

**Appendix 4**

**TRUST-BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

# Pass The Number Row<sup>1</sup>

Description: This game shows what it feels like to work at becoming a team; the drama intensifies if individuals are brave enough to take a risk and take the group in a new direction.

Time: Any agreed-upon amount, minimum of 5 minutes.

Steps:

1. Group gathers in a circle.
2. Agree upon a time limit.
3. Instruct the group to listen extremely carefully to what the first three players say, and then pay strict attention to the emerging number pattern.
4. One person starts the game by stating a number between 1 and 10. The person to her right continues by stating another number, which can become the second item in a patterned series. The third person continues by stating a number that can be continued around the circle. Examples of number patterns are:

1,3,5,7,9,11...      2,4,8,16,32...  
10,9,8,7,6,5.....      1,2,4,7,11,16....

5. Tell the group that the number row can be changed if the entire group has caught on and if the person who wants to make the change feels that she has the unspoken support of the group, that is, if the team seems to need a new direction. The risk, of course, is that the change agent could lose the group in a premature change and become "out." (The penalty for going "out" in this game is ostracism from the circle, so players want to avoid this.) Here's how a change could be managed:

1,3,5,7,9,11...(change) 10,9,8,7,6,5,4....  
or, 2,4,6,8,10,12...(change) 13, 14, 15, 16, 17...

The change agent at risk is the one who says "10" in the first example and "13" in the second.

6. If the person to that person's right doesn't say "9" or "14" both he/she and the change agent are out; both players dropped the number row.
7. Play starts over with a new number row and continues until the end time is called.

Discussion Questions: At the end of play, facilitate discussion about how it felt to work as a team. If an attempted change failed, focus on that moment, asking both persons who were "out" to talk about why the change failed and how it could have been prevented. Facilitate trainees to talk about patience and unspoken communication--necessary ingredients to successful team building. It is best to continue discussion long enough so that trainees verbalize how it feels to have experienced working on a team building task.

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<sup>1</sup> Nilson, Carolyn. *Team Games for Trainers*. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, Inc. 1993, 37-38.

# Linguistics 101<sup>2</sup>

Description: This exercise helps new team members choose words that accurately convey their values regarding teamwork.

Time: Approximately 20 minutes.

## Steps:

1. Copy the list of "sensitive" team words onto a flip chart, leaving space to the right of the list to record a frequency count. Be sure to add words that are unique to your experience/organization.
2. As you read each word, ask trainees to vote by raising their hands for words that they believe the team should use.
3. Record each vote by placing check-marks after each word on the list.

## Sensitive Team Words:

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| empowerment            | trust          |
| productivity           | feedback       |
| profit                 | flexibility    |
| self-managed           | decision       |
| quality                | growth         |
| recommendation         | vertical       |
| horizontal             | capability     |
| competence             | development    |
| capacity               | sharing        |
| learning               | authority      |
| error                  | responsibility |
| facilitator            | motivation     |
| continuous improvement | job enrichment |
| evaluate               | cross-training |
| audit                  | problem        |
| integrity              |                |

Discussion Questions: After the voting, take the time to have trainees explain their votes, especially on any word that has a split vote.

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<sup>2</sup> Nilson, Carolyn. *Team Games for Trainers*. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, Inc. 1993, 167-168

## Cars<sup>3</sup>

Description: This exercise brings out the level of trust among the participants.

Time: Approximately 15 minutes.

Steps: Working in pairs, one person stands behind the other. The person in front, with her/his eyes closed, is the car, the person behind (with eyes opened) is the driver. This is a nonverbal exercise. The driver indicates the direction in which the car should be moving. A continuous tap on the right shoulder means “turn to the right”, a continuous tap to the left shoulder means “turn to the left”, a continuous pat on the head means to “move straight forward”, and a hand placed solidly on the back means “stop!”. Hopefully, the cars moving around the room will not end up bumping into each other! After a few minutes, switch positions so that the drivers become the cars and vice versa.

Discussion Questions: This game can precede any kind of team discussion where sensitivity to the potential of each individual team member is of paramount concern. It helps team members realize that they need each other's *personal* power in order to tackle the tough tasks ahead of them.

## Fears and Fantasies Graffiti Mural<sup>4</sup>

Description: This activity is often used to identify participant expectations for a workshop or program, or as a check-in midway during a workshop. The activity can be modified and turned into a trust-building activity, as indicated below.

Time: Preceding or during a difficult session or discussion topic, or during a coffee break.

Steps: Headline two pieces of flip chart paper, one with Fears and the other with Fantasies. Explain to participants that this is their graffiti board, their way of letting the facilitator(s) know what hopes and worries they have about an issue or discussion topic confronting the group. The facilitator should indicate where the graffiti board will be located and how long it will be up. It should also be pointed out how the information will be used to guide the upcoming discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> Bishop, Anne, Alyson Huntly, et al. *Basics & Tools: A collection of popular education resources and activities*. Ottawa: CUSCO Education Department 1988, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold, Rick., Deborah Barndt, and Bev Burke. *A New Weave popular education in Canada and central America*. ND, 82-83.



## Power of Touch<sup>5</sup>

Description: To let team members experience a sense of personal connection with each other as a prerequisite to coming to grips with a difficult team challenge. It is one of the least threatening or physiologically risky "physical" games. Many people find that non-competitive games with a physical component reach them in a way that word games alone cannot.

Time: Approximately 10 minutes.

### Steps:

1. Ask team members to pair off and stand facing their partners, touching the palms of their hands--not holding tight, but simply touching full palm to full palm.
2. When all palms have been joined, ask trainees to close their eyes and move back a step from their partners without breaking the touch.
3. When all eyes are closed, and movement backwards has been completed, tell them to drop their hands so that each person is "blinded" and alone. Ask participants to keep their eyes closed.
4. Ask all trainees to slowly spin around twice in place, and, still "blinded," extend their palms in search of their partners' palms and re-establish the touching palms. Ask the still-blinded trainees to feel the welcome power of their partners' touch, and suggest that each person does in fact have tremendous capacity for contribution to another's safety, security, and well-being.

Discussion Questions: This game can also precede any kind of team discussion where sensitivity to the potential of each individual team member is of paramount concern. It helps team members realize that they need each other's *personal* power in order to tackle the tough tasks ahead of them.

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<sup>5</sup> Nilson, Carolyn. *Team Games for Trainers*. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, Inc. 1993, 299.

## Tell Me A Story<sup>6</sup>

Description: To help facilitate a frame of mind sensitive to each other's feelings.

Time: Approximately 15 minutes.

Steps:

1. Read the story below to a group of trainees who are beginning to work together as a team.
2. Use it to set a mood for their thinking about developing their relationships in a deeper way.
3. As you read the story, you may want to further set a mood playing (live or recorded) peaceful music--make sure that all can still hear the story well.

The Tale: Secret Sounds of the Forest

Many years ago, a wise king set out to teach his son, the crown prince, the wisdom necessary for him to become a great ruler. To do this, the king decided to send the prince to the forest alone for one year. The instructions the wise father gave the son were to return to him in exactly one year and describe the sounds of the forest.

The dutiful son did as his father bade him to do. He went to the forest and listened for all the sounds he could hear. He returned in one year and happily told his father what he had heard: leaves rustling in the wind, leaves falling to the earth, birds singing, bee buzzing, insects whirring and chirping, small and large animals coming and going, water gurgling up from crevices in rocks.

But the king was not pleased. He frowned and admonished his beloved son to go back to the forest and listen some more, and when he had discerned the true sounds of the forest to return home again report his observations. So the boy went back to the forest.

He sat alone beside huge trees and lay in the forest grasses, pondering his apparent lack of understanding. After many days and nights, the prince began to sense a strange awareness about him. He knew that at last he could return to his father with honor.

So the young boy ran home, bursting with the excitement of his new learning. He told his father that finally he had heard the leaves of the trees awakening in the morning dew, the sound of woodland flowers opening and closing, the clamor of

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<sup>6</sup> Nilson, Carolyn. *Team Games for Trainers*. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, Inc. 1993, 17-19.

earth as it bared itself to the warming rays of the noonday sun, the heartbeats of a thousand animals and birds. His father was pleased.

"My son," said the king, "to hear the unbearable is one's best discipline for being a great leader. The best rulers must truly hear unspoken joys and pains of their people. It is easy to hear the obvious and the superficial, but great kingdoms are built only by hearing the secret sounds of those around you. You have learned well the wisdom of the forest and our lifelong task."

Discussion Questions: Ask participants to think of the work tasks they did during the last week. Ask them if any of their "unheard" feelings or ideas had or could have had an effect on the outcome of last week's work. Facilitate the process with questioning such as:

Unspoken thanks?  
Discomfort?  
Feelings of insecurity?  
Sadness?  
Pleasures?

Explain and discuss how our environment is highly individualistic, sheltered from our colleagues' feelings; we all need help in overcoming barriers to relating to each other at a basic human level.

## **Past-Present-Future<sup>7</sup>**

Description: This exercise helps people to understand the experiences and situation of others in the past, their present concerns and their hopes for the future.

Time: This is best used as an evening activity when groups can end when they finish and do not feel rushed.

Steps:

1. Divide participants into groups of 4-8 people.
2. Post the following questions on newsprint or a blackboard. Tell participants that they should read each question aloud, have everyone respond, and then move on to the next question. Emphasize that response is voluntary.

- "Where was I and what was important to me 5 (or 10) years ago?"
- "Where do I feel I am now and what is important to me this year?"

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<sup>7</sup> Hope, Anne., and Sally Timmel. *Training for Transformation a handbook for community workers*. Zimbabwe, Mambo Press. 1984, 34.

- “Where would I like to be, what would I like to be doing and what changes would I like to see in my life in 5 (or 10) years time?”

3. After the groups are finished, ask participants to share with the large group their reflections on the activity.

## Who Am I?<sup>8</sup>

Description: This activity helps the participants to know themselves better and what's important to them. Additionally, participants identify many different parts of themselves or "roles."

Time: 30 minutes.

### Steps:

1. To start, explain to the participants that they will be thinking about themselves and what's important to them. We need to know ourselves before we can solve our problems.
2. Tell the participants they are going to play a game called "Who Am I?"
3. Divide the participants into groups of five or six members. Meet separately with each group and instruct the group to think of all the possible things they are. Explain that the teams will then compete to see which team thought of the most. Take about 5 minutes for this step. (Some examples of "Who Am I?" are: mother, wife, sister, teacher, nurse, aunt, member of a certain association, farmer, seller, etc. The responses do not have to be formal jobs, but *roles* that the women have in their lives.)
4. Bring the teams back together. Put up sheets of newsprint. Explain that each team will alternate in giving an answer to "Who Am I?" All the members of all the teams should have a chance to respond.
5. Start with the first member of the first team, and write her answer on the paper. For preliterate groups, draw a stock figure or symbol. (Note: To increase excitement, each item can be on only one list!)
6. Record the responses of a member of each team in turn. After all have responded, begin again with the first person. When the teams have no more answers, the team with the longest newsprint list is the "winner." But—explain that they're all really "winners." They had a good time and found out more about themselves and each other!

Discussion: Your job in the discussion is to guide the participants in examining what they do and how they live. Here are some questions one could use:

- Which of these parts of yourself or "roles" did you choose yourself? Which were in some way given to you?
- What are some of the things you do in your different roles?
- Which roles do you like? Why? Which don't you like? Why not? Could you change these things?
- Are there some things that you would like to do or be that are not on the lists? How could you do or be these things?

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<sup>8</sup> Source unknown



## What Are Some Of My Values?<sup>9</sup>

Description: The participants will discover some things that they like and that are important to them. They will also have a chance to see that these things are different for different people.

Time: 30 minutes.

### Steps:

1. It's important to explain to explain to the participants that there are no right and wrong answers in this activity. We're all different. We need to understand and respect each other's differences.
2. Read the first question from the "My Values" questions below, and ask for volunteers to respond. Call on about five women who want to give answers. (As an alternative, you can give all the participants a chance to respond to each of the questions. This will take more time).

### "My Values" Questionnaire:

1. What is your favorite food?
2. What is something you love to do?
3. What is one thing you want to change in your neighborhood?
4. What qualities do you want in a friend?
5. What makes you happy?
6. What is the most important thing you want your children to remember?
7. What is the one thing you hope your children will not have to go through?
8. What makes angry?
9. What are the qualities of a good husband?
10. If you found (\$10), how would you spend it?
11. What is something you did to help someone?
12. What would you say if you met the leader of your country?

### Discussion Questions:

- Which questions were easy to answer? Why? Which were difficult?
- What did you learn about yourself that you didn't know before?

To close this exercise, note that everyone expressed her own likes and opinions. The ideas weren't right or wrong, just different. Different ideas are important to different people.

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<sup>9</sup>*Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students* by Leland, Howe and Kirschenbaum 1972).

## Group Decision-Making and Cooperation<sup>10</sup>

Description: The "Making Something" game involves the clients in working together. This activity facilitates the development of guidelines for effective and productive group-work. Group members can use these guidelines for future cooperative tasks.

Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

### Steps:

1. Tell participants that this session is about working together effectively as a small group. We can learn most about how groups work by actually doing a group activity made to talk about what happened. Emphasize that there are no "right" or "wrong" ways to carry out the task of "Making Something," and that the focus of this activity is how we work together.
2. Divide the participants into four groups. Two groups should include six members each. The other two groups can include all the remaining participants. (With a smaller number of participants, have one group of six and another group of the remaining participants.)
3. Meet with the two groups of six members each. These two groups will do the "Making Something" game. Then meet with the other two groups. These groups will be the "observers." Make sure to meet with the observers separately from the groups "Making Something." These groups should not know what the observers are watching.
4. Here is what to explain to the two kinds of groups:

#### To the group "Making Something":

Each group making something will sit at opposite ends of the room. Each member will be given a bag containing one of the six materials from the "Making Something." The group will have 20 minutes to make something together. Members can make anything they like and work together any way they choose. Group members can talk to one another but not to the observers.

#### To the groups of observers:

One group of observers will be matched with one group "Making Something." The groups "Making Something" have been told that they have 20 minutes to create something. They can make anything they like and work together any way they choose. You may not talk to the members who are "Making Something" Your job is to watch how the group works together. How do they decide what to do? How do they cooperate, if at all?

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<sup>10</sup> Source unknown

5. Seat the groups "Making Something" in their separate places. The observers should sit in a circle around them. Give each group member one of the six bags. Tell them to open their bags and to begin. Remind them that they have 20 minutes to make something together. Literate observers should take notes on what they see.
6. At the end of 20 minutes, stop the groups even if they are not finished. Have each group show the other what it's made or begun to make.
7. Then, bring all the participants back to the circle for a discussion. First, ask the following set of question to the observers. Then, ask the same questions to participants. Compare their responses.
  - What happened in the two groups? Were they able to complete their task?
  - How did members of each team feel? Satisfied or frustrated? Why?
  - How did the group decide what to do? Who made the decision? How? Did the group have a leader or leaders?
  - Were all the six materials used? Why or why not? Did all group members contribute their own resources and ideas?
  - What difficulties did the group members have in working together? How could these difficulties be avoided?
8. Participants will be working together during the rest of the program. What guideline(s) can participants set: for reaching a group decision? for using resources? for cooperating? Record these ideas on newsprint, if possible. Add some of your own ideas too.

## River of Life<sup>11</sup>

Description: A river is a very meaningful symbol in many cultures, and most people find it natural and very stimulating to think of their own lives in terms of a river. This exercise is useful for personal reflection, leading to greater self-knowledge, and also for small group sharing, leading to greater trust in the group.

Time: One hour or more.

### Steps:

1. Give each person a sheet of plain paper and make plenty of crayons, markers, watercolors, etc., of different colors available.
2. Ask each person to draw the river of their own life, going right back to the source (the early years in their family), and including the different periods their lives, such as quiet peaceful times, wild stormy times (of rapids, and waterfalls) etc.
3. Encourage participants to use colors to express different moods at different periods of their lives.

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<sup>11</sup> Hope, Anne., and Sally Timmel. *Training for Transformation a handbook for community workers*. Zimbabwe, Mambo Press. 1984, 35.

4. Give 10-15 minutes for the drawing. Then ask people to form groups of 3-5 to share the experiences illustrated by the river.
5. It is not advisable to share in a large group but if people wish, they can put the drawings on the wall later and explain them informally to each other.

## Lifeboats<sup>12</sup>

Description: This exercise helps participants get to know each other and have a sense of group, begin to build group spirit, have fun and relax.

Time: 30 minutes to 2 hours.

### Steps:

1. The facilitator should share with the group the object of the exercise. Then explain that we are on a ship which has started to sink and we will have to evacuate into lifeboats. However, everyone will have to listen carefully to make sure that they are in the right lifeboat and once there, stay close together (maybe join hands) so as to avoid falling.
2. The facilitator can form the boats by various means, for example, by the province that you live in and then by place of birth, with a separate boat for those born outside Canada. While participants are in the lifeboats, the facilitator can identify each province or country, the numbers in each boat as well as have people identify who they are and what they do (very briefly) while still in a boat.

### Method Variations:

- Have everyone stand up. Now, form a group with people with people who: have the same number of siblings; now, find the other people in the group born in the same state as you, etc.
  - More time can be spent in the smaller lifeboats trying to learn names by having a ball tossed around in each group with participants calling out the name of the person to whom they are about to throw the ball. (Note: You can't throw it to the same person twice in a row.)
  - People can also be asked to move into boats by organization or union affiliation. Once in those boats, people can be asked to give their name, organization/union and what they do there.
3. To avoid the process dragging, the facilitator should try and ensure that things keep moving with the right balance of lifeboats and tasks to do in each boat. Besides names, different information could be shared after each change in the group's makeup.
  4. An element of excitement can be added by making an announcement that numbers of people in each lifeboat have become important. Too many will sink the boats and too few will make them capsize. Then participants can be asked to move quickly into lifeboats of 6 or 8 and so on. Choosing multiples that divide into the total number of participants ensures that no one needs to be left out--or the 'leftovers' can get into your boat!

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<sup>12</sup> Arnold, Rick., Deborah Barndt, and Bev Burke. *A New Weave popular education in Canada and central America*. ND, 79-81.



### Considerations for the activity:

There are innumerable options for the naming of your lifeboats depending on where the participants are coming from. Careful selection of these options can underscore strengths and deficiencies in the makeup of the group--should this be important. The more time you have for the initial phase of introductions and group building the more variations in the lifeboat technique you can use. However, the facilitator should be conscious of keeping the whole process moving and not bogging down in discussion at any point.

## **Pass the Hat<sup>13</sup>**

Description: This exercise emphasizes value identification and cooperation.

### Steps:

1. Explain to participants the purpose of the exercise.
2. Prepare a list of questions. The questions should promote value identification, greater self and group-awareness while not being too threatening. Examples of possible questions are as follows:
  - "I am best at...?"
  - "More than anything in the world I would like to ....?"
  - "My favorite music is....?"
  - "Someone who played a significant role in my life is...? (and why?)
  - "The famous person I would like most to be left on a deserted island with...?"
  - "Something I'd like to learn is...?"
  - "Something nice I did for someone was...?"
  - "Something I'd like to change is...?"
  - "I would never..."
  - "The qualities I like in a friend are..."
  - "If I found \$100 bill fall out of someone's wallet, I would...?"
3. Write each question on a 3x5 index card, or other piece of paper large enough to print a question large enough for all to read, and place all the cards in a hat.
4. Pass the hat around the circle, asking each participant to pull out a card, read the question and respond to it.

Discussion: When all the cards have been drawn, ask participants to describe their thoughts about the activity: What did they learn about others in the group? Was

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<sup>13</sup> WAGES' miscellaneous files, no publisher, no date.

anything surprising? What? What other things would they maybe like to learn about each other in the future?

## 7—12 Years Old<sup>14</sup>

Description: The aim of this exercise is to build trust through sharing some of our childhood experiences. We choose age 7—12 because this is a period of our lives that was 'given' to us, not made by us, and we can remember it well enough to reflect upon it. Also at that age there is a certain equality among us. We get away from the barriers created by prestige and position. The activity is useful, especially in diverse groups, to understand differences of culture and common human experiences.

Time: This is best used as an evening activity when groups can end when they finish and do not feel rushed.

### Steps:

1. Divide participants into groups of 4—6 people.
2. In the small groups, ask participants to share their answers to the following questions, moving on to the next question only after everyone has had a chance to respond.
  - Where was I and what was important to me during the time I was 7—12 years old?
  - Who was the most important person (influence) in my life at that time?
  - Choose one experience, or event, which had a decisive influence on leading you to make an important decision which has brought you to where you are now.

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<sup>14</sup> Hope, Anne., and Sally Timmel. *Training for Transformation a handbook for community workers*. Zimbabwe, Mambo Press. 1984, 34-35.

# Self-Disclosure Questions<sup>15</sup>

Description: This activity facilitates group building; enables individuals to get to know others in the group in a non-evaluative atmosphere; and encourages the development of skills in the area of self-disclosure, self-awareness, non-possessive caring, risk-taking, trust, acceptance, and feedback.

Time: 30 minutes to two hours.

Materials: 2—50 people, a large room, questions written on hand-out sheets, writing instruments, flip-chart or chalkboard, pens or chalk where appropriate.

### Steps:

1. The facilitator should decide in advance what areas of information to focus on and which questions to ask (see below for possible questions). Questions should be adapted to the issues/needs of the group. Questions should be written on hand-out sheets.
2. Group members should be divided into pairs or larger groups, and the question sheets should be distributed to each group. Instructions are for participants to fill in the blanks verbally.
3. Sample questions and uses of the activity are as follows:

### Basic Data:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ My hometown is \_\_\_\_\_ I was born in \_\_\_\_\_ I have \_\_\_\_\_ brothers/sisters/children. I live in \_\_\_\_\_ My parents are \_\_\_\_\_.

### Skills and Experiences:

My weirdest job experience was \_\_\_\_\_ Basically, my job is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ On the job I'm best at \_\_\_\_\_. I prefer to receive advice and  
feedback by \_\_\_\_\_ My own personal goals are \_\_\_\_\_  
I'm hoping that \_\_\_\_\_ I'm most satisfied in my work when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ After work, I \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

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<sup>15</sup> Bishop, Anne, Alyson Huntly, et al. *Basics & Tools: A collection of popular education resources and activities*. Ottawa: CUSCO 1988, 61. Acknowledgement: The self-disclosure method has been used and adapted by a number of groups. Some of the best information on these encounters comes from *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*, edited by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones.

Expectations:

The reason I'm here is \_\_\_\_\_ I came to this session because \_\_\_\_\_ The thing I DON'T want to have happen this weekend is \_\_\_\_\_ The workshop will be a success if \_\_\_\_\_ When I leave this meeting, I hope to \_\_\_\_\_.

Feelings:

Right now I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_ When I enter a room full of people, I usually feel \_\_\_\_\_ When I am feeling anxious in a new situation, I usually \_\_\_\_\_ I'm happiest when \_\_\_\_\_ When I feel rejected, I \_\_\_\_\_ The emotion I find most difficult to control is \_\_\_\_\_ My most frequent daydreams are about \_\_\_\_\_ A pleasant memory from my childhood is associated with \_\_\_\_\_ The first time I tried to swim/ performed before a group/ rode a bike/ traveled overseas/ etc., I \_\_\_\_\_.

Issues:

Premarital sex is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: Adapt topics specific to your group members such as economics, racism, the future or issues that will be the focus of discussion later in the program).

Participation:

I work best when \_\_\_\_\_ Large groups are \_\_\_\_\_ When I get upset at meetings, I usually \_\_\_\_\_ At meetings, I enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

Evaluation Technique:

The listener summarizes/synthesizes the answers by saying: "What I heard you say is... because you feel..." The other person should then provide comments on the feedback, usually in the form of agreement with the statements, disagreement, or clarification of certain points. The feedback process is as follows:

Round One: A answers the question. B provides comments to A. A then indicates agreement with B's comments (or provides clarification).

Round Two: B responds to the questions. A provides feedback to B, and B indicates agreement with the commentary.

## Skills Inventory Exercise<sup>16</sup>

Description: To allow the participants to reveal their skills and experiences, especially those skills that may not be obvious to others. This is an excellent activity for building confidence and pride in the collective skills of group members.

Time: 30 minutes or more depending on group size and length of discussion.

### Steps:

1. The facilitator should prepare in advance a list of questions for participants, and should write these on hand-outs. Questions should be adapted to fit the participants, but should include not just obvious work skills but also secondary skills and experiences.
2. Divide participants into pairs or small groups of three. Pass out question sheets to each group.
3. Questions might include:

At work my job is to \_\_\_\_\_

The things I do on a typical day include \_\_\_\_\_

Things that I enjoy doing at work are \_\_\_\_\_

In my free time \_\_\_\_\_

Skills that I want to enhance \_\_\_\_\_

Skills that I can teach \_\_\_\_\_

My 'people skills' are \_\_\_\_\_

In my youth, I wanted to be a \_\_\_\_\_ when I grew up.

One of my best life experiences was \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. And now, I can \_\_\_\_\_

4. When groups have finished answering the questions, reconvene the large group. Have members of the pairs introduce their partners.
5. After everyone has been introduced, ask the group to create a group skills inventory by listing all the various skills on a large sheet of newsprint. The inventory will be a useful reference for the group in its future work.

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<sup>16</sup> Bishop, Anne, Alyson Huntly, et al. *Basics & Tools: A collection of popular education resources and activities*. Ottawa: CUSCO 1988, 63.

## Tree of Life<sup>17</sup>

Description: This exercise helps people reflect on their own lives.

Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on group size. If possible it is good to do this in an open-ended session (e.g. in the evening) when groups can continue to share for as long as they wish.

### Steps:

1. Ask each person to draw the Tree of their own Life.
2. Explain that the tree represents the following aspects of our lives. If useful, the facilitator can post a drawing of a tree naming what the different parts of the tree represent.

- The Roots represent:
  - the family from which we come,
  - strong influences which have shaped us into the person we are now.
- The Trunk represents the structure of our life today,
  - job
  - family
  - organizations, communities, movements to which we belong.
- The Leaves represent our Sources of Information
  - newspapers
  - radio, television
  - books
  - reports
  - friends and contacts
  - school
- The Fruits represent our achievements
  - projects we have organized
  - programs
  - groups we have started or helped to develop
  - materials we have produced
- The Buds represent our hope for the future.

3. Give the group about 20 minutes to do their drawings.

4. Share in groups of 3-5.

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<sup>17</sup> Hope, Anne., and Sally Timmel. *Training for Transformation a handbook for community workers*. Zimbabwe, Mambo Press. 1984, 3.

## The Human Pretzel<sup>18</sup>

Description: Participants form a human pretzel by interlinking hands and then trying to become untangled. The activity allows participants to tackle a (sometimes) complex task together, observe leadership and participation styles, and examine reactions to physical contact and needs for personal space. The activity is best done with a group that has had some experience working together.

Time: 30 minutes.

### Steps:

1. The facilitator explains the objectives of the activity.
2. The facilitator calls out the instructions to group members, starting by telling participants to link their right hand with one person, their left hand with another, and then to execute a series of movements, never letting go of the hands they are holding on to. For example:
  - Turn yourself around to face outward.
  - Slip underneath the hands of another couple.
  - etc.
3. When the group is thoroughly entangled, tell participants that their job now is to untangle themselves. Explain that the facilitator will now bow out.
4. The group may or may not be able to untangle itself. When the activity is finished, debrief the activity.

### Discussion questions:

Discussion questions can focus on two main areas: First, the issue of teamwork and leadership; and second, the issue of physical contact and space.

- Was the group able to untangle itself? Why or why not?
  - What did it feel like to be able (or not able) to achieve a goal?
  - Who took a leadership role?
  - Who had a good idea and shared it?
  - Who had a good idea and didn't share it? Why not?
  - How did it feel to follow someone else's instructions?
  - How did it feel to give instructions?
  - When you didn't agree with someone's idea, what did you do?
  - What lessons can we learn from this activity about teamwork?
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- What did it feel like to touch other participants?

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<sup>18</sup> Author unknown. WAGES adapted this activity for its own purposes.

- Is touch or physical contact common in your culture and background? How is physical contact seen?
- What are your personal needs for "space"? How do you achieve space in a busy setting filled with people and activity?