



COMMUNITY
TOOL BOX

Active Listening

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

Listening is something we often take for granted; of course we know how to listen! Yet to be a good listener is hard work. Because the brain works four times the rate that someone can speak, you have to actively intend to listen to understand someone's position, feelings, or attitude.

Active Listening:
Making a conscious effort to hear, analyze, assign meaning to and respond to what another person is saying.

Doing public involvement activities—whether interviews, workshops, or presentations—necessitates good listening and an active resistance to inserting our own opinions. As project leaders who ask for input and people's responses we need to practice being a willing receiver and gatherer of information about a

subject before moving to interpret it or react to it. Especially in a controversial project, everyone has a need to be heard and to feel understood.

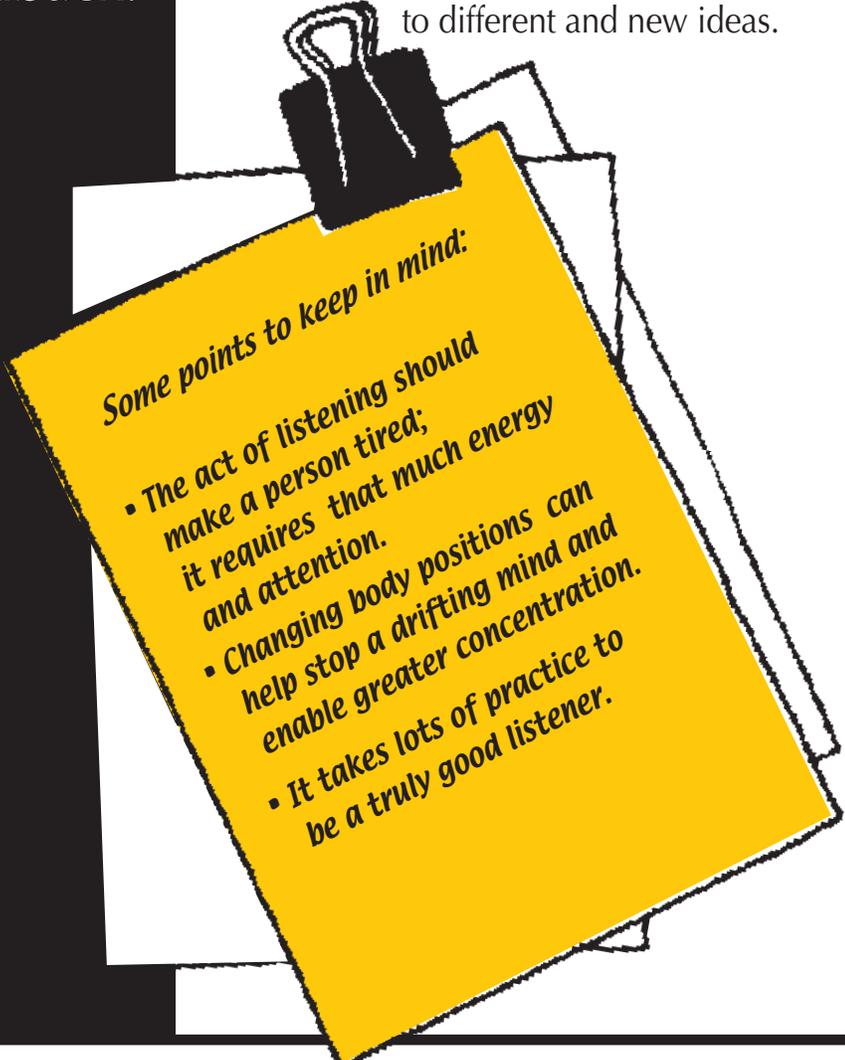
Timing is Everything

Some form of active listening is critical throughout the project. It is especially important whenever asking for information or feedback.

JUST THE FACTS

Active listening requires expending energy. While it may seem like a passive activity, to be an effective listener requires inner discipline and processing.

All too often, distractions, attitude, or personal biases interfere with the ability to clearly hear what someone is saying. Likewise, listeners tend to decide what the outcome is going to be and how they feel about it. This kind of judgmental awareness can prevent seeing alternatives. Non-judgmental awareness is being open to different and new ideas.



Some points to keep in mind:

- The act of listening should make a person tired; it requires that much energy and attention.
- Changing body positions can help stop a drifting mind and enable greater concentration.
- It takes lots of practice to be a truly good listener.

How to do it

1. Focus on the Speaker
2. Use Receptive Language
3. Listen for Key Words
4. Respond

1. Focus on the Speaker

Establish and keep—
eye and face contact
with the speaker.

Reinforce what is being
said is being heard
through non-verbal
facial expressions.

To paraphrase an old
saying, good listeners are
like poor boxers: they
lead with their faces.

2. Use Receptive Language

Follow and encourage
the speaker's train
of thought by using
receptive language; e.g.,
"I see," "Hmmm,"
"Un huh," etc.

3. Listen for Key Words

It takes continuous action
to focus on the essence
of the information being
shared. The listener's
mind should be actively
gathering, sorting,
sifting, evaluating,
synthesizing, and
ordering the data.

4. Respond

Verify with the speaker
about the essence of what
was said, especially if the
thought is being captured on
a flipchart or electronically
for future reference. Ask
questions for clarity but be
cautious that the questions
are not leading. Never,
unless expressly requested,
give an opinion on the
presented information.

Try It If...

- You need to gather information such as during a focus group or workshop.
- You need to challenge expectations and perceived opinions, whether your own or someone else's. Active listening can open new possibilities and ideas.

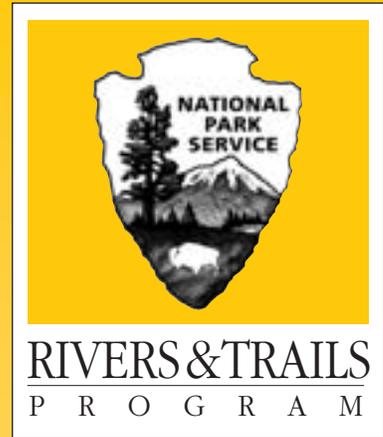
Forget It If...

- You need action. At some point during every project a decision needs to be made and that sufficient information exists to form a decision.
- You are asked for your professional opinion advice or direction.

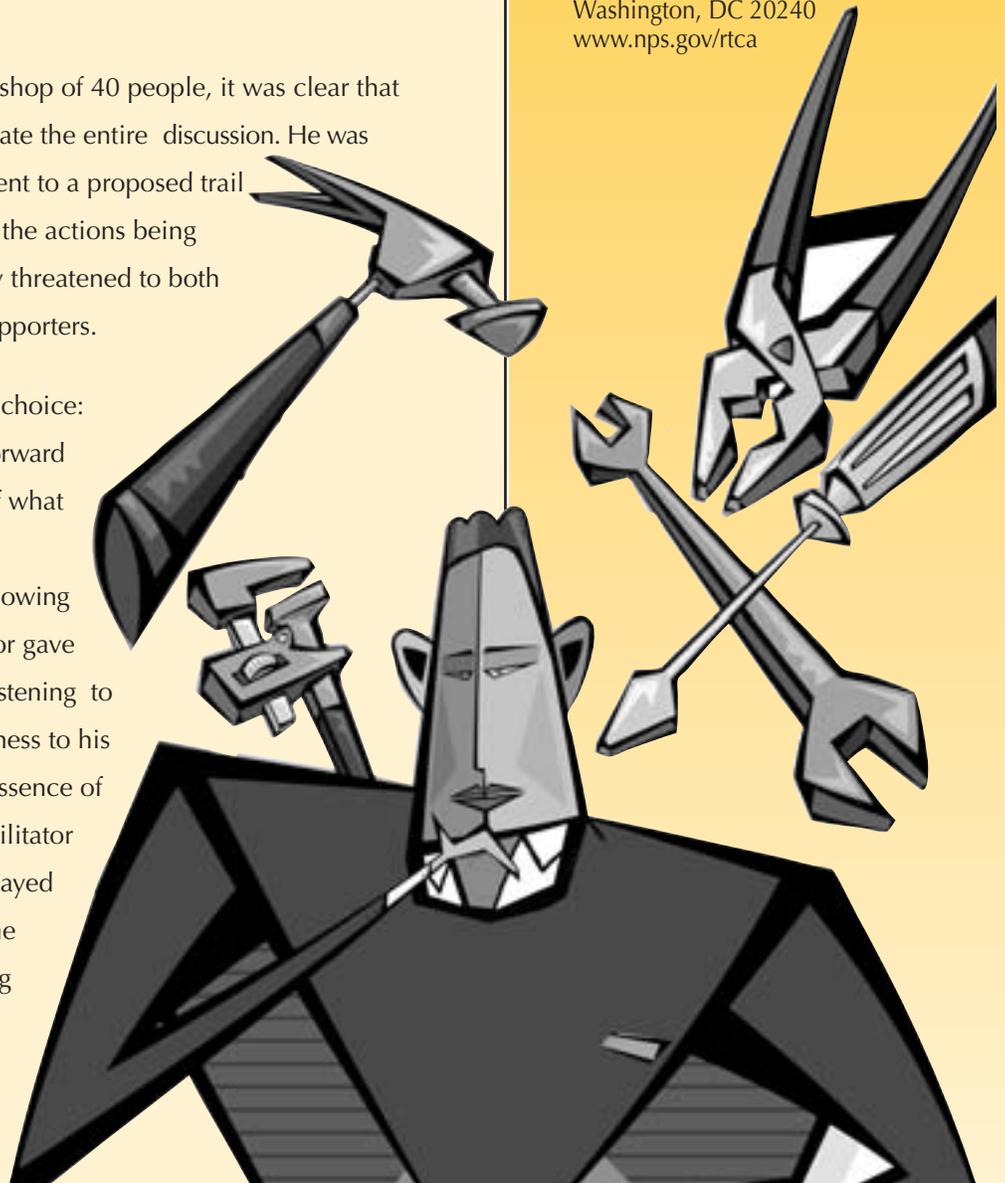
SOLUTIONS AT WORK

Only a few minutes into a workshop of 40 people, it was clear that one person was about to dominate the entire discussion. He was a landowner with property adjacent to a proposed trail corridor, and he disagreed with the actions being taken. His outspoken negativity threatened to both convince others and squelch supporters.

The facilitator was faced with a choice: ignore the outbursts and move forward with the workshop regardless of what the landowner said or give the landowner time to vent. Not knowing what could happen, the facilitator gave the man the floor. By carefully listening to what he said, by showing openness to his opinion, and by capturing the essence of the dissenting dialogue, the facilitator gained the man's respect. He stayed and participated in the rest of the meeting, no longer angrily trying to derail the process.



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BrainStorming



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WHAT WE'VE FOUND

Brainstorming is an excellent way to get people engaged, to gather a lot of ideas, and to break down barriers of communication. Not everyone will feel this way; some will say this type of exercise is a waste of time delaying getting to work. We find even the strongest skeptics will loosen up and participate if they understand the purpose of an activity and how it is leading everyone towards realizing the goal. Take time to explain how the information collected in the group brainstorm will be used—or if it is just for fun, say that and watch what happens. Usually everyone joins in.

**Brainstorming:
Generating ideas
and gathering information
through a free-flowing,
energetic,
creative
exchange.**



JUST THE FACTS

Brainstorming is an exercise in free-thinking. It usually involves a facilitator, who may also act as a recorder, and a group of people who are informed about the topic. A question is asked and everyone is encouraged to respond. All ideas are recorded with no judgments made.

The brainstorming technique can also be used just for fun as an icebreaker, to introduce the concept of brainstorming, or simply just to get people talking. In this case, a facilitator should encourage people to think quickly and call out whatever comes to mind regarding the topic in question.

The philosophy of brainstorming is that quantity breeds quality; the more suggestions, the better. For this reason, and to ensure total participation, it is important to make sure everyone present has an opportunity to speak.



HOW TO DO IT

1. BASIC TECHNIQUE

- Break into small groups of 15 people or less.
- Have chairs arranged in a single circle to allow everyone to see each other.
- Set aside a specific amount of time.
- Describe the questions that the group will be responding to and check for understanding.

Caution everyone not to discuss the merits of each idea reminding them that will happen later or in subsequent meetings. Record all ideas on a flip chart. Print large, legibly and fast! Repeat key words and phrases and be sure to ask the speaker to clarify ideas you do not understand. Build on and expand ideas. Push the group to consider other ways of looking at the issue, to stimulate more ideas.



2. ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

- **Silent Thinking and Writing:** present the question or statement and ask people to spend 5 to 15 minutes concentrating on their own thoughts and writing down their responses. These responses can either be handed in and a facilitator reads them to the group or an open session can begin where everybody shares. (This may be a good step if people seem especially reluctant to speak and express their ideas.)
- **Round-Robin:** Each person is systematically called on in turn and shares one idea at a time until either there are no

more ideas or the time limit is reached.

Try reversing the direction of calling on people.

- **Popcorn:** Ideas are called out randomly, quickly.
- **Discussion Brainstorm:** Have a discussion about the question or issue for a specific amount of time, say 5 to 10 minutes. Then run the brainstorm, describing key ideas that came up.
- **Post-it Notes®:** Each person is given 5 minutes to think about a response to the question or issue. (Alternatively, have people work in pairs to generate ideas.) They are to record their responses on as many Post-it Notes as necessary. Each person, when called upon, gives the notes to the facilitator who reads them and sticks them on the wall or a flip chart. Similar ideas are then grouped.

3. ICEBREAKER TO DEMONSTRATE BRAINSTORMING

Describe either an imaginary problem to be solved, such as “ways to reduce paper” or “how to get people to come to a public meeting” or use a current event or issue that is particular to that community (but is not related to the resource or the project). Have everyone take a turn around the room in round-robin fashion stating humorous, infeasible, unwise, or outlandish ways to achieve the desired goal—the crazier the better. Write the responses on a flip chart. After everyone has had an opportunity to provide at least two responses, the facilitator guides the discussion. Identify any trends that were noticed such as one idea building on a previous one, unrestricted thinking, breaking into new territory, concepts of creativity, how some items could be adapted to really solve the problem, etc. Use these trends to illustrate how fresh, new thinking will be required in this planning process.

Use It If...

- You want get people comfortable expressing themselves with each other and sharing ideas even if they do not agree.
- You have a group that has come together to solve a problem or develop a plan.
- You want everyone to feel involved in contributing to work that is being done.

Forget It If...

- Your group does not trust the facilitator, the topic, or each other. This can especially happen if the project is highly controversial.
- You want people's honest opinions. Once people begin to hear other's speaking, they can begin to influence each other.
- Consider interviewing in small groups or conducting a survey instead.
- You already have the "answer." Never ask a roomful of people to express their ideas and then try to manipulate the responses to fit your own agenda.

Timing is Everything

Use brainstorming at any point of a planning process to generate ideas or just to get people interacting.



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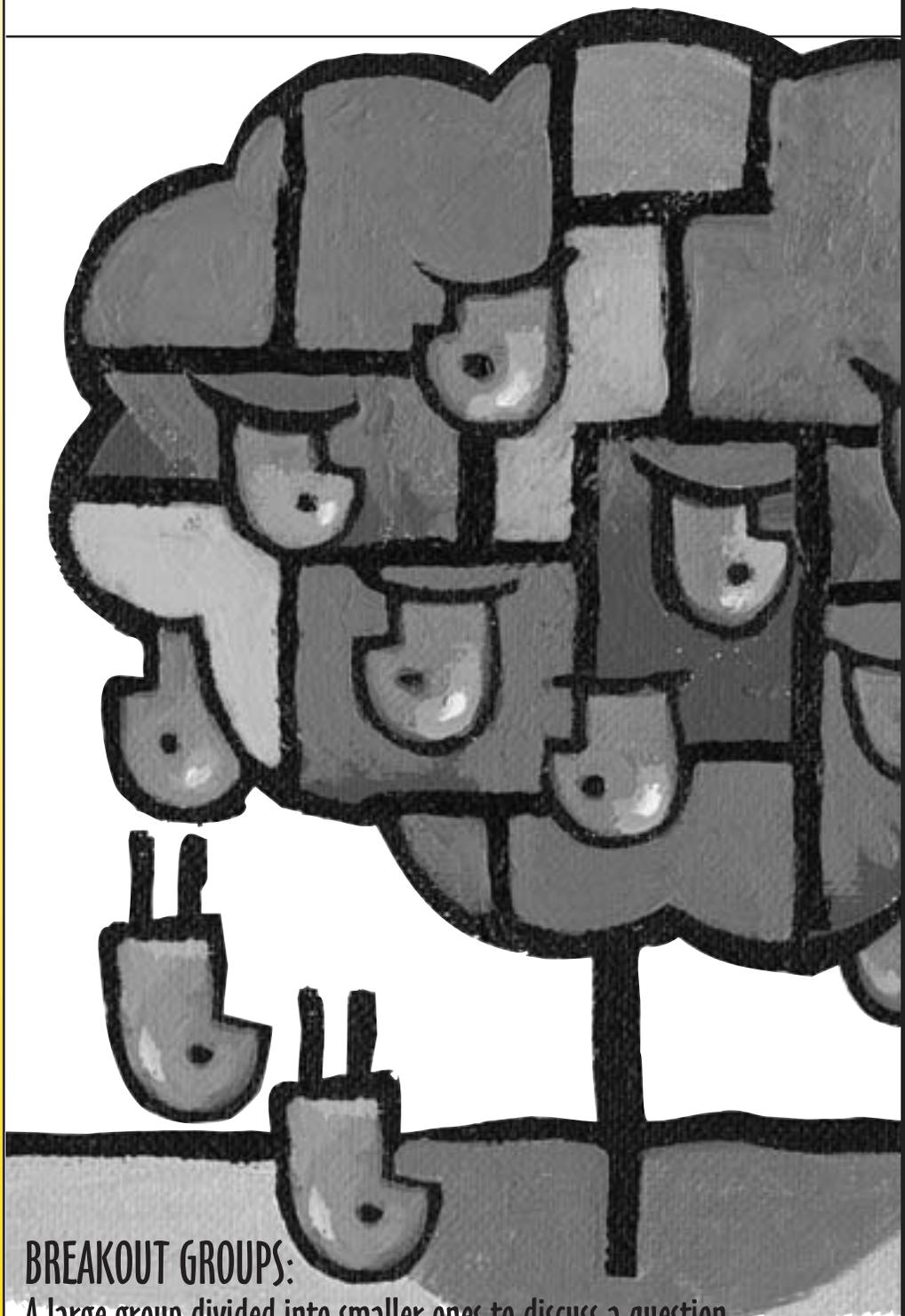


COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

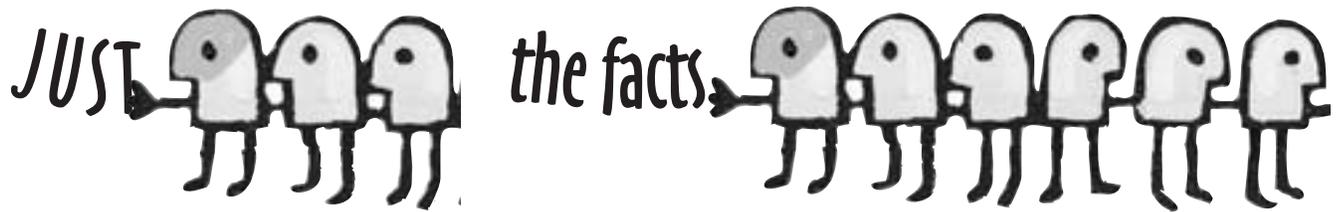
Breakout groups have three great advantages. First is that they are a means of bringing people to the information rather than simply bringing information to people. Second is they get people moving around and talking. And third is real work can be accomplished much more quickly in a small group than trying to do it with a large group. We find the only limitation for breakout groups is the meeting facility itself: some just cannot accommodate splitting into multiple groups and having adequate space to work, hear each other, post findings, etc.

Breakout Groups



BREAKOUT GROUPS:

A large group divided into smaller ones to discuss a question or do an activity and then report back to the whole group.



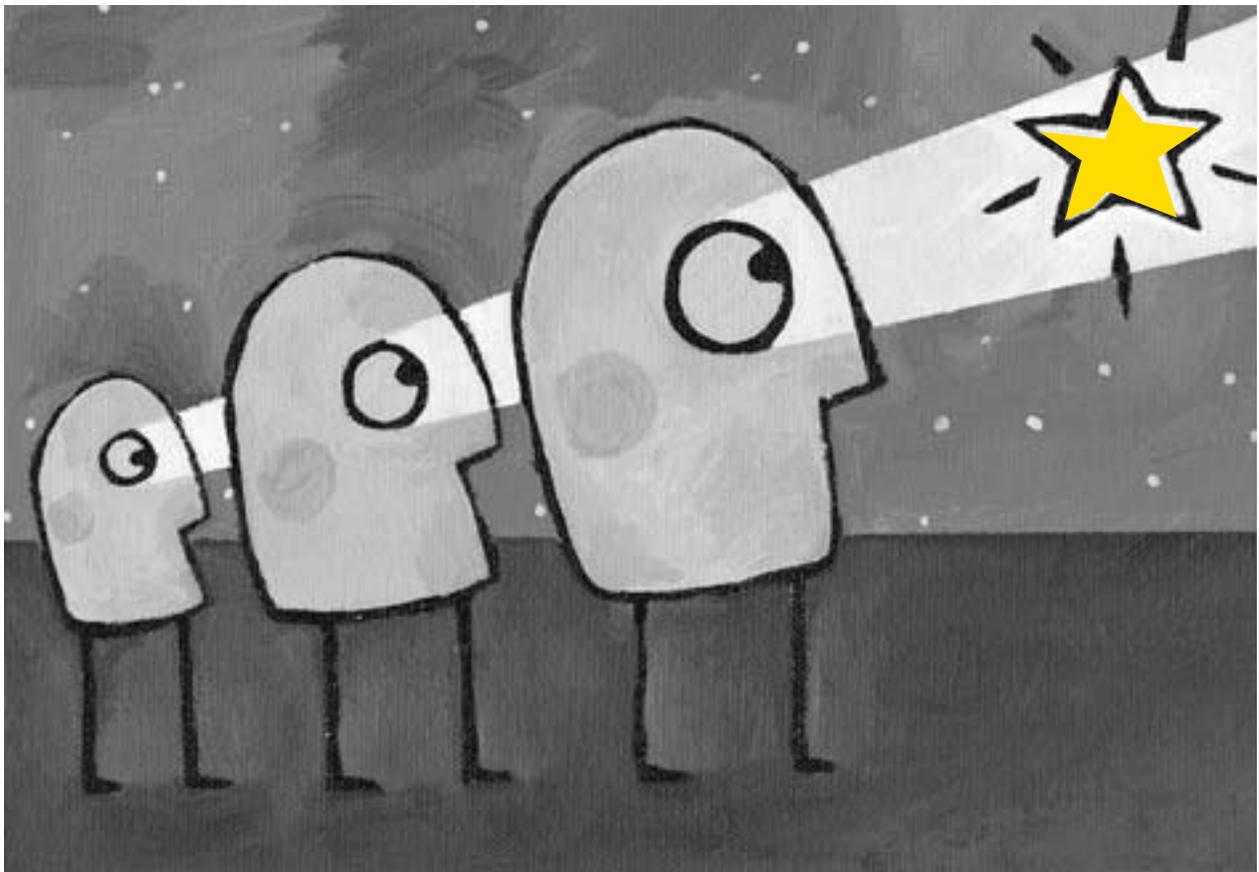
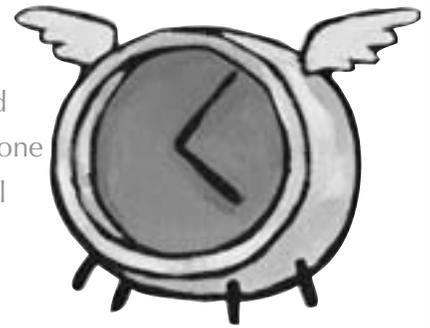
Breakout group is a term used to describe the division of a gathering of people into smaller clusters. It is a means of rapidly and actively gathering a large amount of newly generated information that can be reported back to a large audience.

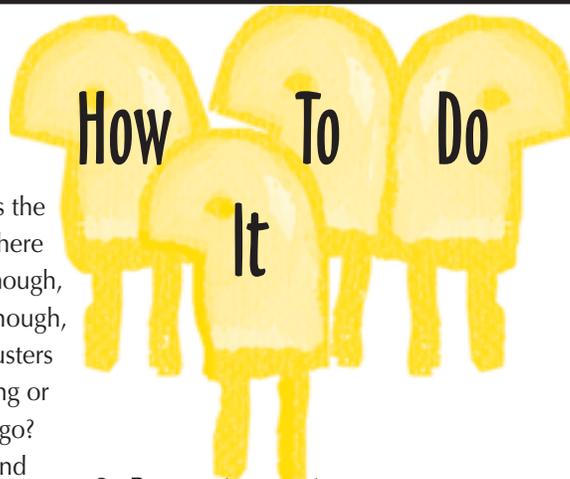
A breakout group may range in size from 4 to 15 people. If the meeting facility is adaptable and there is sufficient time in the program, there really is no limit to the number of breakout groups. Be warned that

the more breakout groups there are, the greater the challenge of facilitating.

Once divided, each group responds to a question or completes an activity.

Following an allocated amount of time, everyone reassembles to hear all of the small groups present summaries of their discussions.





1. Prepare the space

Anticipate before a meeting begins the number of breakout groups and where they will meet. Is the room large enough, and the number of groups small enough, that people can pull chairs into clusters to work? Is there access to adjoining or separate rooms where groups can go? Determine where people will go and then, at each station or in each room, set up an easel with flip chart and a supply of felt tip markers.

2. Prepare the participants

At the appropriate point, the facilitator should describe the breakout groups. If every group is going to work on the same item, go over it including encouraging people to ask questions for clarity with everyone present. If different groups will be working on different items, present it all so each group has a full idea of what is happening.

Tell them how much time they will have to work and that they need to be prepared to give a brief summarization (2 to 5 minutes). Each group needs a scribe, a reporter, and a facilitator. (These roles do not have to be filled by three people; one person can be, for example, both scribe and reporter.) Define those roles and functions if necessary. Then divide the group; counting off by numbers can help assure a better mixture. During the breakout the facilitator should roam among the groups to answer any questions and announce time remaining at the 10- and 5-minute marks.

3. Prepare to report

Plan a break following the end of the working session. This gives each group time to organize its information for presentation or to give the information to the facilitator if that is who will be presenting. The presentation should focus on the highlights of the breakout group's discussion: key topics, conclusions, recommendations, issues, and process.

4. Report back

When each group is ready, or time is up, call the whole audience back to attention, choosing one group to go first. Remind everyone of the amount of time for each presentation (2 to 5 minutes) and stick to it! How each group reports back depends largely upon the room. Here are two alternatives:

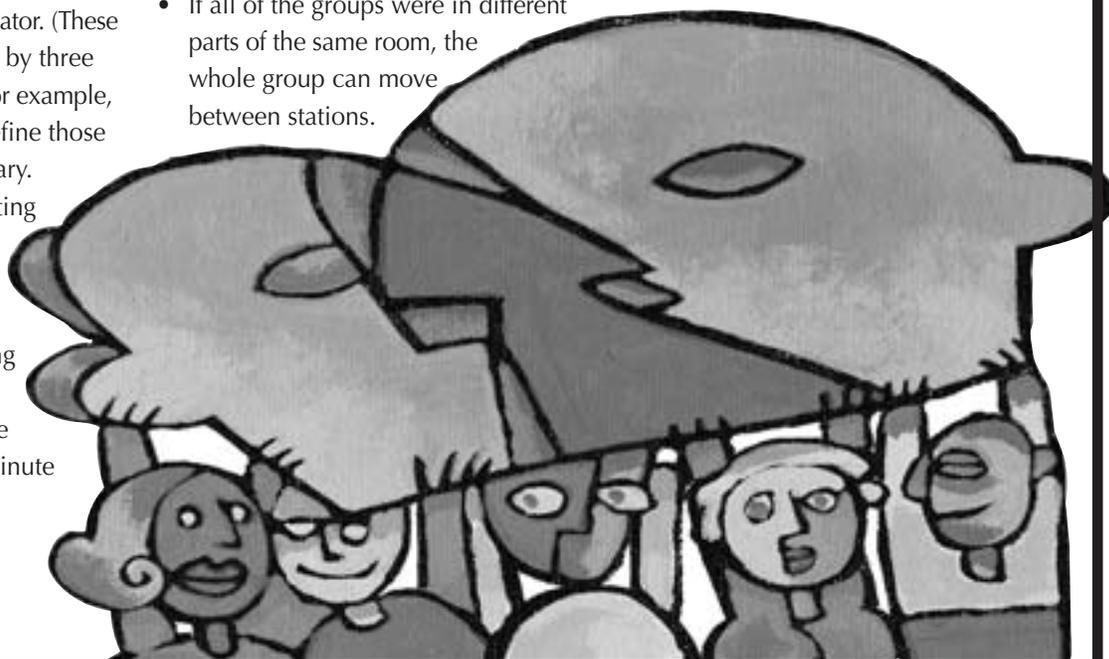
- If all of the groups were in different parts of the same room, the whole group can move between stations.

At the first station, introduce the reporter and allow him or her to begin. Monitor the time; when completed, thank the reporter and quickly move the group to the closest station. Begin next report. Repeat this process until all the small groups have reported.

- If the breakout groups were in different rooms, have everyone assemble back in the main meeting area. Call the reporter from the first group forward to the front of the room to give his or her 2- to 5-minute summary. Monitor the time, thank the reporter and call the next group up. Repeat process until all the small groups have reported.

A POINT TO REMEMBER:

If everyone worked on the same question, and time is getting short, ask the reporters to highlight different insights or ideas and not to repeat things mentioned by a previous group.



Use It If...

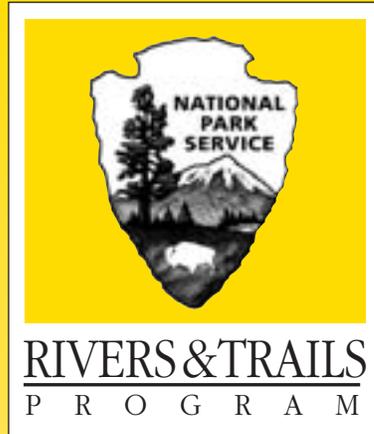
- You want to give everyone a chance to contribute to the discussion. Some who may not express themselves in a large group will speak in a smaller group.
- You are looking for ways to alter the pace of a long workshop. This gives people the chance to move around, meet, and talk with different participants.
- You have a lot of material to cover but not a lot of time. Each breakout group can cover a separate question or issue; their findings will give the whole group a jumpstart on resolving or acting upon it.

Forget It If...

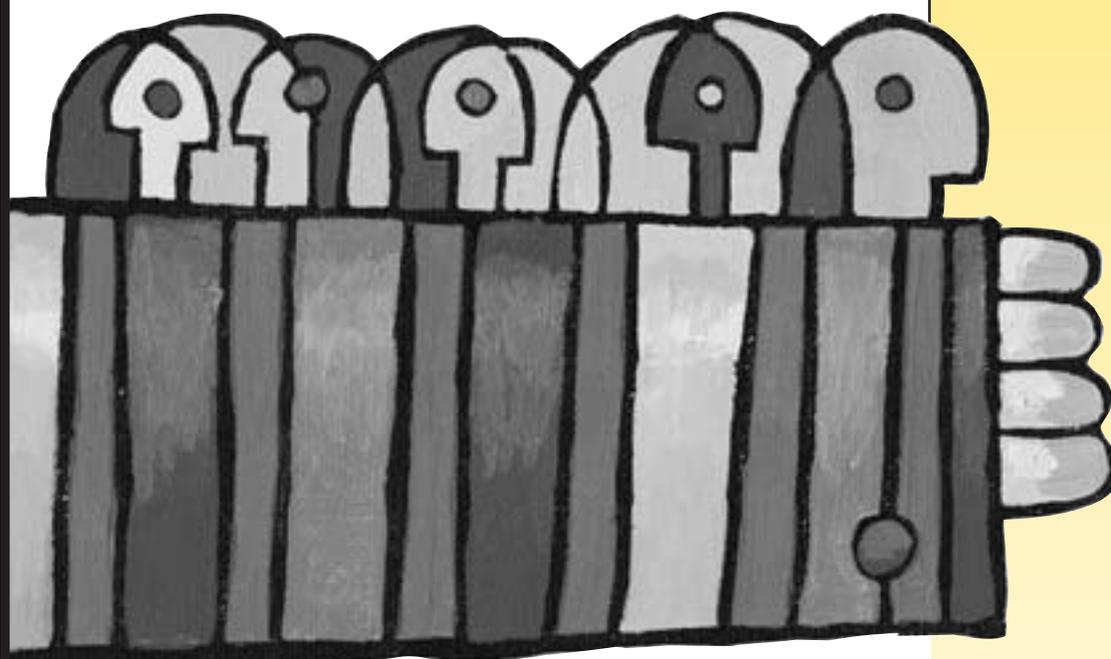
- Your group is less than five people or the breakout groups will be larger than 12 people.
- Your facility cannot accommodate smaller groups either with separate rooms or because the meeting room cannot be arranged.
- You do not have legitimate questions, issues, or activities for the small group to accomplish. People will quickly see this is a waste of time; this will damage your credibility and progress for getting real work accomplished.

Timing is Everything

Use breakout groups at any large meeting or workshop where decisions need to be made.



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Dialogue



COMMUNITY
TOOL BOX

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

For a group wanting to explore in depth its own consensus process and to bring out the best in group creativity, dialogue is an excellent choice. It is a great way of going to the heart of a matter. This technique requires time and a contemplative attitude. While it's certainly not for everyone, if there is the right mix of people and a trained facilitator, we have seen groups take conversations to completely new levels and develop ideas that would have never been possible.



DIALOGUE:
The art of conversation
in a group.

JUST THE FACTS

In the 1970's David Bohm, a physicist, and Patrick de Mare, a psychiatrist, brought to prominence a traditional meeting format referred to as "dialogue." It is a means of communicating in great depth and sincerity. It works best for those who share a common interest in knowing more about themselves, their potentials together, and where their mutual creativity might lead. Dialogue is not discussion or a debate of issues. It requires participants to be open and step back from rigidly held opinions.

Dialogue can be used for any subject. When a group meets, there are no pre-set agendas, imposed outcomes or objectives.

In the beginning there are sometimes frustrations with this technique. One reason is that dialogue is based on slowing down the thought process of a group in order to examine it. To do that, dialogue puts an emphasis on silence. Groups are encouraged to repeatedly stop talking and pause for reflection. From this contemplative silence new thoughts are generated. It takes time and practice to improve this technique.

Key principles of dialogue:

INQUIRY:	SUSPENSION:	LISTENING:	SPEAKING:	RESPECT:
openness to explore the origin, meaning and consequences of topics, actions, positions that are 'suspended' before the group.	the willingness and act of putting any and all personal ideas, opinions, judgments, impulses, etc. before the group to consider.	hearing what others and yourself have said.	giving voice to the deeper feelings associated with a topic in a responsible manner; a willingness to join the group in verbal exploration.	willingness to hear and understand the positions of others and to assist them and the group as a whole in the overall process.

HOW TO DO IT

1. SET UP THE EXPERIENCE

Invite between seven and forty participants. More people will mean a greater diversity of thought. Let them know ahead of time, either through written materials or verbal explanations, what the meeting will entail and that this will likely be only the first of a number of such meetings. The meeting should last approximately two hours.

Find an experienced facilitator to assist the group or at least to advise you on getting started. Have chairs arranged in a circle to emphasize equality of all participants, as well as openness to any and all contributions.

2. DESCRIBE THE GROUND RULES

Instruct participants at the beginning of the meeting about what dialogue is and is not. All individual titles, labels, hierarchy must be set-aside during the gathering in order for dialogue to work effectively. Everyone must feel free to speak her or his mind openly and honestly, and likewise to be silent and reflective when appropriate. Finally, remind everyone that there is no pre-set agenda or objective other than the

exploration of the group awareness itself, in the anticipation of group coherence and creativity.

3. LAUNCH A TOPIC

Have the group choose a topic either in real time or from a brainstormed list. Participants are asked to reflect on the topic and begin commenting on it. If necessary, remind participants to refrain from speaking directly to the one who proposed the topic or who just offered an opinion; this is not a debate and no one should feel he or she has to defend himself or herself.

A new topic may be proposed at any time, but the group must agree that it is ready to depart from the former topic.

4. LEAD FROM BEHIND

The task of the facilitator is to witness and ensure the open flow of thought and the development of the maximum opportunity for creativity. Use meeting techniques such as eliciting participation from each person, steering control and manipulation away from one or a few participants, encouraging mutual respect, etc.

While dialogue flows back and forth, the facilitator may want to offer observations

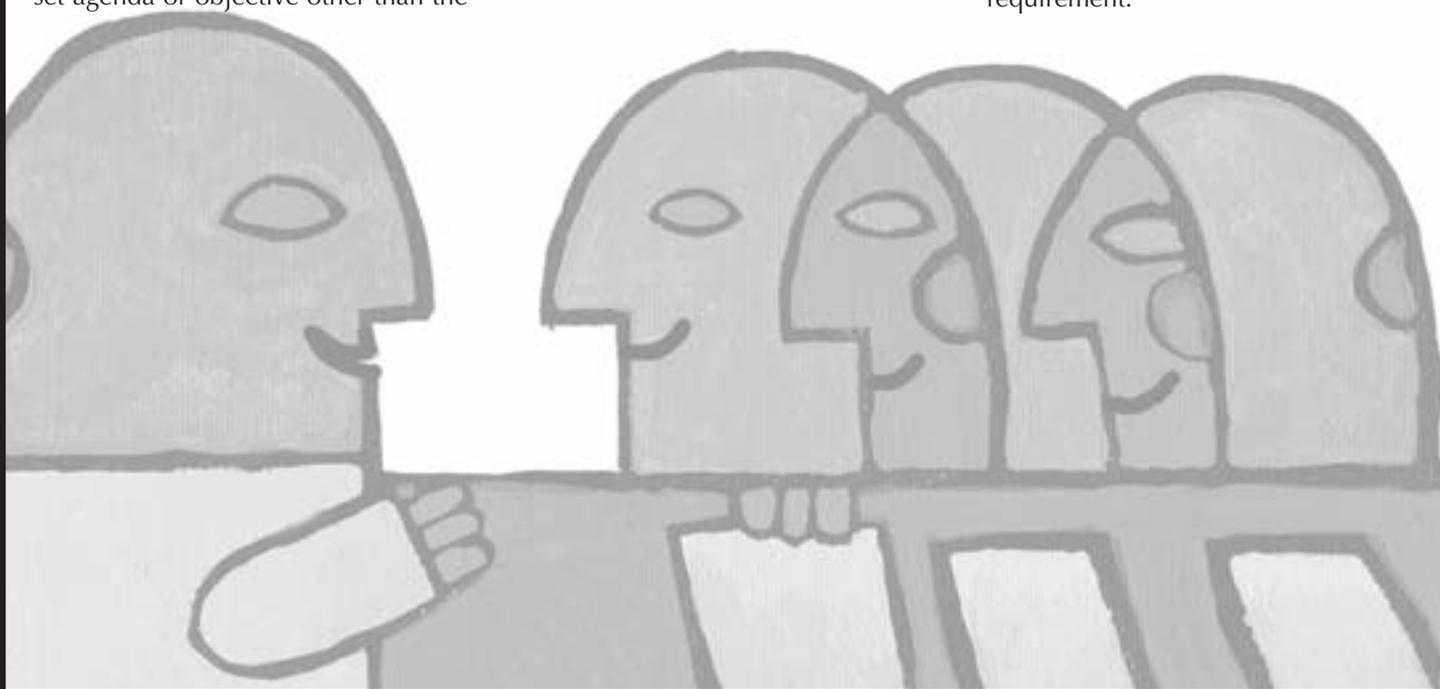
of the group thought process and consensus and offer guidance. For example, if a discussion or debate is emerging, or if polarization is causing rigid positions and cutting off effective exploration, gently bring the group back to its shared sensibilities.

5. LET GO.

Remind participants they need to “dis-identify” with opinions, ideas, and positions and to let go of ego attachments. The facilitator, or anyone in the group, can encourage the participants to take risks, to be spontaneous, and open, and to explore beyond what they might be accustomed to in other types of groups or meetings.

6. WRAP IT UP

It is up to the facilitator, who is observing the time and the energy of the group, to suggest an ending point. At this point the facilitator may then summarize the ideas and topics explored during the meeting or decide not to suggest any conclusions. Set a meeting time and place for the next gathering and adjourn. Notes taken during the meeting may be distributed but this is not a requirement.



Use It If...

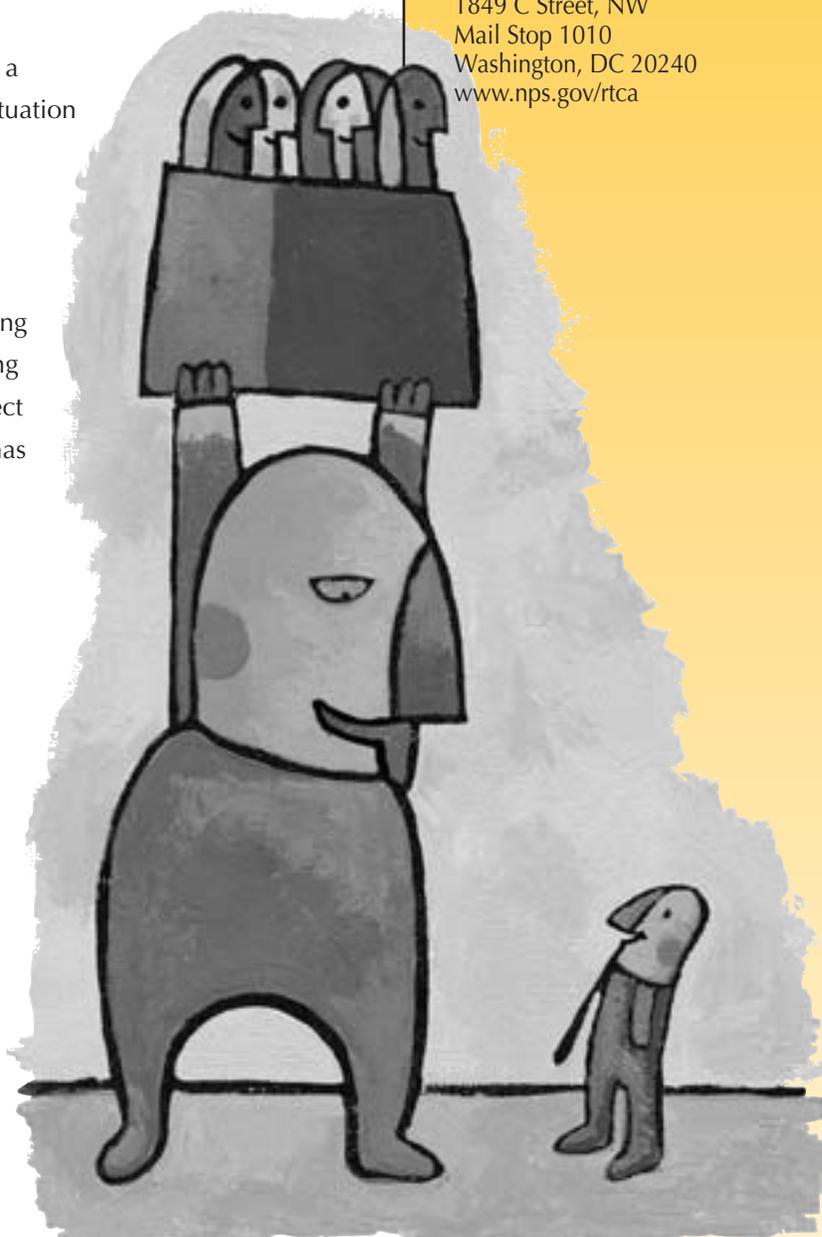
- You have a longer time frame that can incorporate multiple meetings and an introspective beginning.
- You are interested in exploring group dynamics and in enhancing the quality of everyone's involvement with one another.
- You want to enhance general creativity among a specific group of people.

Forget It If...

- You have a limited time schedule with deadlines fast approaching.
- Your group wants to work solely with established agendas, goals, objectives, specific outcomes, and pragmatic expectations.
- You know the participants are not of a philosophical temperament or the situation is not conducive to a contemplative approach.

Timing is Everything

Dialogue can be used at any point during the planning process. A group's ongoing dialogue may be what launches a project or spurs further actions after a project has finished.



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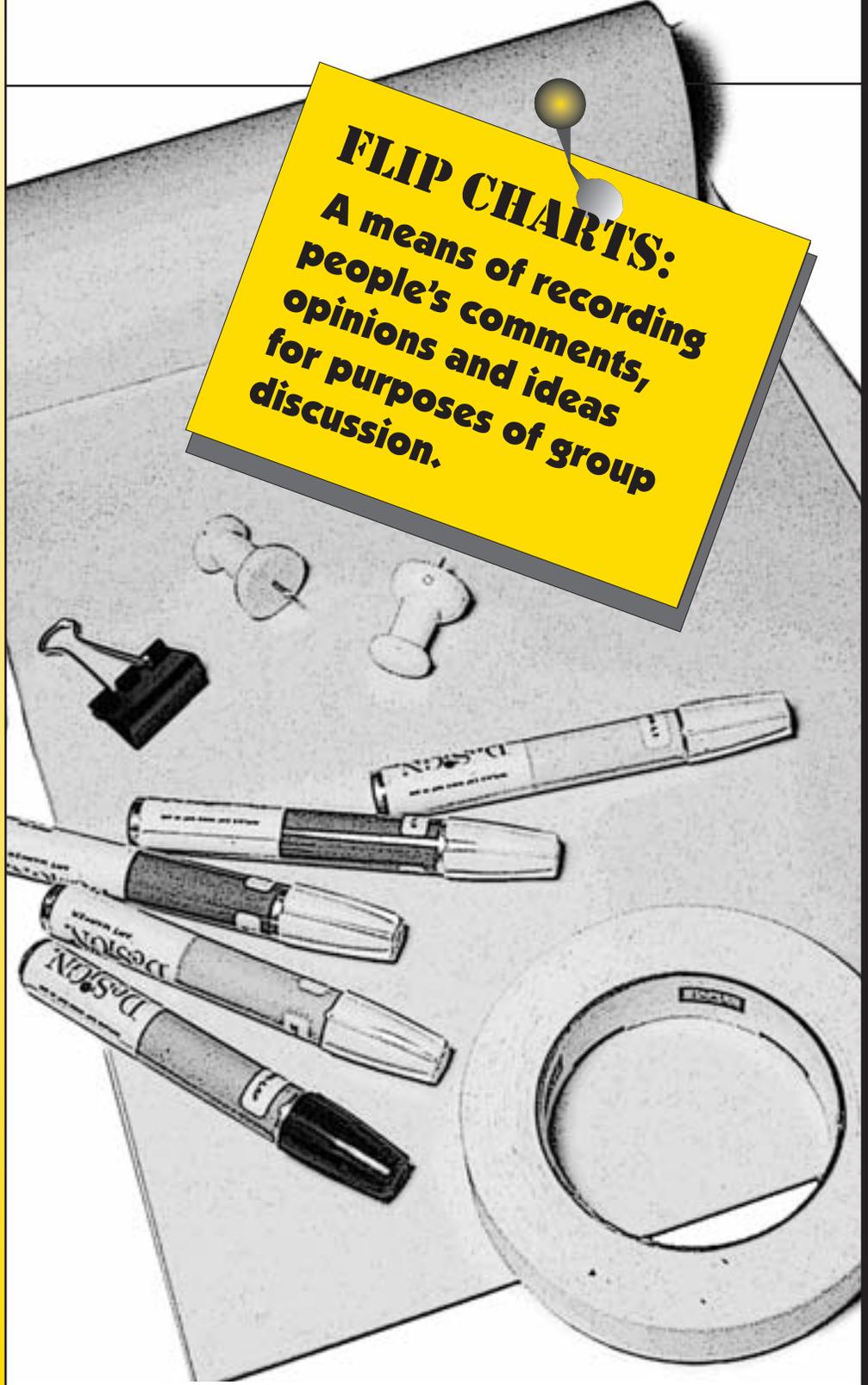
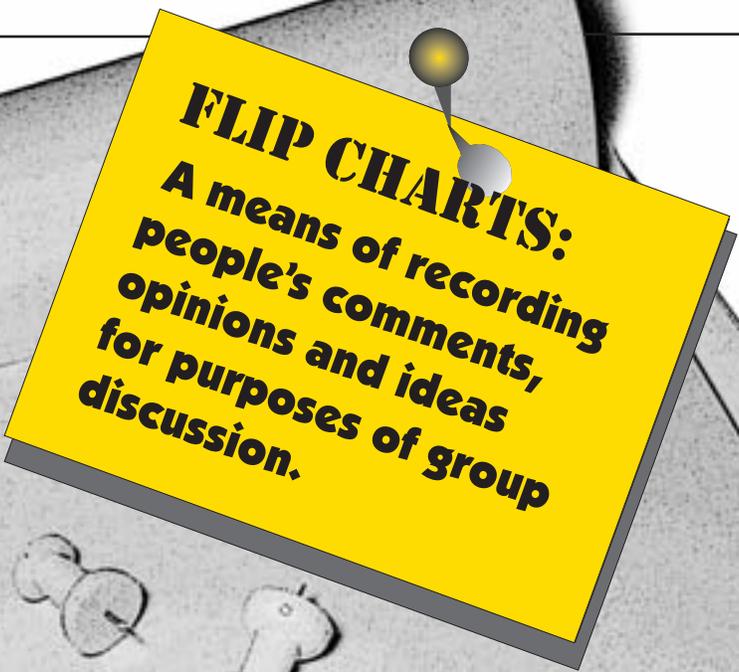


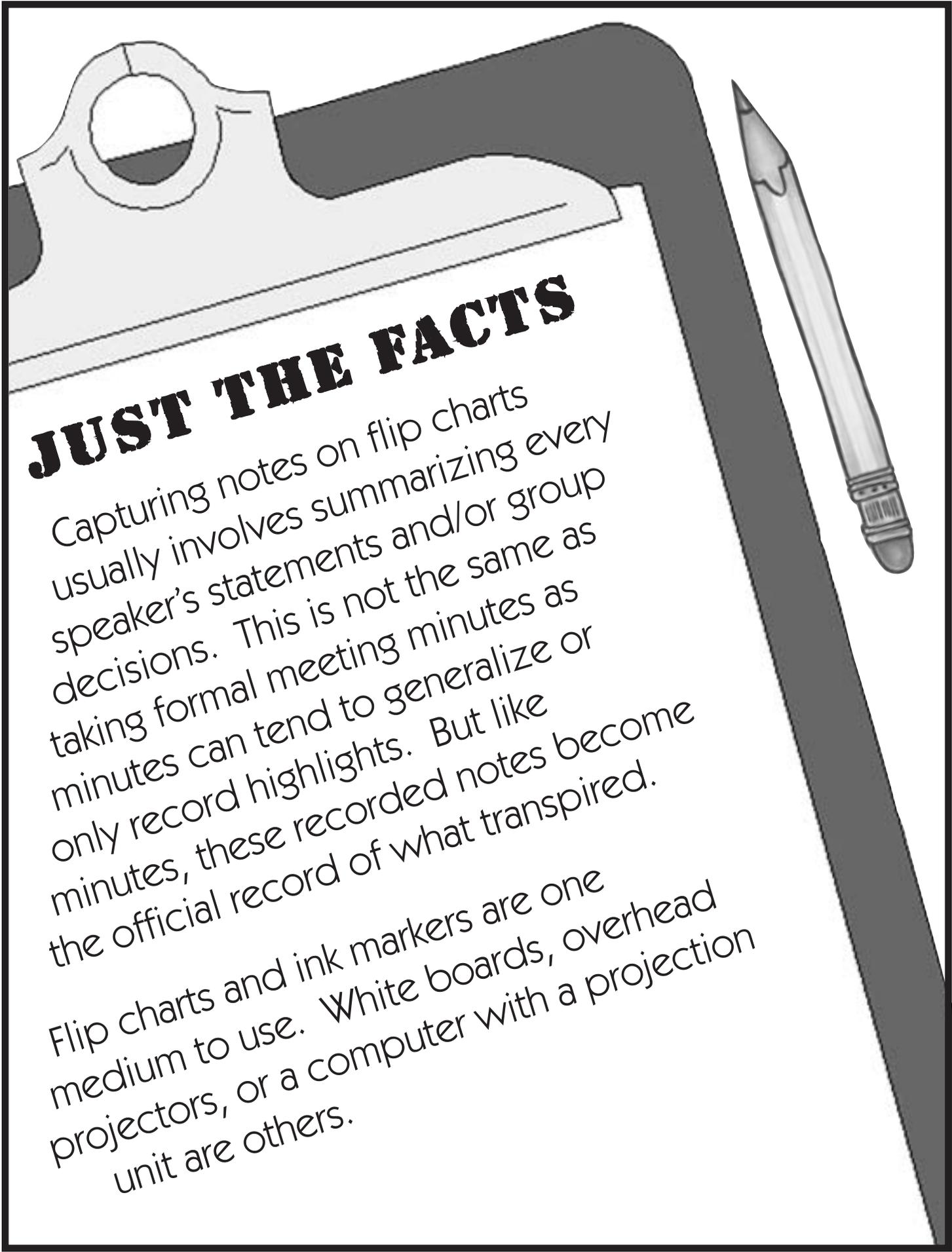
COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

If the focus of a large meeting is to collect information and discuss ideas, recording notes on flip charts is essential. Large, posted notes allow everyone to visually see what is being discussed and help ensure that everyone has a similar understanding of the discussion. After the meeting, we usually mail the write-ups to attendees. We have also used the notes for content in newsletters and project publications to reach an even larger audience.

FLIPCHARTS





JUST THE FACTS

Capturing notes on flip charts usually involves summarizing every speaker's statements and/or group decisions. This is not the same as taking formal meeting minutes as minutes can tend to generalize or only record highlights. But like the official record of what transpired.

Flip charts and ink markers are one medium to use. White boards, overhead projectors, or a computer with a projection unit are others.



1. Get the supplies

Purchase a set of good quality washable markers. Avoid colors like yellow, red, and orange which are harder to read from a distance. If the smell is bothersome, get scented pens.

You also need flip charts, at least one stand, and a means of posting sheets once they are filled up. It is important to check with personnel at the meeting facility as some have very stringent rules about posting. Tape may be an option; some rooms have cork runners along the walls to tack up paper (that means thumb-tacks need to be on the purchase list). For a bit

more money, you can buy pads of poster-size self-sticking paper.

2. Announce the intent

At the meeting, before the discussion starts, tell participants what will happen to the notes that are captured. Tell them if, after transcription, they will be mailed out, posted online, filed for future publication, or a combination of these possibilities.

3. Record the quotes

- Print LARGE and neatly in short, understandable phrases.
- Use the speaker's exact phrasing, or if summarizing, the facilitator should verify with the speaker that

the summary communicates the original intent.

- Write each idea on the flip chart in alternating colors such as green and blue.
- Number each page and also write the date of the meeting or workshop.

4. Post the pages

Determine before the meeting if the facilitator will also be the recorder or if there will be a person for each job.

If one person is doing both, ask a volunteer from the audience to post the completed sheets. That way the flow of conversation is not stopped if the facilitator has to hang up each sheet.

If you are using a white board, some electronic models are attached to a printer so that the notes can be printed before the board is erased. If the model is not electronic, or if you are using an overhead projector, you can take a photograph of the board or capture the notes on video for transcription later.

Alternatively, someone in the audience will need to be copying what is captured. White boards

and overhead projectors are not the best tools if a meeting is expected to generate a volume of notes. It becomes difficult, if not impossible, to refer back to previous statements. Even using a computer and a projection unit can be unwieldy to scroll and find specific comments.

5. Transcribe the notes

After the meeting, the notes should be typed out verbatim. Do not expand on the thought or even turn a phrase or fragment into a complete sentence. It is important that what people saw at the meeting is exactly the same as what gets printed. Doing this reveals how necessary it is for the recorder to print neatly and not use abbreviations that may be understood at the meeting but cannot be remembered a few days later. These transcribed notes will be a good reference for future discussions and decisions.

Use It If...

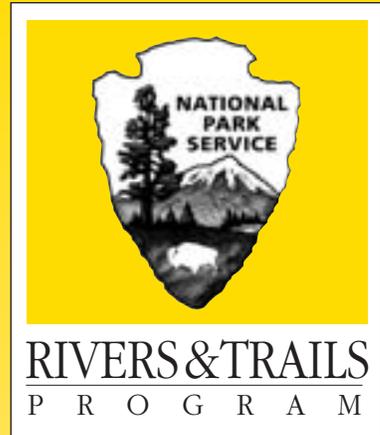
- You want a group to work towards a consensus by first understanding each other's opinions or meeting to determine priorities.
- You want to document a project history: what was accomplished, decided upon, and when.

Forget It If...

- You do not have plans to make use of the notes.
- You are leading a small, informal meeting and the participants are meeting each other for the first time.

Timing is Everything

Use flip charts throughout a project at any appropriate meeting.



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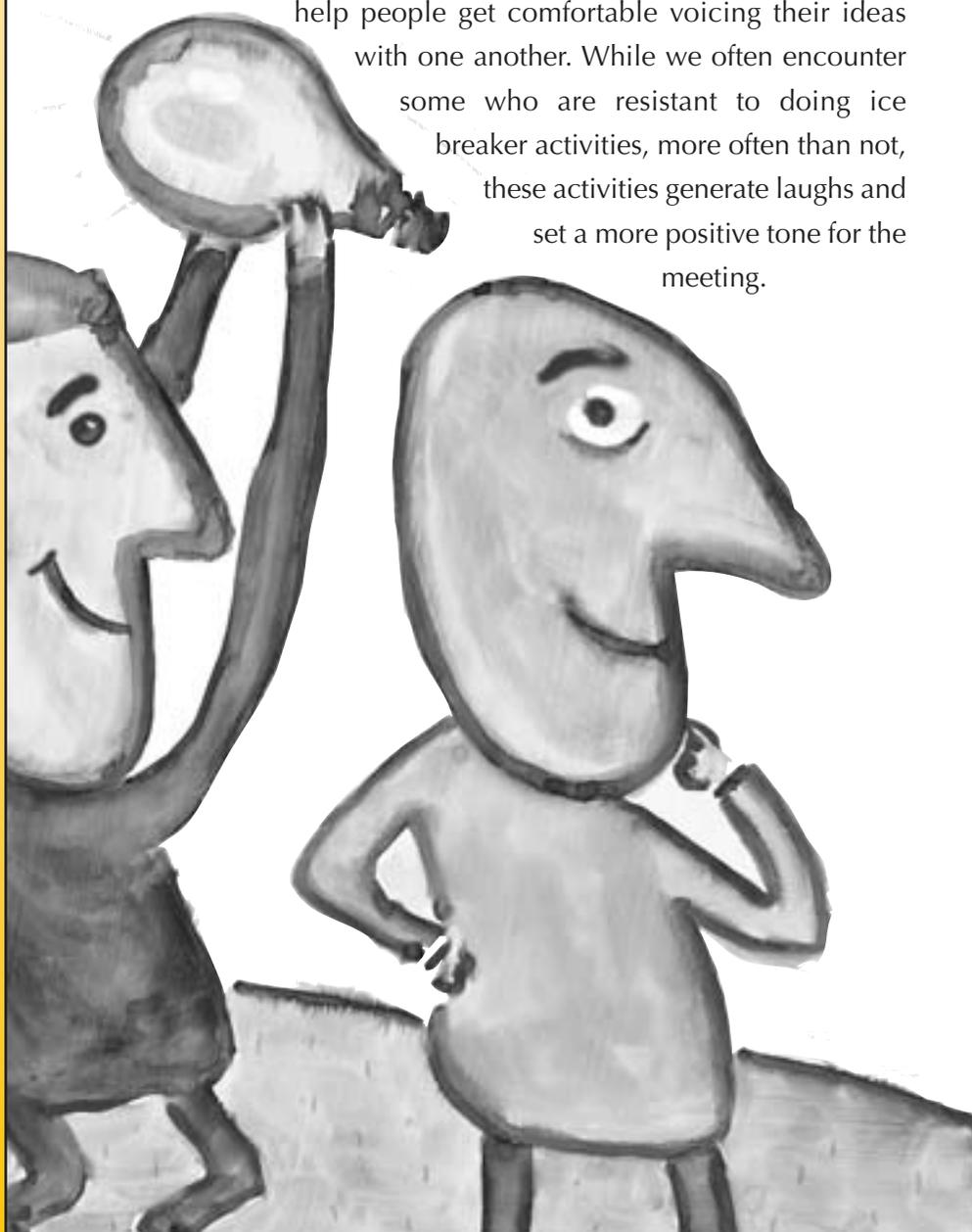
COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

**Ice Breakers:
Guided, short
activities
that help a group
of people become
acquainted with
each other.**

ICE BREAKERS

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

Ice breakers can effectively break tension and encourage interaction between people, whether they know each other or not. We can all be a little intimidated upon entering a room of people; and a short activity can help people get comfortable voicing their ideas with one another. While we often encounter some who are resistant to doing ice breaker activities, more often than not, these activities generate laughs and set a more positive tone for the meeting.



JUST THE FACTS

Ice breakers usually take 15-30 minutes. A facilitator introduces the activity, everyone participates and then the facilitator provides a quick debriefing by bridging the activity into the next task.

The activities can be pure fantasy or they can relate to the purpose of the meeting. Some happen at the beginning of the meeting. As people are introducing themselves and explaining their roles or interests for being there, they also answer an invented question the facilitator poses. Other ice breakers require writing or talking one-on-one to other participants. But whether used at the beginning of a meeting in introductions, after a break to help everyone refocus or as a way to introduce a new technique to a group, ideally these activities can help people learn to communicate more effectively with each other.

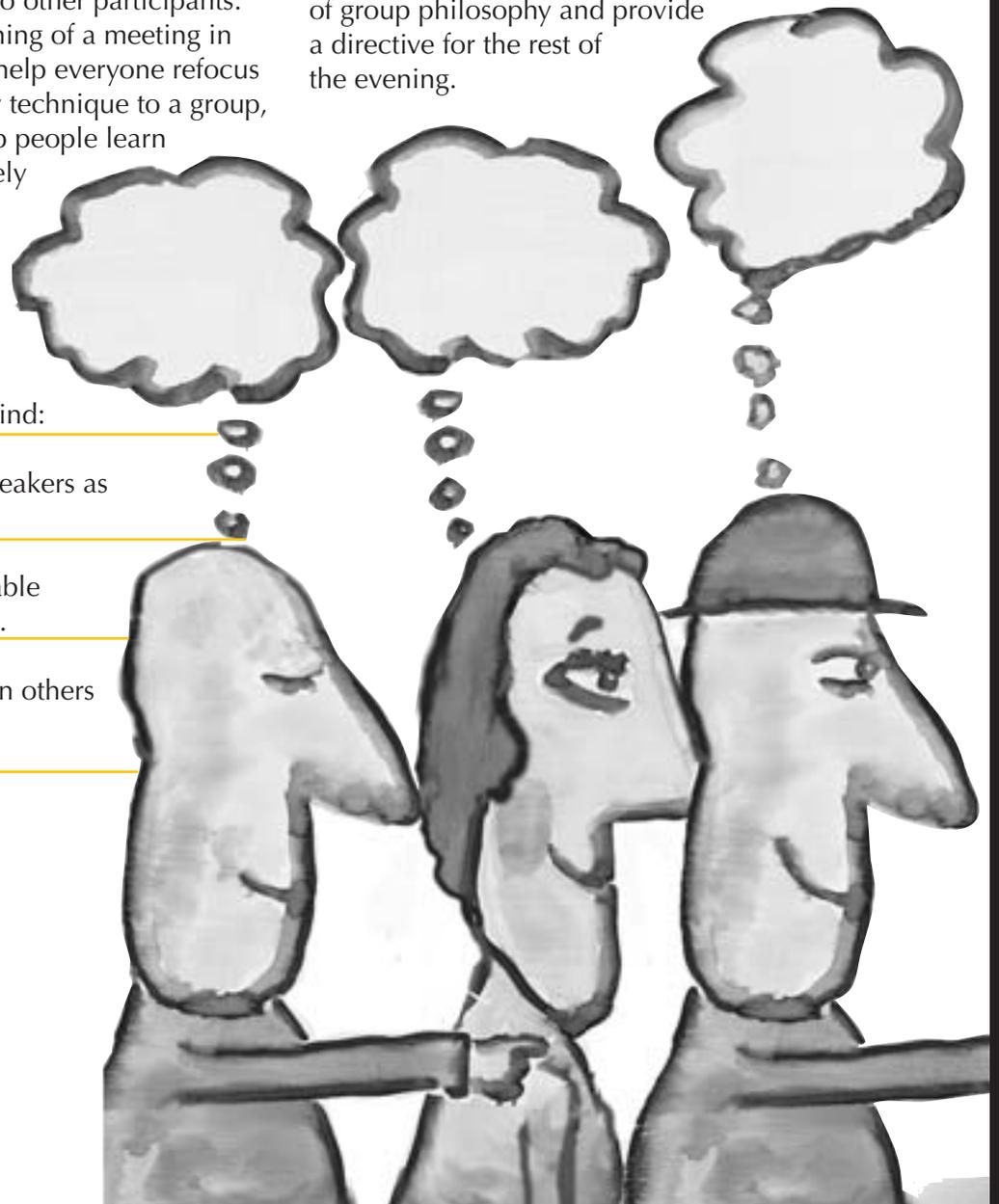
A facilitator needs to be sensitive to different people's feelings in order for everyone to have a positive experience. Thus some points to keep in mind:

- Some people perceive ice breakers as a silly waste of time.
- Some people are uncomfortable sharing personal information.
- Some people take longer than others to think of responses.

HOW TO DO IT

Bumper Stickers

Each person answers the question: "What words would be on your bumper sticker to let the world know how your week has gone (or your philosophy of life reflected by this week)?" This technique provides humor and insight, as well as a sensitization to particular needs and feelings that should be taken into account while doing the task at hand. This exercise is especially useful at evening meetings when people may be tired or tense. The facilitator should pull it all together into a quick summary of group philosophy and provide a directive for the rest of the evening.



New Skills

Each person finishes this statement: "If I could wake up tomorrow with a new skill or talent it would be..." Responses help participants identify common interests and hobbies and discover talents that people may have but dream of spending more time on (which can potentially be encouraged and used in completing a project). This can especially help if the group is relatively new and may feel its members have little to relate to with each other. Some more lead-ins:

- If I win the lottery, the first thing I would do is...
- If I won an all-expenses-paid trip to anywhere, I would go to ___ and would take _____ (a person and/or thing).

Have 3 boxes, one labeled verbs, one for adjectives and one for nouns, and put the paper in the appropriate box. Drawing one paper from each box, create short phrases of action items to consider during the planning session. While this is a whimsical exercise, it is interesting to note those phrases that really do make sense for the group's work. It also helps the group to think in short, concrete, action-oriented terms for simplicity in communication. One note of caution, without talking-down to any of the participants, it may be

a good idea to review the parts of speech and give examples of each.

Mad Libs Strategic Planning

At a strategic planning or visioning session, have each participant write down two action verbs, two adjectives and two nouns, each on its own piece of paper.

I've Got Your Number

This exercise requires people to approach and make requests of each other. As people arrive to the meeting, each gets a number that they must wear in a conspicuous place on their clothes.

Ahead of time, prepare lots on instructions on little slips of paper, such as borrow something from 1, introduce 2 to 7, have 6 get you a glass of water, find out 12's pet's name. Put all of the instructions in a box for the meeting. Everyone takes a slip of paper with an instruction on it. When they have completed their instructions, they come back and get a new one. At the end of the time limit (five minutes or so), whoever has completed the most instructions wins. The prize could be something simple pertaining to the resources being protected like a flower or a special stone. The person with the least number of completed tasks could be required to shake everyone's hand.

An extension would be for the facilitator to have everyone line themselves up in order of the least to the most instructions completed. The facilitator has everyone to look to see each person's location. Discuss together any general conclusions about differences in personality, leadership styles, playfulness, competitiveness and just plain luck (or even timeliness if the person with the least number of tasks was late to the meeting!). Consider ways that these qualities might impact the development of networks, partnerships and friendships. Focus on the value of diversity. As the group works together, humorous references can be made to people's styles. Some individuals may even work to change the group's perception of their style.

continued



Heerree's Johnny...and Carol and...

For an especially tough small group with participants who may be resistant to more creative "what if" scenarios have people introduce their neighbors to the rest of the group. While slightly more staid than other activities, it does give two people a chance to speak one-on-one and learn about why each of them are involved in the project or attending the meeting.

Another idea for anti-whimsical ice breaker types is for each person to write down three strong skills. These can be on one sheet of paper, on separate pieces or even on paper cut in shapes of tools (e.g., a hammer, a screw driver, etc.). Then either each person shares his or her skills or the facilitator reads them all aloud. This can help a new group get a sense of the wealth of abilities they have to draw upon to accomplish their tasks.

Use It If...

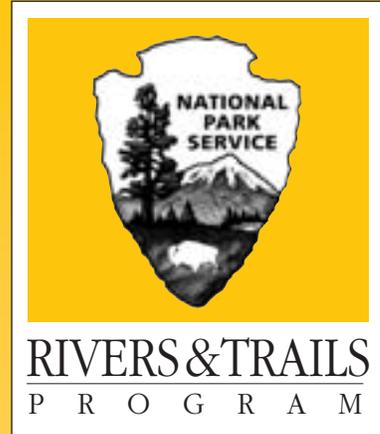
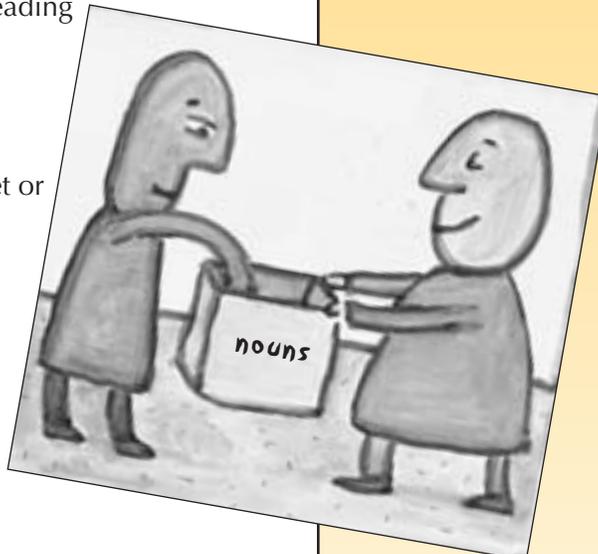
- You want to loosen up a group, make a meeting feel less formal, spur creative thinking, adjust attitudes, encourage acceptance of diversity, build working relationships or just encourage laughter.

Forget It If...

- You have a really full agenda and the activity would be rushed.
- You are facilitating a group that has been together for a while and there are some members who protest every time an ice breaker is suggested. Don't let their negative attitudes discourage you, but it might be time to find another way to focus people on working together such as reading from a journal or book, listening to music, role playing or writing thoughts and reading them aloud.

Timing is Everything

Ice breakers can be used at any meeting, whether it's the first time the group has met or the hundredth.



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