field.

It fosters connection, reflection, and mindfulness, leaving a lasting impact on how we see ourselves in relation to others.

Village of Social Presencing Theater

Community Speaks

“A powerful experience of moving as one body, one heart”

***“The body says what words cannot”
Martha Graham***



11

Breathwork



15-30min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a quiet, mindful, and introspective space. Participants are encouraged to breathe consciously, listen to their bodies, and honor their personal limits. All practices should be approached with awareness, gentleness, and respect for oneself and others. Silence and stillness are part of the practice.



Position in the Workshop

Used as a morning awareness practice, relaxation tool, or as part of a deeper self-awareness or spiritual reflection segment.



Keywords

#breathwork *#spirituality*
#mindfulness *#well-being*
#awareness *#stressreduction*
#energybalance *#self-reflection*
#pranayama *#grounding*

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ Cultivate mindfulness and present-moment awareness
- ✓ Support emotional regulation and enhance focus
- ✓ Offer practical tools for stress relief, energy balancing, and relaxation
- ✓ Encourage self-reflection and inner transformation through breath

Previous Skills

No prior experience is needed. The facilitator should guide the breathing exercises gently and be familiar with the techniques introduced.

Materials

Comfortable seating (cushions, chairs, or yoga mats)

A quiet, peaceful space free from distractions

Description of the Activity

This breathwork session introduces participants to pranayama-based techniques designed to foster clarity, relaxation, and emotional balance.

Through conscious breathing, participants shift from stress and distraction to centered awa-

reness. Practices are selected to match the group's energy and intentions, and each technique connects body, mind, and spirit — offering grounding, balance, and empowerment.

Instructions

01. Preparation and Grounding (3–5 minutes):

Invite participants to sit comfortably with a straight spine.

Guide a short grounding:

Feel your body supported by the floor or chair.

Begin observing the natural rhythm of your breath.

Let the body relax and settle.

02. Choose and Guide One Breath Technique (5–15 minutes):

Facilitator selects one or more of the following, based on group needs:

- **Ujjayi Breath (Victorious Breath):**

For clarity and calm

Inhale slowly through the nose with a soft throat constriction
(ocean-like sound)

Exhale slowly with the same constriction

Focus on releasing tension or “what no longer serves”

- **Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing):**

For emotional balance and mental clarity

Close the right nostril, inhale through the left

Switch and exhale through the right

Inhale through the right, switch, exhale through the left

Continue alternating for several rounds

- **Kapalabhati (Skull-Shining Breath):**

For energy and motivation

Take a deep inhale, then forcefully exhale by contracting the belly

Allow passive inhales between sharp exhalations

Practice for 20–30 breaths, rest, repeat 2–3 rounds

- **Box Breathing (Four-Part Breath):**
For calm and focus

Inhale for 4 counts - Hold 4 - Exhale 4 - Hold 4
Repeat the cycle for 2–5 minutes

03. Set Intention (2 minutes):

Invite participants to set a personal or spiritual intention
Reflect silently on what they wish to cultivate or release today

04. Silent Observation (2–3 minutes):

Allow the group to sit in silence, observing internal shifts
Optional: invite a short mantra or affirmation (e.g., “I am calm, I am present”)

05. Closing & Reflection (3–5 minutes):

Guide participants back gently with a few deep breaths and gentle movement

Offer space for journaling or sharing how they feel

Remind them to carry breath awareness into the rest of their day



Examples of Workshop Integration

Morning breathwork to start the day with clarity and energy

As a grounding practice before deep conversations or reflection

In safe space sessions for stress regulation and inner balance

Possible Variations

Themed Breathwork: Pair with themes like “letting go,” “grounding,” “clarity,” or “empowerment”

Silent Breath Awareness: Skip verbal cues and allow participants to explore their breath alone

Movement Integration: Combine breath with gentle yoga or stretching for body-mind connection

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Participants may feel light-headed — encourage slow pacing and self-awareness

Avoid deep pranayama techniques for those with respiratory or cardiovascular concerns

Offer trauma-sensitive facilitation: grounding, present-focused, and optional participation

Reassure participants that their breath is always their anchor — simple awareness is enough

This gentle and transformative method is a simple yet powerful way to deepen self-awareness, reconnect with the body, and begin the day with calm presence and intention.

“Breathing deeply gave me calm and clarity I didn’t expect”

12

Possibility Conversation



30-45min.

(Inspired by Peter Block)



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 8-40 participants



Age

16+



Code of Conduct

This space invites hope, imagination, and courage. Everyone is encouraged to speak from the heart, listen deeply, and stay present to one another's visions. This is not a space for fixing problems, but for creating new futures. Judgment, cynicism, and passive listening are left at the door.



Position in the Workshop

This activity is perfect at the beginning of a project to build vision, or toward the end to encourage reflection, ownership, and commitment to future action.



Keywords

#transformatin *#activelisting*
#communitybuilding *#visioning*
#empowerment *#mindsetshift*

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ Shift participants' focus from problems to possibilities
- ✓ Spark hopeful, imaginative dialogue about what can be created together
- ✓ Encourage personal responsibility and action toward change
- ✓ Strengthen a shared sense of vision and belonging within the group

Previous Skills

No prior experience necessary. Participants need only curiosity and openness to engage in honest, reflective conversation.

Materials

Chairs arranged in small circles (4-6 per group)

Printed prompts (optional)

Flipchart or large paper to gather insights

Description of the Activity

The Possibility Conversation invites participants to leave behind traditional problem-focused thinking and enter a space of vision, agency, and connection.

In small groups, participants explore what matters most to them and what future they stand

for. Rather than analyzing limitations, they name the possibility they want to help bring to life.

It's a powerful shift in mindset—from “What’s wrong?” to “What’s possible?”

Instructions

01. Setting the Space (5 minutes):

Arrange chairs in small circles of 4–6 people; no tables between them.

Frame the space as one of trust, possibility, and creativity.

Explain the shift:

From problem-solving - to visioning
From “What’s not working?” - to “What could be?”

02. Framing the Dialogue (5 minutes):

Introduce the key reflection questions:

“What possibility do you stand for?”
“What could we create together if we had no fear?”
“What are you willing to commit to to bring this to life?”

03. Small Group Conversations (20–25 minutes):

In small circles, invite participants to reflect and speak to questions such as:

What possibility do you see for yourself or this group?
What would we create if there were no constraints?
What do you deeply care about, and how does that shape what’s possible?
What action—however small—are you willing to take toward this vision?

Encourage storytelling, vulnerability, and deep listening.

04. Sharing Insights (5–7 minutes):

Invite each group to share key takeaways, themes, or bold ideas.

Capture these on a flipchart or poster as a visual record of the collective vision.

05. Closing Reflection (5 minutes):
Ask participants:

What was it like to speak about possibility instead of problems?

What surprised or inspired you?

What one action are you committed to taking next?

Reinforce the message: “The future we want isn’t something to predict — it’s something we create.”

Examples of reflections prompts

What’s the boldest idea you’re ready to stand behind?

What would your community look like if everyone lived this possibility?

What conversation are you avoiding that could unlock something new?

Possible Variations

Silent Reflection First: 5 minutes of journaling before speaking

Walking Dialogues: Encourage pairs to walk and talk outdoors

Creative Expression: Invite participants to draw their vision and share with the group

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Participants may default to listing problems — gently steer them back to visioning

Some may feel cynical — validate their experience and invite “what if…” thinking

Ensure all voices are heard — the facilitator may need to support quieter participants

Emphasize this is not about guarantees, but about intention and direction

Key Takeaways

The Possibility Conversation helps shift group energy from resignation to hope

It nurtures agency, creativity, and the courage to act

It's a foundational tool for building community and catalyzing change



Community Speaks

“We envisioned futures filled with hope and agency”

***“The best way to predict the future is to create it”
Peter Drucker***

13

Mindful Trekking



60-120min.



Target Group

Also appropriate for youth workers and social workers interested in mindfulness-based practices



Number

Recommended for 5-20 participants



Age

Suitable for youth and adults, especially young women (18-30 years)



Code of Conduct

This is a quiet, reflective space where participants are encouraged to be present, respectful of silence, and fully engaged with nature and their surroundings. Phones should be silenced or kept away, and conversation kept minimal unless prompted. Participants are asked to move at a gentle pace and to honor both their own boundaries and those of others.



Position in the Workshop

This activity can be used:

As an icebreaker to foster connection and presence

As a core practice for developing mindfulness and emotional well-being

As a closing ritual to consolidate learning and provide reflective closure



Keywords

#mindfulness *#well-being*
#nature *#empowerment*
#self-awareness *#connection*
#emotionalresilience *#outdoorpractice*
#stressmanagement *#belonging*
#grounding *#teambuilding*
 #physicalactivity

Method Objective Goals

- ✓ Foster mental clarity and self-awareness through movement in nature
- ✓ Strengthen emotional resilience and reduce stress
- ✓ Deepen connection with oneself, the group, and the environment
- ✓ Provide accessible mindfulness tools participants can use in everyday life

Previous Skills

No prior experience with mindfulness or trekking is required. Participants simply need a willingness to engage with the activity and a curiosity to explore through movement and stillness.

Materials

Comfortable walking shoes
Weather-appropriate clothing
Water bottles
Journals or notepads for reflection
Optional: yoga mats or blankets for seated meditation

Description of the Activity

Mindful Trekking is a guided walk through nature that integrates mindfulness techniques such as conscious breathing, sensory awareness, and reflection.

This gentle yet powerful practice supports emotional regulation, inner calm, and a sen-

se of grounding. It invites participants to slow down, connect deeply with themselves, and feel a greater sense of belonging to their environment and group.

Instructions

01. Introduction (10–15 minutes)

Welcome participants and explain the purpose and benefits of Mindful Trekking

Invite them to set an intention for the walk (e.g., release stress, find clarity, reconnect with self)

Ask for minimal use of phones and to embrace silence or gentle awareness

Provide any safety or route information

02. Mindful Walking (30–60 minutes)

Guide participants to walk slowly and consciously, with attention to each step

Offer breathing cues: inhale for 3 steps, exhale for 3 steps

Encourage sensory awareness—notice colors, textures, sounds, scents

Include a silent walking period of at least 10 minutes

Invite grounding practices: touching trees, pausing to observe, feeling the earth beneath

Keep a gentle and encouraging tone throughout

03. Reflection & Sharing (20–30 minutes)

Gather participants in a quiet seated circle or natural resting space

Ask reflective prompts such as:

“How do you feel now compared to when we started?”

“What did you notice about your surroundings or your internal state?”

Invite journaling or sharing in pairs/small groups

Examples

A youth leadership group uses Mindful Trekking to reflect on personal growth and emotional balance

A session for young migrant women explores feelings of belonging and inner strength through movement in nature

Possible Variations

Gratitude Trek: Focus each segment on something participants are grateful for

Urban Version: Use a local park or quiet city route instead of natural trails

Story Points: Pause at intervals for participants to share personal stories or metaphors

Movement Integration: Include gentle stretching or short breathing exercises during pauses

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may have mobility limitations—adjust the route accordingly

Silence may feel uncomfortable for some—reassure them that this is normal

Participants with past trauma related to nature should be supported with care and offered alternatives

Always check the weather in advance and have a backup plan for indoor mindfulness

Mindful trekking

Community Speaks

“Walking in silence helped me hear my own thoughts clearly”

“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks”

John Muir



14



Working with Clay: Expressing Emotions Through Creativity



60-90min.



Target Group

Also suitable for youth workers, social workers, and anyone exploring emotional self-expression through art



Number

Recommended for 5-15 participants



Age

Young people, especially young women (18-30 years old)



Code of Conduct

This is a space for quiet reflection, open expression, and creative exploration. Participants are encouraged to respect each other's process and privacy. There is no judgment—only presence, support, and openness to what arises through the creative process. Sharing is invited, but never required.



Position in the Workshop

Can be used as an icebreaker to relax and open creative flow

As a core activity for emotional exploration and mindfulness

As a closing ritual to reflect on themes or experiences from the workshop



Keywords

#creativity
#self-expression
#mindfulness
#emotions
#grounding
#tactileexperience
#empowerment
#arttherapy
#non-verbalcommunication
#physicalactivity

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Encourage emotional expression through tactile, creative means
- ✓ Provide a grounding, mindful experience that supports focus and inner calm
- ✓ Foster a sense of accomplishment and pride in artistic creation
- ✓ Offer a non-verbal pathway for exploring inner themes and personal stories

Previous Skills

No artistic experience is required. The method is intuitive, exploratory, and focuses on process rather than final product. Participants only need a willingness to engage and explore through touch and form.

Materials

Natural clay or air-dry clay (one small block)

Basic shaping tools (can include rolling pins, spoons, toothpicks, small knives, etc.)

Water bowls for softening and shaping clay

Optional: cloths or mats to protect tables, aprons, or hand wipes

Description of the Activity

This tactile method allows participants to connect with their emotions through clay modeling.

By working with their hands, participants focus inward, release tension, and create symbolic shapes that may reflect feelings, stories, or inner states.

The physicality of clay brings a grounding, calming energy to the space and invites self-reflection through texture, movement, and form.

Instructions

01. Introduction (10 min)

Welcome participants and introduce the purpose of the activity: to explore and express emotions through working with clay

Emphasize that this is not about making “beautiful” objects—this is about feeling and expressing

Set a tone of mindfulness, openness, and personal exploration

02. Centering Practice (5 min, optional)

Invite participants to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths

Encourage them to check in with how they’re feeling emotionally and physically

Suggest they set a quiet intention for what they want to express or explore

03. Clay Creation (30–50 min)

Distribute materials

Encourage participants to begin shaping the clay—no specific goal is needed

Prompts (optional):

“Create a shape that represents how you feel right now.”

“Form an object that reminds you of home, hope, or resilience.”

“Let your hands guide you—don’t overthink.”

Let participants work mostly in silence with soft music if desired

Walk around to offer quiet support and reassurance

04. Reflection & Sharing (15–20 min)

Invite participants to look at their creations and reflect silently or in journals

Optional group sharing:

“Would anyone like to share the story behind what they made?”

“What did you feel during the process?”

“Was anything surprising or healing for you?”

Emphasize that there’s no pressure to explain—some pieces can stay private

Examples

A young woman shapes a spiral representing her journey through anxiety toward clarity

A participant creates a hand sculpture to symbolize connection and care

One person forms a broken heart that they later mend together with a second piece of clay

Possible Variations

Themed Creations – Tie the clay work to a workshop theme (e.g., “belonging,” “transformation”)

Partner Interpretation – Participants swap creations and guess the emotion or message

Group Sculpture – Work together to build a collective piece representing the group’s shared experience

Color Integration – Use colored clays to symbolize different emotions or energies

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Emotional reactions may surface—have tissues and emotional support available

Not all participants will want to share—respect silence and privacy

Be sensitive to trauma-related triggers that may arise through tactile or symbolic work

If someone struggles to begin, offer reassurance and simple prompts

This activity offers a gentle, non-verbal way to connect, reflect, and express—helping participants feel more grounded, more heard (even without words), and more empowered through their own hands.

Working with Clay

Community Speaks

“*Shaping my feelings through clay was unexpectedly healing*”

“Creativity is intelligence having fun”
Albert Einstein



15



Migration/ Refugee Iceberg



45-60min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth (14+)



Number

Recommended for
10-25 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a respectful and inclusive space for dialogue on sensitive social topics. Participants are encouraged to express thoughts openly while remaining empathetic and nonjudgmental. Personal stories are always voluntary. Emotional safety is a priority, and active listening is essential.



Position in the Workshop

This activity fits well midway through a workshop or project, once group trust is established. It serves as a reflective turning point and deepens the emotional engagement with the project theme.



Keywords

#migration
#refugee
#empathy

#engagement
#groupdiscussion
#criticalthinking

#awareness
#support
#diversity

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Explore the visible and invisible aspects of migration and refugee experiences
- ✓ Challenge societal assumptions and highlight emotional, legal, and psychological struggles
- ✓ Promote empathy, understanding, and solidarity
- ✓ Facilitate meaningful discussions on differences and commonalities between migrants and refugees
- ✓ Identify practical actions that promote support and inclusion

Previous Skills

No prior knowledge required, but participants should be open to respectful discussion and willing to explore emotional and social themes. The facilitator should have strong skills in moderation and emotional awareness.

Materials

Large flipchart or craft paper sheets (one per group)

Colored markers or pencils

Space for small-group work and large-group presentation

Description of the Activity

Using the metaphor of an iceberg, participants explore what society sees (above the waterline) versus what is often hidden (below the waterline) in the lives of migrants and refugees.

This activity brings out both external stereotypes and internal struggles, encouraging participants to think more deeply and discuss how society can become more supportive.

Instructions

01. Group Formation (5 min)

Divide participants into small groups of 4–5 people
Assign each group either “Migration” or “Refugee Experience” as their theme

02. Drawing the Iceberg (5–10 min)

Each group draws a large iceberg with two sections:

Above the Waterline: what is visible to society (e.g., stereotypes, media narratives, visible differences)

Below the Waterline: what is hidden (e.g., trauma, legal barriers, cultural loss, identity crises, strength and resilience)

03. Group Discussion and Brainstorming (15–20 min)

Groups brainstorm and write down their ideas in each section of the iceberg
Encourage the inclusion of both challenges and strengths

Prompts may include:

“What do people commonly assume about migrants/refugees?”

“What emotional or systemic challenges are rarely seen or acknowledged?”

“What inner strengths do migrants and refugees develop?”

04. Group Presentations (10–15 min)

Each group presents their iceberg to the whole group
Invite reflections, questions, or additions from the audience

05. Whole Group Discussion (10 min)

Facilitate a discussion on:

Differences and similarities between the two icebergs

The contrast between perceptions and realities

How society could become more understanding and supportive

Invite participants with lived experience to share if they feel safe and willing

06. Emotional Grounding (as needed)

If emotions run high, lead a brief grounding exercise (e.g., 5-4-3-2-1 technique or deep breathing)

Examples

Above the Waterline (Migration): “Looking for better jobs,” “Foreign accents,” “Taking jobs,” “Don’t want to integrate”

Below the Waterline (Migration): “Missing home,” “Navigating identity,” “Discrimination,” “Fear of deportation,” “Dreams of a better life”

Above the Waterline (Refugees): “Pity,” “Victims,” “Scary,” “Desperate”

Below the Waterline (Refugees): “Resilience,” “Post-traumatic stress,” “Uncertainty about the future,” “Loss of family,” “Gratitude for safety”

Possible Variations

Role Cards: Assign different stakeholder roles (e.g., migrant, host community, policymaker) and ask them to reflect on perceptions

Personal Iceberg: Have participants create their own personal iceberg related to identity or belonging

Follow-up Poster Creation: Turn icebergs into posters for an awareness-raising exhibition

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may have personal experiences with migration or trauma—be respectful and avoid forcing anyone to share

Offer emotional support and debriefing if needed

Ensure balance between recognizing challenges and highlighting resilience

Reinforce confidentiality and psychological safety throughout

This method opens up powerful, honest conversations about migration, identity, and societal responsibility. It brings what is hidden to the surface and invites communities to see migrants and refugees in their full human complexity.

Migration/Refugee Iceberg

Community Speaks

“ It opened my eyes to the hidden experiences beneath the surface”

“We are all more than what we show”
Unknown



16

Rise with intention: A Mindful sun salutation



5-30min.



Target Group

Suitable for all fitness levels, including beginners



Number

Recommended for 1-20 participants



Age

Young people, especially young women (18-30 years old)



Code of Conduct

This is a space of mindfulness, embodiment, and self-respect. Each participant is invited to move at their own pace, listen to their body, and honor their boundaries. Breath and movement are guided, but individuality is always respected. Silence and presence are welcomed.



Position in the Workshop

As a morning awareness practice or energizer

As a core activity for emotional grounding and physical well-being

As a closing practice for reflection and gratitude



Keywords

#mindfulness *#energyflow* *#strength*
#movement *#self-awareness* *#gratitude*
#yoga *#empowerment* *#flexibility*
#breathing

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Energize and ground the body and mind through a mindful movement sequence
- ✓ Improve flexibility, posture, and physical strength
- ✓ Promote mental clarity, emotional balance, and presence
- ✓ Cultivate gratitude and awareness through intentional breathing and movement
- ✓ Provide a tool for self-care, reflection, and empowerment

Previous Skills

No prior yoga experience is required

Participants should be open to movement, reflection, and breath awareness

Materials

Yoga mats or soft ground

Comfortable, breathable clothing

Optional: calming music, guided audio, or printed visuals of the 12 steps

Description of the Activity

Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskara) is a traditional 12-posture sequence that synchronizes breath with movement to awaken energy, build resilience, and promote mindfulness.

This method can be practiced dynamically or slowly and can be enhanced with personal intentions or gratitude themes for a deeper experience.

Instructions

01. Introduction (5 min)

Explain that Sun Salutation is a dynamic meditation that strengthens both body and mind

Introduce the idea of dedicating each round to a personal or collective intention (optional: gratitude themes)

2. Flow Practice (5–25 min)

Guide participants through the 12 classical postures, with breath cues:

Pranamasana (Prayer Pose) – Grounding breath

Hasta Uttanasana (Overhead Stretch) – Inhale, arms rise

Uttanasana (Forward Fold) – Exhale, fold forward

Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Lunge) – Inhale, right leg back

Phalakasana (Plank) – Exhale, step back into plank

Ashtanga Namaskara (Eight-Limbed Pose) – Lower knees, chest, chin

Bhujangasana (Cobra) – Inhale, lift chest

Parvatasana (Downward Dog) – Exhale, lift hips

Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Lunge other side) – Inhale, left leg forward

Uttanasana – Exhale, forward fold

Hasta Uttanasana – Inhale, arms rise

Pranamasana – Exhale, return to prayer pose

Repeat on the opposite side (start with opposite leg in Step 4)

Optional Theme-Based Gratitude Flow (5 rounds):

Round 1: Gratitude for self

Round 2: Gratitude for teachers or mentors

Round 3: Gratitude for ancestors and history

Round 4: Gratitude for community

Round 5: Gratitude for today's opportunities and challenges

03. Closing Reflection (5 min)

Invite silence or journaling

Suggested questions:

“What changed in your body or mind during the sequence?”

“What are you grateful for today?”

Offer optional sharing in pairs or as a group

Examples

A morning ritual in a youth retreat to awaken energy

A workshop session on body awareness and emotional resilience

A mindfulness segment in a women’s empowerment training

Possible Variations

Slow Flow: Practice the sequence slowly with long breaths and pauses

Affirmation Flow: Add silent or spoken affirmations with each pose (e.g., “I am grounded,” “I am grateful”)

Partner Flow: Mirror postures together for connection and support

Silent Flow: Perform without verbal cues to encourage deeper self-connection

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Participants may experience physical or emotional release—invite gentle acceptance

Offer modifications for physical limitations (e.g., bend knees in forward fold, skip lying down if needed)

Remind that it’s not about perfection, but about presence and listening to one’s own body

Culturally contextualize yoga, being respectful of its roots and inclusive in presentation

This method brings focus, energy, and inner peace to participants, while also offering space for gratitude and grounding. Practiced with awareness, it becomes a powerful daily ritual for self-care and transformation.

Sun Salutation

Community Speaks

“ I felt energized and centered in my body”

“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live”

Jim Rohn



17

Building a Thriving Community with the PERMA Model



45-60min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-40 participants



Age

16+



Code of Conduct

This is a respectful and inclusive space. Participants are encouraged to reflect openly, listen actively, and engage constructively. All contributions are valued. There are no wrong answers—only diverse perspectives. Kindness, presence, and curiosity are key.



Position in the Workshop

This activity works well near the beginning of a workshop to spark vision and connection or towards the end for collective reflection and future planning.



Keywords

#well-being *#resilience*
#communitybuilding *#engagement*
#positivepsychology *#reflection*
#PERMA *#empowerment*

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Introduce the PERMA model of well-being in a practical and accessible way
- ✓ Encourage participants to reflect on and co-create a vision of a thriving community
- ✓ Identify strengths, gaps, and possibilities within a group or project
- ✓ Inspire small, personal commitments that contribute to collective well-being

Previous Skills

No prior knowledge of the PERMA model required. Just an openness to reflect, listen, and participate.

Materials

Flipchart paper, large whiteboard, or craft paper

Markers and post-its

Printed PERMA model prompts (optional)

Comfortable space for small group conversations

Description of the Activity

The PERMA model (developed by psychologist Martin Seligman) outlines five essential pillars of well-being:

- P – Positive Emotions
- E – Engagement
- R – Relationships
- M – Meaning
- A – Accomplishment

This method invites participants to explore these elements within their own group or community—identifying what’s working, what could be nurtured, and how each person can contribute to building a flourishing environment.

Instructions

01. Introduction to the PERMA Model (10 min)

Present the five elements briefly with relatable examples:

- P – Positive Emotions: Joy, gratitude, humor, hope
- E – Engagement: Flow, curiosity, deep involvement
- R – Relationships: Trust, belonging, connection
- M – Meaning: Shared purpose, values, identity
- A – Accomplishment: Progress, growth, celebration

Emphasize that PERMA is about building on strengths, not fixing problems.

02. Group Reflection on PERMA (25 min)

Split participants into five small groups, each assigned one PERMA pillar. Give each group reflection prompts related to their theme:

- Positive Emotions: What brings joy or hope here?
- Engagement: When do we feel most energized and involved?
- Relationships: What makes us feel supported and connected?
- Meaning: What gives us a sense of purpose or identity?
- Accomplishment: How do we recognize growth and effort?

Groups write their insights on flipcharts or post-its.

03. Collective Sharing & Community Map (15 min)

Gather in a large circle. Each group presents their findings. Compile insights into a “Flourishing Community Map” on a central board. Highlight recurring themes, surprising discoveries, and missing elements.

04. Commitment to Action: “One Small Change” (10 min)

Each participant reflects on one small action they can take to support community well-being.

They write it on a post-it or card and place it on the Community Map.

05. Closing Reflection (5 min)

Invite a few volunteers to share what stood out. Affirm the idea: thriving communities grow from shared vision and small, intentional actions.

Examples of Insights Participants Might Discover

Positive Emotions: Creating joyful rituals, celebrating small wins

Engagement: Space for creativity and initiative

Relationships: Feeling seen and heard, trusted support

Meaning: Shared values or mission, community traditions

Accomplishment: Group projects completed, personal progress recognized

Possible Variations

Silent Journaling: Begin with personal reflection before group work

Walking Dialogue: Discuss each pillar in pairs while walking outdoors

Creative Expression: Draw or collage visions of a thriving community

Ongoing Map: Leave the map up for the entire project to add to daily

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Encourage inclusivity—use prompts that welcome diverse perspectives

Redirect focus gently if discussion becomes problem-focused

Some may feel disillusioned or disconnected—validate these emotions while inviting hope and agency

Key Takeaway

The PERMA model offers a practical language for cultivating well-being

Each person contributes to the emotional and social health of a group

A thriving community is not a perfect one—it's one where people show up with care, curiosity, and a commitment to grow together

Building a Thriving Community (PERMA Model)

Community Speaks

**“ I learned practical ways to
nurture well-being and purpose”**

***“The good life is a process, not a state of being.
It is a direction, not a destination”
Carl Rogers***



18



Body Mapping



90-120min.



Target Group

Can be adapted for younger or older groups involved in emotional exploration or healing



Number

Recommended for 10-25 participants



Age

16+



Code of Conduct

This is a safe space for emotional expression and vulnerability. All participants are encouraged to engage with care, confidentiality, and respect—for themselves and others. Sharing is always voluntary. Active listening and non-judgmental presence are essential throughout the session.



Position in the Workshop

This method is best used after trust-building activities and once the group rapport has been established. It fits well mid-way through the workshop or before the final reflections as a deep emotional and creative processing activity.



Keywords

#bodymapping *#teambuilding*
#emotionalrelease *#emotionalhealing*
#vulnerability *#self-expression*
#reflection *#arttherapy*
#empowerment *#storytelling*

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ To help participants externalize and reflect on personal experiences, challenges, and emotional stories through body mapping
- ✓ To support emotional release by creatively expressing and then letting go of personal burdens
- ✓ To promote self-awareness, empowerment, and healing
- ✓ To encourage empathy and connection through group sharing and reflective dialogue
- ✓ To make internal narratives visible and offer symbolic transformation

Previous Skills

No prior artistic or therapeutic experience required. Participants should feel emotionally safe and open to self-expression. Facilitator must be experienced in holding emotional space and managing vulnerability within groups.

Materials

- Large sheets of paper (A1 or larger)
- Colored markers, pens, and pencils
- Scissors (for release/destruction stage)
- Tape or chalk for outlining body shapes (optional)
- Comfortable space for participants to lie down or move freely
- Quiet, calm atmosphere for reflections

Description of the Activity

1. Introduction (15 min)

Introduce body mapping as a creative method for externalizing internal stories. Emphasize that this is about emotional expression—not artistic skill. Ask participants to outline their body on a large sheet (lying down and tracing or drawing a shape).

2. Body Mapping and Reflection (20–30 min)

Invite participants to reflect on personal experiences: emotions, fears, challenges, hopes. They write, draw, or use color/symbols to represent these experiences within the body outline. Encourage identifying where in the body these feelings are held. Participants work in silence or soft background music can be played.

3. Sharing in Pairs/Small Groups (20–30 min)

Divide participants into pairs or trios to share their maps. Encourage empathy, active listening, and confidentiality. Sharing is optional but encouraged.

4. Symbolic Release (20–30 min)

Transition to a moment of letting go: invite participants to reflect on what they wish to release. They are then guided to tear, crumple, or cut their body maps as a physical act of emotional release. Frame this as a personal ritual of transformation.

5. Group Reflection (15 min)

Bring the group together and invite voluntary sharing:
How did it feel to create and reflect on your map?
What emotions arose during the release?

What are you walking away with?

Optional: invite participants to journal a closing thought or affirmation.

Instructions

01. Trace or draw your body outline on a large sheet of paper.
02. Reflect on your emotional experiences, challenges, and personal journey.
03. Use symbols, drawings, or words to represent these stories on your body map.
04. Share your map and insights with a partner or small group.
05. Engage in the collective release by tearing or transforming your body map.
06. Reflect together on what this process brought up for you.

Examples

A participant draws tight ropes around the chest to represent anxiety and scissors near the feet to symbolize freedom through movement.

Another marks tears near the eyes with the word "grief," and places a light near the heart to express healing and hope.

Possible Variations

Silent Journaling: Begin with personal Collective Body Map: Create one large group outline and co-create a shared emotional map.

Movement Integration: Before or after mapping, guide the group in movement to embody or express their emotions.

Gentle Release: Offer writing + burning, folding, or burying for participants who find tearing the map too intense.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

This is a deep emotional process. Be prepared to hold space for vulnerability, including sadness or silence.

Some participants may feel resistance—validate their emotions without pressure to participate fully.

Ensure trauma-informed facilitation—know when to offer grounding tools or pause.

Emphasize the importance of self-care after the activity.

Key Takeaways

Emotions live in the body, and mapping helps make the invisible visible.

Expressive art can support emotional healing and transformation.

Shared vulnerability creates connection, empathy, and empowerment.



Community Speaks

“ Letting go of the old made space for something new”

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you”
Maya Angelou

19

Hate Speech through media analysis



60min.



Target Group

Suitable for teenagers and young adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

12+



Code of Conduct

This activity addresses sensitive and potentially triggering content. Participants are asked to remain respectful, avoid personal attacks, and maintain a safe, non-judgmental space for open dialogue. Everyone has the right to pass on any discussion that feels uncomfortable.



Position in the Workshop

This interactive session works well in the middle of a workshop focused on media literacy, online behavior, digital citizenship, or diversity and inclusion.



Keywords

#hatespeech

#onlinesafety

#criticalthinking

#discrimination

#medialiteracy

#engagement

#empathy

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ Raise awareness of online hate speech and its consequences
- ✓ Teach participants how to critically evaluate and classify online messages
- ✓ Promote empathy and digital citizenship through dialogue and analysis
- ✓ Introduce participants to legal and ethical considerations of digital communication

Previous Skills

Participants do not need prior knowledge, but the facilitator should be familiar with hate speech definitions, legal frameworks, and basic media literacy concepts.

Materials

Printed message cards (sample online comments or scenarios)

Sorting sheets labeled:

Positive / Negative / Neutral

Legal / Illegal

Protected Characteristics

(race, gender, religion, disability, etc.)

Markers or pens

Flipchart or whiteboard (for summarizing insights)

Description of the Activity

Participants engage in an imaginative, interactive scenario as digital analysts helping “Xorg the Xenovian,” a fictional alien who is new to Earth and confused by online human communication.

Through analyzing real-world-inspired messages, they explore how digital interactions affect individuals and communities.

They will reflect on tone, legality, protected characteristics, and emotional impact, enhancing their critical thinking and empathy.

Instructions

01. Introduction – Meet Xorg (10 min)

Introduce the scenario: Xorg is an alien visitor trying to understand human communication on Earth.

Explain the impact and challenges of hate speech online.

Hand out message cards (each with a short online statement).

02. Round 1 – Positive / Negative / Neutral (15 min)

Participants sort the messages using the provided sheet.

Facilitate a group discussion:

Which comments were clearly positive?

Were any neutral on the surface but negative in tone (e.g., sarcasm)?

How does intention and tone change interpretation?

03. Round 2 – Legal or Illegal? (15 min)

Participants now classify the same messages as either Legal (freedom of expression) or Illegal (hate speech, threats, discrimination).

Provide a short explanation of relevant local or European hate speech laws.

Reflection questions:

What makes a message cross the legal line?

Does intent matter more than impact?

How does context shift legality?

04. Round 3 – Protected Characteristics (15 min)

Introduce the concept of legally protected characteristics (e.g., race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation).

Participants identify which (if any) characteristics are targeted in each message.

Discuss patterns:

Which groups are most commonly targeted online?

Are some platforms more tolerant of hate than others?

05. Conclusion & Reflection (5 min)

Invite participants to reflect:

How did it feel to analyze these messages?

What surprised or challenged them?

What role can they play in creating safer digital spaces?

Share tools and platforms for reporting hate speech and supporting peers.

Examples of Questions/Prompts

“Was this comment rude or illegal?”

“Could sarcasm hide hate?”

“Which part of this message targets a protected characteristic?”

“What might Xorg learn from this message?”

Possible Variations

Silent Sort: Let participants sort the messages alone before discussing in pairs or groups.

Digital Version: Use Google Jamboard or Miro for online workshops.

Creative Closure: Ask participants to rewrite a hateful message into a positive one.

Role Play: Assign roles (e.g., bystander, target, perpetrator) and ask how each might feel.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some messages may trigger emotional responses-check in with participants throughout.

Allow participants to opt out of specific discussions or sharing.

Be prepared to pause or ground the group using mindfulness or breathing if emotions escalate.

Ensure clarity that this is not about judgment but understanding and empathy.

Key Takeaways

Hate speech isn't always obvious—tone, context, and intent matter.

Legal and ethical lines are nuanced and vary by region.

Media literacy helps young people become responsible digital citizens.



Community Speaks

“ I feel more capable of challenging harmful narratives ”

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing”

Edmund Burke

20



I love you I love you too



60min.



Target Group

Suitable for teenagers and young adults



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

12+



Code of Conduct

This activity is built on light-heartedness, respect, and inclusion. Participants are encouraged to engage playfully while remaining aware of each other's comfort levels. Consent, laughter, and a non-judgmental environment are essential. No one should feel pressured to speak or move in a way that makes them uncomfortable.



Position in the Workshop

This energizer is best placed at the beginning or middle of a workshop. It's especially effective after a heavy or serious activity, or before transitioning into more reflective work, helping to create a relaxed and connected group energy.



Keywords

#movement
#teambuilding
#safespace

#communication
#engagement
#fun

Method Objective/Goals

- ✓ To relax and energize participants through physical movement and shared laughter
- ✓ To lower barriers and increase group connection in a light, playful way
- ✓ To create a joyful and inclusive atmosphere
- ✓ To build comfort and engagement within the group

Previous Skills

None required. Participants simply need an open mind and willingness to engage in play.

Materials

Chairs (one fewer than the number of participants)

Open space large enough for everyone to move freely

Description of the Activity

This is a movement-based energizer that combines humor, fast thinking, and physical interaction. Through a sequence of movements and playful dialogue, participants learn each other's names, let go of tension, and engage in joyful group connection.

The surprising twist of someone trying to claim the empty chair keeps the energy high and laughter flowing.

Instructions

01. Preparation:

Arrange chairs in a circle — one fewer than the number of participants.

All participants sit in a chair, leaving one chair empty.

One person (facilitator or volunteer) stands in the center of the circle.

02. Game Rules:

The person to the left of the empty chair quickly moves into it while saying "I love you."

The next person to the left of the new empty chair does the same, saying "I love you too."

The third person — now with an empty chair on their left — must name another participant in the circle before the person standing in the middle manages to sit in the empty chair.

The named participant must immediately move to the empty chair.

If the naming is successful, the game continues with the new empty chair, and the same person remains in the center.

If the person in the middle manages to sit down first, the person who failed to name someone becomes the new person in the center.

The game continues, with fast-paced movement and quick thinking, until the group feels relaxed, energized, and connected.

Possible Variations

Phrase Swap: Replace "I love you" with something that feels more comfortable for the group (e.g., "You rock," "High five," or "You've got this!").

Thematic Phrases: Tie the phrase to your workshop's topic (e.g., "I feel seen" in a self-awareness workshop).

Language Twist: Use different languages for intercultural learning or fun bilingual versions.

Remarks or sensitive moments

Some participants may feel awkward saying “I love you.” Use alternative phrases to suit the comfort level and context of the group.

Ensure the rules are clearly explained before starting to avoid confusion or frustration.

Always reinforce that the activity is meant to be fun and inclusive, not competitive.

If someone is not comfortable being in the center, allow them to observe or participate in a supportive role.

Key Takeaways

Simple movement and play can significantly reduce group tension.

Joy and connection foster a strong foundation for deeper learning and participation.

Energizers like this build confidence and group trust through fun, shared experience.

If someone is not comfortable being in the center, allow them to observe or participate in a supportive role.

I love you I love you too

Community Speaks

“At first awkward, then deeply moving—such powerful affirmation”

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive”

Dalai Lama



21

Princess and Castle



10-15min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth (10+)



Number

Recommended for 10-30 participants



Age

10+



Code of Conduct

This activity is rooted in playful movement, teamwork, and mutual respect. Participants are encouraged to engage actively and joyfully, making space for everyone to participate safely and inclusively. There is no competition—only fun and connection.



Position in the Workshop

This game works well as a high-energy energizer, ice-breaker, or team-building activity, especially after a sedentary session or as a warm-up at the beginning of a workshop.



Keywords

#movement
#teambuilding
#fun

#decision-making
#physicalactivity
#engagement

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ To energize participants and create a playful group atmosphere
- ✓ To foster teamwork, adaptability, and coordination
- ✓ To strengthen group dynamics and encourage connection through movement
- ✓ To practice quick decision-making in a fun and low-pressure setting

Facilitation Level

Low – Requires simple instructions but benefits from enthusiastic facilitation and safe group oversight

Materials

No materials needed

Open indoor or outdoor space that allows participants to move around freely

Description of the Activity

“Princess and Castle” is a dynamic movement game in which participants form pairs and take on the roles of castles or princesses. Castles are made by two people linking hands in an arch, while the princess is the person standing underneath.

When the facilitator shouts “Switch!”, all princesses must leave their castles and find a new one—meanwhile, the castles can choose to remain or break apart, adding unpredictability and fun to the mix. The game keeps everyone moving, thinking quickly, and working together.

Instructions

01. Set-Up:

Explain the two roles:

Castles: Two participants join hands overhead to form an arch (the “castle”), leaving space underneath.

Princesses: A single participant stands underneath a castle.

Participants form groups of three, with two as a castle and one as a princess inside.

If there’s an extra person, they start in the middle as a free princess.

02. Game Play:

The facilitator calls out “Switch!”

All princesses must quickly run to find a new castle.

Castle pairs may choose to:

Stay together and form a castle again.

Split up and become princesses themselves.

New castles form quickly to accommodate the shifting princesses.

The participant left without a castle becomes the new “free princess” in the next round.

03. Continue for several rounds, keeping the pace lively and engaging.

04. Optional Variations:

“Double Switch!” – Princesses must change twice before settling.

Add a countdown (e.g., 5 seconds) to raise the energy and challenge.

Encourage participants to make exaggerated royal gestures, funny bows, or sound effects.

05. Closing Reflection (2–3 min):

Invite participants to share how it felt to move, decide quickly, and interact playfully.

Briefly reflect on:

How they handled quick changes and uncertainty

What helped them connect and adapt during the game

Possible Variations

Thematic Version: Change characters to match your workshop (e.g., “Guardians and Portals” for a fantasy theme).

Silent Version: No talking allowed during switches—communication through gestures only.

Team Challenge: Count how many successful switches happen in a certain time.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Be mindful of physical safety—ensure the space is free of obstacles and that movements are gentle.

Watch for participants who may be shy or unsure—encourage but never pressure participation.

Reinforce that this is not about speed or winning, but about engagement and connection.

Adapt the language if “princess” and “castle” feel gendered—use neutral terms like “home” and “seeker” if needed.

Key Takeaway

Fast-paced movement combined with playful roles helps lower social barriers.

Participants experience teamwork, adaptability, and connection through joyful physical interaction.

A great energizer to reawaken focus and bring the group together with smiles and laughter.

Princess and castle

Community Speaks

“A playful way to talk about dreams, boundaries, and identity”

***“Imagination is more important than knowledge”
Albert Einstein***



22

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique



10min.



Target Group

Suitable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 10-20 participants



Age

14+



Code of Conduct

This is a gentle, non-intrusive practice. Participants are encouraged to stay present and follow the steps at their own pace. Privacy and comfort are prioritized—no one is expected to share unless they choose to.



Position in the Workshop

This technique is best used as an emergency grounding tool—either to calm heightened emotions during an intense moment or as a calming transition during a workshop. It is especially helpful for stress regulation or during a panic attack.



Keywords

#breathing *#grounding*
#calmness *#stressreduction*
#sensoryawareness *#mindfulness*

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Support self-regulation and emotional safety
- ✓ Reduce anxiety, panic, or sensory overload
- ✓ Bring participants into the present moment through sensory awareness
- ✓ Provide a practical mindfulness tool that can be used independently

Facilitation Level

Beginner – No special training needed. Facilitator simply needs to read the steps calmly and create a soothing, supportive atmosphere.

Materials

None

Description of the Activity

The 5-4-3-2-1 technique is a simple and effective grounding exercise used in moments of stress or anxiety.

By consciously noticing elements from the five senses, participants are guided back into

the present moment and out of overwhelming thoughts or sensations.

The exercise is short, accessible, and easy to lead with minimal guidance.

Instructions

01. Begin with Breath Awareness:

Invite participants to pause and take a few slow, deep breaths. Encourage long inhales through the nose and soft exhales through the mouth. Remind them: “You are safe. You are here. You are breathing.”

02. Guide the 5-4-3-2-1 Process:

Speak slowly, allowing time for each step.



5 – SEE:

“Look around and silently acknowledge five things you can see. It can be something small, like a shadow, or something large, like a window.”



4 – TOUCH:

“Notice four things you can feel. It might be the chair beneath you, your shoes, the texture of your clothing, or your hands.”



3 – HEAR:

“Now listen. Identify three things you can hear. Maybe it’s the hum of a heater, the sound of your breath, or voices in the background.”



2 – SMELL:

“Bring attention to your sense of smell. Name two things you can smell right now. If nothing is obvious, it’s okay to move or use your imagination.”



1 – TASTE:

“Finally, notice one thing you can taste. Maybe it’s toothpaste, coffee, gum, or just the neutral taste in your mouth.”

03. Closing:

Invite one more deep breath.

“Let your awareness gently expand back to the room. You’re grounded. You’re present. You’re okay.”

Examples of Use

During a workshop when a participant feels emotionally overwhelmed

As a morning grounding ritual to begin the day

After a conflict, intense discussion, or emotionally charged activity

Possible Variations

Silent Version: Participants follow a written guide or internalize the steps without verbal facilitation.

Partner Version: Participants walk each other through the 5-4-3-2-1 steps in pairs.

Nature Version: Use the five senses outdoors to enhance connection to the natural world.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may prefer to keep their eyes open or closed—both are fine.

It's important not to force anyone to engage with a specific sense if it feels uncomfortable.

If someone has experienced trauma, offer the option to opt out or do the practice internally.

Key Takeaway

Grounding brings the mind and body back to safety in the present.

This technique is fast, effective, and can be practiced alone or with guidance.

A valuable tool for emotional regulation, especially in high-stress or unfamiliar settings.

5-4-3-2-1

Grounding Technique

Community Speaks

“This simple practice helped me feel safe and anchored”

“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf”
Jon Kabat-Zinn



23

20 Minute Dance



20-30min.



Target Group

No age or group size limitation



Number

Recommended for 2-40 participants



Age

10+



Keywords

#grounding
#mindfulness
#presence
#self-awareness
#physical activity
#embodiment
#release
#integration



Code of Conduct

This is a space for embodied exploration, presence, and respect. Participants are encouraged to stay attuned to their own bodies, to move without judgment or comparison, and to honor each other's unique expressions. There is no right or wrong way to move—every movement or stillness is welcome.



Position in the Workshop

Use this activity:

After an emotional or intense session to release tension

At the beginning of the day for grounding and presence

Near the end to integrate experiences and prepare for closure

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Reconnect with the body and inner self through intuitive movement
- ✓ Promote presence, grounding, and self-awareness
- ✓ Gently release emotional or mental tension
- ✓ Integrate the group's experience through shared embodied practice

Facilitation Level

Beginner – The facilitator simply holds space, offers calm guidance, and signals transitions. No dance experience required.

Materials

Yoga mat or soft surface (optional)

Comfortable clothing

Bell, gong, or soft sound to mark beginning and end

Spacious, safe environment with enough room to lie down and move freely

Description of the Activity

This moving meditation leads participants from stillness into organic movement and back to stillness.

Through a natural progression—lying down, sitting, standing, and moving through space—participants explore presence, inner sensation, and emotional integration.

The dance is unstructured and personal, guided by internal sensation rather than external rhythm.

Instructions

01. Lying Down (5–7 min)

Begin by lying on the ground with eyes closed.

Invite participants to connect to abdominal breathing and to feel the support of the earth beneath them.

Let movement arise organically—stretching, wiggling, rolling—without planning or performing.

Alternate between movement and stillness, always returning attention to body sensation.

02. Sitting (3–5 min)

Transition to sitting.

Continue the same process: alternating gentle, unstructured movement with moments of stillness.

Keep eyes closed, focusing inward.

03. Standing (3–5 min)

Gently rise to standing.

Invite soft bending, turning, swaying—always staying grounded in awareness of the body.

Stillness is always welcome—encourage authentic movement.

04. Moving Through Space (5–7 min)

Invite participants to begin moving slowly through the space with eyes lowered or half-closed.

Let movements be personal, fluid, and internal.

Encourage participants to ignore others and stay in their own dance.

Remind: “There is no wrong way to move. Follow your body’s truth.”

5. Finding an Ending (2–3 min)

Invite everyone to find a final still shape wherever they are in the room.

Ask them to hold the shape and breathe into it.

Wait until all participants are still before gently signaling the close with a bell or soft voice.

Guide attention to the back of the body, the three-dimensional shape, and space all around.

Reflection (Optional – 10 min)

Invite participants to gather in pairs or trios.

Each person has 1–2 minutes to share their experience without interruption.

Encourage use of first-person voice and focus on direct experience (e.g., “I felt...” rather than “It meant...”).

Remind: There is no ideal dance. Each experience is valid and complete.

Examples of Use

A morning warm-up to invite presence before a learning or healing day

A closing activity to help integrate emotional insights after intense sharing

A self-regulation practice during retreats, mindfulness sessions, or creative residencies

Possible Variations

With Music: Use soft ambient or instrumental music to support flow

Themed Dance: Invite reflection on a theme (e.g., strength, gratitude, renewal)

Guided Imagery: Add visualization prompts during movement

Silent Dance: Begin and end in silence, letting breath guide the rhythm

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may feel self-conscious—normalize stillness and gentle movement as valid forms of dance

Offer the invitation, not obligation, to move—stillness is always welcome

Be mindful of trauma-related responses—invite participants to stay within their comfort zone

Encourage non-verbal presence and emotional respect throughout

Pair quieter voices with expressive roles (note-taking, drawing) if verbal sharing feels difficult

Key Takeaway

Movement can be a powerful mirror of the inner world

Stillness and motion together create a space for integration

This is not about technique, but about authenticity and awareness

The 20-Minute Dance can bring profound grounding, clarity, and inner connection



Community Speaks

“Freedom in movement gave me joy and release”

**“Dance is the hidden language of the soul”
Martha Graham**

24



River of Life

A Journey Through Story and Symbol



30-60min.



Target Group

Especially relevant for individuals with lived experience of migration, transformation, or personal challenges



Number

Recommended for 2-40 participants



Age

18+



Keywords

#entrustedpower *#empowerment*
#storytelling *#migration*
#reflection *#communitybuilding*
#self-awareness *#arttherapy*



Code of Conduct

This activity involves deep reflection and may touch on sensitive personal topics. Participants are invited to share only what feels safe and meaningful. Listening is active, empathetic, and non-judgmental. Confidentiality and respect are essential for building trust in the space.



Position in the Workshop

This activity works best:

As a preliminary exercise before deeper reflection or storytelling sessions

In the middle of a workshop focused on identity, personal growth, or migration

As part of group bonding or coaching/therapeutic settings

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Support participants in visualizing and reflecting on their life journey
- ✓ Explore both challenges and strengths, acknowledging transitions, values, and key influences
- ✓ Foster empathy and connection within a group through storytelling
- ✓ Encourage personal empowerment and insight into past experiences

Facilitation Level

Moderate to High

Moderate: In small or familiar groups

High: In diverse or vulnerable groups, or when exploring migration and trauma-related experiences

Materials

Large paper sheets (A3 or flipchart size)

Pens, markers, colored pencils

Optional: post-its, stickers, scissors for creative expression

Flipchart or whiteboard for group reflection

Calm, comfortable space

Description of the Activity

Participants reflect on their life as a river—full of calm flows, sudden bends, rapids, forks, and tributaries.

They draw this river on paper, symbolizing key life events, values, people, and transitions.

The visual map becomes a tool for self-understanding and storytelling, with optional group sharing and reflection.

Instructions

Step 1: Introduction & Framing (5–10 min)

Present the river metaphor: life as a journey shaped by change, movement, and flow.

Explain that rivers have sources, calm waters, rapids, islands, and branches—just like life.

Invite participants to create their own “River of Life” through drawing.

Step 2: Drawing the River (15–25 min)

Ask guiding questions to support the process:

Where does your river begin?

What were turning points—smooth curves or sudden drops?

Where were the rapids (crises, migrations, deep challenges)?

What brought strength—mentors, communities, values?

Encourage participants to be creative: their river can be winding, circular, dry at times, or flooded—no rules apply.

Add symbols such as islands (important people/places), bridges (transitions), or obstacles (barriers or traumas).

Step 3: Reflection & Meaning-Making (10–15 min)

Invite participants to consider:

What patterns do you see?

How have your values or purposes changed over time?

What or who has helped your river keep flowing?

Step 5: Closing Circle (5–10 min)

Invite participants to share:

One key learning or surprise from their river

One strength or value they've carried throughout their journey

What their river has taught them about who they are today

Examples of Use

In a migration-focused training, participants map their emotional and geographical journeys.

In a leadership retreat, participants reflect on life moments that shaped their current path.

In community building, participants discover shared challenges and triumphs.

Possible Variations

Group River: Create a collective “community river” where each person adds one life event or value.

Digital River: Use online whiteboards or drawing apps in remote workshops.

Nature-Based Version: Do the activity outdoors near a real river for inspiration and grounding.

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Emotional content may arise—hold space gently, and offer support or grounding tools.

Not all participants may wish to share their rivers—sharing is always optional.

Avoid over-analysis—this is a personal, symbolic process.

Be prepared to pause or slow down if the atmosphere becomes emotionally intense.

Key Takeaway

The “River of Life” helps visualize personal growth and complexity.

It fosters both individual insight and group empathy.

Life, like a river, flows with change, challenge, and connection.

This method honors each person’s lived experience as a source of wisdom.

Community Speaks

“ Seeing my life as a river gave me perspective and pride”

“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away”

Maya Angelou

25



The Living Library

Stories that Challenge Stereotypes



30min.

(can be extended based on the number of “books” and group dynamics)



Target Group

Adaptable for youth, young adults, and intergenerational groups



Number

Recommended for 4-20 participants



Age

14+



Keywords

#humanbooks
#storytelling
#prejudicereduction
#diversity
#inclusion
#activelisting
#empowerment



Code of Conduct

This is a space for honest dialogue, deep listening, and respect for diversity. Participants are encouraged to stay open, ask respectfully, and hold space without judgment. Confidentiality must be honored: stories shared stay in the circle.



Position in the Workshop

This activity is ideal for:

Midway through a workshop on diversity, empathy, or storytelling

As a main session for exploring identity, social issues, or inclusion

Before closing, to deepen personal connection and reflection

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ Reduce prejudices and challenge stereotypes
- ✓ Foster empathy through direct conversation
- ✓ Promote social inclusion, understanding, and active listening
- ✓ Empower “human books” to share their stories meaningfully

Facilitation Level

Moderate to High

Moderate: When participants are used to respectful discussion

High: When themes are sensitive (e.g., trauma, discrimination), requiring emotional awareness and clear group agreements

Materials

Chairs for small-group or one-on-one conversations

Optional: printed catalog of books (titles, themes)

Name cards or “book covers” for each storyteller

Flipchart or markers for group reflection

Facilitator's Role:

- Recruit and prepare the “human books”
- Establish ground rules for safety and respect
- Introduce the method and manage transitions
- Offer emotional support and facilitate reflection afterward

Description of the Activity

The Living Library allows participants to “read” people instead of books. Each human book shares their personal story related to identity, struggle, resilience, or transformation. Participants (“readers”) engage in respectful, open conversations for a fixed time. Through listening and dialogue, participants challenge assumptions, broaden their perspectives, and build human connection.

Instructions

01. Preparation (Before the session)

- Define your theme (e.g., inclusion, migration, breaking bias)
- Select 2–4 “human books” willing to share their personal stories
- Prepare each book with brief coaching:
 - Choose a clear title/theme for your story
 - Focus on lived experience, not lectures
- Set up chairs for conversations in a quiet space

2. Introduction (5–10 min)

Welcome everyone and explain:

- Each book is a real person, ready to share a chapter of their life
- Readers will have time to listen and ask questions
- This is about dialogue, not debate

Ground rules:

- Respect the speaker
- Ask curious, open-ended questions
- Don't interrupt or argue
- Keep what's shared confidential

03. Reading Session (15–20 min)

Divide participants into small groups (1–3 per book)

Each human book shares their story

Readers can ask questions and explore deeper themes

Optional: After one round, readers rotate to a new “book”

4. Reflection & Closing (10–15 min)

Bring the group together

Invite reflection:

What moved or surprised you?

What assumptions were challenged?

What did you learn from this experience?

Thank the books for their courage

Share resources for continued exploration

Examples of Use

“The Girl Who Left Her Country Behind”
(refugee story)

“Breaking the Silence – Living with Mental Health Challenges”

“From Prison to Purpose”

“I Wear a Hijab, Ask Me Why”

“Queer in a Small Town”

Possible Variations

Library Catalog Display: Participants choose a “book” from a table or poster list

Digital Version: Host online “Living Library” sessions via breakout rooms

Open Library: After scheduled sessions, allow informal mingling with books for further questions

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Be prepared to hold emotional space—stories can be intense

Remind participants to stay within the boundaries of consent—books are free to pass on questions they don’t wish to answer

Encourage all readers to thank the book at the end

If needed, follow with grounding or check-in exercises

Key Takeaway

The Living Library makes invisible stories visible

Direct dialogue helps humanize complexity and combat stereotypes

The method fosters courageous storytelling, deep listening, and meaningful connections

A safe, respectful structure empowers both storytellers and listeners to grow

Community Speaks

“Listening to real stories challenged my assumptions”

“Stories are a communal currency of humanity”
Tahir Shah

26

Resource Salad

Recognizing Talents Through Reflection



30min.



Target Group

Adaptable for youth and adults



Number

Recommended for 4-10 participants



Age

14+



Keywords

#self-awareness
#teambuilding
#reflection
#empowerment
#strengths
#competencies
#appreciation



Code of Conduct

This is a space for appreciation, curiosity, and self-discovery. Everyone's input is valuable, and honesty is welcomed when shared with kindness. Feedback should focus on strengths and constructive insight, never on critique or judgment.



Position in the Workshop

Ideal for midway through the workshop as a tool for team-building and group cohesion

Can also be used toward the end to reinforce awareness of group strengths and individual value

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ To recognize and appreciate each participant's talents and competencies
- ✓ To foster self-awareness and interpersonal understanding
- ✓ To encourage positive reinforcement and group cohesion
- ✓ To promote dialogue about the diverse resources we carry within us

Facilitation Level

Moderate

Requires guiding participants gently into reflective space

The facilitator should be prepared to offer examples of strengths and help reframe limiting beliefs if necessary

Important to keep the tone encouraging, inclusive, and emotionally safe

Materials

Pens or markers

Blank paper or cards (one per participant)

A box, basket, or space to collect and shuffle the cards

Description of the Activity

Resource Salad is a playful and reflective group activity where participants anonymously share personal strengths.

Through guessing games and discussion, the group uncovers the wealth of talent present among them.

This method supports positive self-reflection, builds connection, and often leads to delightful surprises as hidden gifts are named and celebrated.

Instructions

Step 1: Writing the Strengths (5 min)

Each participant writes one of their personal talents or strengths on a small card or piece of paper—**anonymously**

It could be something they're proud of, like "creative problem-solving," "being a good listener," or "bringing calm to tense situations"

Encourage them to focus on inner qualities or skills, not physical traits or job titles

The cards are then placed face down in a box, basket, or pile and shuffled thoroughly

Step 2: Drawing and Interpreting (15 min)

One by one, each participant draws a card from the pile and reads the strength aloud

The person who drew the card shares how they understand the strength and whether they see it in themselves

The group reflects together:

In what situations is this strength especially valuable?

How could this skill be further developed?

Why might this strength be important in group or community settings?

Step 3: Guessing and Expanding (10 min)

The group guesses who might have written this strength (purely for fun and reflection—no need to be correct)

If the author feels comfortable, they can reveal themselves

Others may then express:

Whether they see this strength in the person it's attributed to

Whether they aspire to develop this trait themselves

Any examples from the workshop where they saw this strength in action

Examples of Strengths

"I stay calm when others panic"

"I make people laugh"

"I'm good at finding solutions when there's conflict"

"I can see the bigger picture"

"I bring good energy into a group"

Possible Variations

Themed Strengths: Ask participants to write a strength related to a specific topic (e.g., leadership, creativity, empathy)

Future-Oriented Version: Instead of current strengths, write down a quality they aspire to develop

Color Coding: Use colored cards for types of strengths (e.g., emotional, practical, creative)

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Contraindication: Avoid using with participants experiencing depressive moods or in groups with serious internal conflict—it may trigger shame or defensiveness

If participants struggle to identify strengths, the facilitator can offer a list of strengths or help with wording

Always affirm that there is no "right" or "wrong" strength—every person brings value in different ways

Key Takeaway

Everyone has unique resources that may go unspoken or unnoticed

By sharing anonymously, participants can reframe their inner dialogue and see themselves through the eyes of others

The method encourages mutual appreciation, self-esteem, and group unity

This is a light yet powerful way to highlight the human richness in the room.

Resource salad

Community Speaks

“I realized I have more strengths than I thought”

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us”
Ralph Waldo Emerson



27

A journey through the body



15-30min.



Target Group

Suitable for ages 16 and above



Number

Recommended for 5-20 participants



Age

16+



Keywords

#mindfulness
#bodyawareness
#grounding
#relaxation
#meditation
#emotionalregulation
#self-care
#presence



Code of Conduct

This is a quiet, reflective space. Participants are encouraged to remain present, observe without judgment, and listen inwardly with kindness. All physical and emotional sensations are welcome. There is no right or wrong way to experience this practice.



Position in the Workshop

As a morning awareness session to begin with clarity and calm

As an opening grounding exercise

Or as a closing practice to integrate experiences and restore balance

Method

Objective/Goals

- ✓ To cultivate awareness of bodily sensations and support a mind-body connection
- ✓ To encourage emotional regulation and relaxation by staying present
- ✓ To support individuals in processing sensations without judgment, especially those with heightened sensitivity or past trauma
- ✓ To introduce a simple, repeatable practice for stress reduction and inner balance

Facilitation Level

Beginner to Intermediate

Facilitator should have basic experience with mindfulness or somatic awareness practices

Must be able to hold silence, guide with a calm voice, and create emotional safety

Materials

Yoga mats or soft surfaces for lying down

Comfortable chairs for seated participation

A quiet and undisturbed room

Optional: soft instrumental music or ambient sound

Description of the Activity

The Mindful Body Scan is a guided meditation that invites participants to bring gentle awareness to different parts of their body, one by one. This somatic practice fosters self-awareness, deep relaxation, and a sense of safety and embodiment.

Participants lie or sit quietly while being guided to observe internal sensations, tensions, or areas of stillness—without needing to fix or analyze them.

Instructions

01. Setting the Space (2–3 min)

Invite participants to find a comfortable position: lying on their backs or seated in a relaxed posture

Ask them to close their eyes or lower their gaze

Encourage them to let their body be supported by the ground or chair

02. Anchoring with the Breath (2–5 min)

Guide participants to bring attention to their natural breath

No need to control it—just observe the rhythm, depth, and movement

Allow the breath to act as an anchor to the present moment

03. Noticing the Body (2–3 min)

Ask participants to tune in to the points of contact (e.g., feet on the floor, back on the mat)

Notice textures, warmth, tingling, pressure, or stillness

Emphasize non-judgmental observation—whatever is present is okay

04. Guided Body Scan (10–15 min)

Guide participants through the body, slowly and gently:

Lower Body: toes, feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs

Pelvic area & abdomen: hips, belly, lower back

Upper body: chest, upper back, shoulders

Arms & hands: arms, elbows, wrists, palms, fingers

Neck & head: jaw, mouth, cheeks, eyes, forehead, scalp

With each body part, use language like:

“Notice any sensations... warmth, tightness, tingling, or even numbness...”

“There is nothing to change—just observe.”

“Breathe gently into this area, if it feels helpful.”

05. Returning to the Present (2–3 min)

Bring awareness back to the breath

Invite gentle movement: wiggling fingers, rolling shoulders

Slowly open the eyes or raise the gaze

Suggest a soft stretch or seated pause before continuing

Final Reflection (5–10 min):

Offer participants a chance to journal silently or share in pairs or small groups

Prompt questions:

“What did you notice?”

“Were there any areas that surprised you?”

“How do you feel now compared to before the practice?”

Examples of Strengths

Morning mindfulness session to start a training with presence

Closing integration activity in emotional well-being workshops

A tool for trauma-informed spaces to reconnect with the body safely

Part of a self-care toolkit for youth workers, educators, or facilitators

Possible Variations

Short Version (10 min): Focus only on feet, belly, hands, and face

Self-guided version: Provide participants with printed instructions or an audio recording

Themed Scan: Focus on body parts connected to emotions (e.g., the chest for vulnerability, the gut for instinct)

Remarks or Sensitive Moments

Some participants may feel disconnected or uncomfortable—reassure them that this is normal

Emphasize that participants are always in control and can open their eyes, shift posture, or skip parts of the scan if needed

Avoid physical touch unless part of a separate consent-based practice

This method can trigger emotional release—allow time for stillness or support if needed

Key Takeaway

The body scan is a simple yet powerful mindfulness practice

It promotes grounding, emotional regulation, and inner calm

It can become part of a personal well-being ritual, helping participants cultivate embodied awareness

“A deep journey inward. I felt more in touch with my body and emotions”

**“Your body is your first home”
Thich Nhat Hanh**

Conclusion:

Cultivating Safe Spaces as seeds of belonging

This guide is more than a collection of methods. It is a call to action for facilitators, educators, and community leaders **to create spaces where authenticity, vulnerability, and growth can thrive**. In a world where many young people, particularly young women with migrant and refugee backgrounds, navigate trauma, exclusion, and systemic barriers, the need for intentional, compassionate facilitation has never been more urgent.

According to the World Health Organisation (2022), over 25% of young people globally experience mental health challenges each year, with young women disproportionately affected.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) reports that women with migrant backgrounds face unemployment rates up to twice as high as non-migrant women in many EU countries.

The “Power of Belonging” methodology responds to this reality. It emphasises that transformation begins not with external systems alone, but with inner connection to self, to story, and community. By **combining mindfulness, self-awareness, and creative expression, this approach empowers participants to reclaim their voice and agency**.

Research from Harvard's Center on the Developing Child shows that a strong sense of belonging is directly correlated with increased resilience, academic motivation, and emotional regulation.

A Gallup poll found that individuals who feel a strong sense of belonging are 43% more likely to report excellent mental health and 22% more likely to achieve personal goals.

Each activity in this guide, whether a breathwork session, a storytelling circle, or a clay sculpting exercise, offers more than a method. It provides a mirror, an invitation, and a seed. A seed of trust, of safety, and hope.

As a facilitator, your presence matters. You are not just holding space; you are holding possibility. Your intentionality can help interrupt cycles of isolation and inequality, and in their place, plant communities rooted in empathy, connection, and strength.

Let this guide be both your compass and your catalyst. The tools inside are not just techniques, they are pathways to healing, inclusion, and transformation.

And let us remember: belonging is not a destination, it is a daily practice. One we choose, together.

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for building
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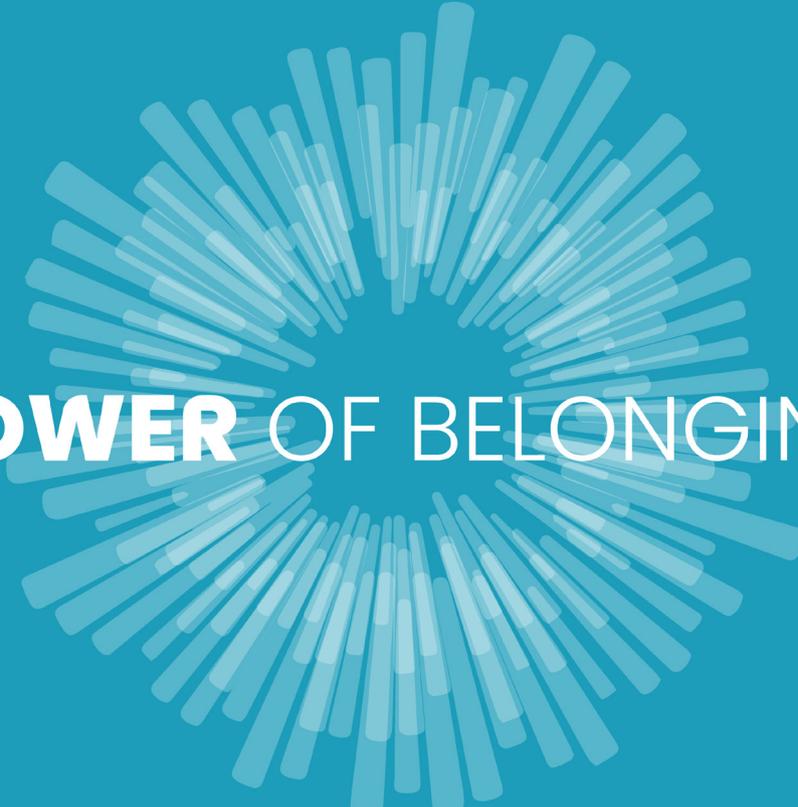


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POWER OF BELONGING

**A mindfulness-based
toolkit for youth work
and community building**

Expression with dignity, grounded in equity