



Youth Development
Resource Center

GUIDES TO QUALITY PRACTICES

Community Building

Building an emotionally safe community of peers and adults is essential for youth to learn and develop as individuals. This guide will introduce participants to a variety of activities designed to support the community building process when working with youth virtually or in-person.

Strategies for Community Building:

- ▶ Create avenues for community building
- ▶ Be involved and mindful
- ▶ Don't leave anyone out
- ▶ Promote respect for diversity

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

ENERGIZERS AND MOVEMENT GAMES

CAN'T CATCH THE BALL

- ❑ A participant throws a “ball” to another participant, but this is an uncatchable ball. The person “catching” the ball is asked to miss it in the most dramatic way possible, and then the entire group cheers for them!

SHOW ME

- ❑ Participants will use objects around them to replace items commonly used. For instance, the facilitator will say “Show Me Your Hat” and participants can use anything in their workspace - except an actual hat - to show their hats. You can play a few rounds of this game with different objects (watch, glasses, beauty mark), and you can give participants a chance to come up with their own objects, too!

WHAT CHANGED*

- ❑ Have participants observe the backgrounds of others on the call. Have everyone shut off their camera and change one thing in their background. Ask everyone to guess what people changed.

COLOR GRAB*

- ❑ Have everyone shut off their camera and give them a color. Participants need to find an object in their house that matches the color. Once they get back with the item, have them turn on their camera, and the last person who turns their camera on has to call out the next color.

GET TO KNOW YOU ICE BREAKERS

SCAVENGER HUNT

- Create a list of items you would like participants to find in their setting. Ask the participants to find each item one by one and share what they have. The list of items could be actual objects like a pencil or you could ask participants to grab something that makes them feel a certain way. For example, find something that brings you joy.

RENAME

- Ask participants a question and have them rename themselves to the answer for the question. For example, you could ask, what is your nickname, what is your favorite color, what is one word that describes you. To facilitate this game in-person you can use name tags.

POLL QUESTION*

- Using the poll feature ask the participants to answer a question you provide. Share the results to see what the top choice was. See additional resources for question list.

CHAT BOX DISCUSSION*

- Using the chat box feature ask the participants to answer a question your provide. Ask a few participants to share aloud. See additional resources for question list.

WEATHER FORECAST

- Ask participants to share how they are feeling using a weather forecast. For instance, sunny and 75° with a slight breeze!

COLLAGE RANKING

- Find a collage of 5-10 different pictures and number them. Ask the participants to pick the number of the picture that best describes how they feel and ask them to explain why they picked it.

SHOW AND TELL

- Ask participants to share a person (family member, pet), place (favorite room in their house), or thing (object of importance) with the group. Make sure you give participants plenty of notice before your meeting so they have time to prepare.

HOPES AND FEARS

- Ask participants to share one hope, and one fear about the topic you are discussing.

***Recommended for virtual facilitation only.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Youth Work Methods Building Community Guidebook

▶ <https://store.cypq.org/collections/all-books/products/building-community-online-course-with-guidebook>

Shift Decks

▶ <http://shiftingnorms.net/shift-decks>

Ice Breakers for In-Person Small Groups

▶ https://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

Social Distance-Friendly and Virtual Ice Breakers

▶ <https://www.boredteachers.com/classroom-ideas/21-social-distance-friendly-and-virtual-icebreakers-students-will-actually-have-fun-with>

Ice Breaker Questions by Age

▶ <https://blog.polleverywhere.com/fun-icebreaker-questions-to-bond-with-students/>