Facilitating Small Group Activities

Before the Activity

This document contains information to help you plan your small group activity ahead of time. It is very important that care, thought, and planning happen in advance of your small group activity.

## Address Issues of Diversity and Inclusion

* Include diversity and inclusion topics in small group activity prompts.
* Become familiar with relevant diversity research.

## Develop a Questioning Strategy

* When creating the small group activity, pay attention to how the activity encourages questions and interactions.
* Create questions that allow for individual reflection, small group discussion, and large group synthesis.
* Brainstorm possible follow-up questions for the report out stage.
* Identify possible take home messages from the activity.
* If using small group facilitators, provide them with a copy of the activity and facilitation directions ahead of time.

## Choreograph Group Dynamics

* Identify active learning techniques or group engagement techniques that will be used in the session. Consider ways to maximize the number of individuals contributing to the larger group conversation. If using small group facilitators, share these ideas with them.
* Determine the goals and intention of group engagement activities.
* Plan time for individual reflection, small group interaction, and large group report out and synthesis.
* Determine if it would be useful to have pre-assigned small groups, paying attention to group composition when pre-assigning groups.

## Reflect on the Session

* Identify the overarching goals for the session and confirm small group activity reflects these goals.
* Map out the session timing, leaving buffer time for logistics and group management tasks.
* Create an evaluation tool and plan time in the session for collecting participant feedback.

Facilitating Small Group Sessions

During the Activity

# These facilitation tips will help you during your activity. It is recommended that you read over these tips the night before the session, and review them as needed while you are leading the session.

## Address Issues of Diversity and Inclusion

* Remind the audience to consider the topic through a diversity lens.
* Share the results of relevant diversity research during discussion.
* Pose some questions with a diversity angle during the discussion.

## Develop a Questioning Strategy & Choreograph Group Dynamics

* Announce to the participants the strategies being used to encourage engagement (e.g., "We are now going to break up into small groups to discuss individual case studies. Afterwards, we’ll come back together and report out solutions").
* State the goals and intention of group engagement activities.
* Allow time for individual reflection, group interaction, and report out.
* Actively solicit a variety of contributing voices (e.g., different individuals, different parts of the room).
* Make it a point to break up the conversation if some individuals are dominating. Moderate who asks questions and from which part of the room. Get a mix of voices (e.g., junior and senior faculty, men and women).

## Reflect on the Session

* Pay attention to what is working well and what is not. Make notes for things to change and things to keep the same.
* Ask the audience for final takeaways from the session.
* Pay attention to which topics received the most attention/feedback; quickly summarize and share these observations at the end of the session.
* Review session notes.
* Remember to ask for evaluations and review the collected feedback.