

ACTIVITY

INNER TRANSITION ACTIVITIES FOR MEETINGS

People:	Ideally everyone in your group
Time:	Varies based on activity
Resources:	This activity sheet and a place to meet

Why should we do this?

The activities below will help your group to have effective, energising meetings, get on well, build stronger relationships and get through stressful times. Including Inner Transition will help strengthen your Transition group, making it more enjoyable and satisfying, and adding the richness that comes from working with depth as well as clarity and action. Research shows that groups which give time to creating a positive culture, attend to group dynamics and have social time together do better in the long run.

Below are three activities you could do in your meetings at different times. Some are suggestions for things you can include in every meeting - these are things we have tried and benefited from within Transition Network. If you like the idea of one of these, see if your group will agree to try it out, or put something on your meeting agenda about creating energising, enjoyable meetings.

How to do it:

Start your meetings with Something Lovely! (5 – 10 minutes)

Start every meeting with a go-round where everyone says a few words about how they are, and something they enjoy. Change it for every meeting. Make it positive, fun and creative. Here are some suggestions (use one at the start of a meeting – and add your own!):

- Something you're enjoying about this time of year
- Something you love about living in this place
- Something you'd like to pass on to the next generation
- Something you're grateful for
- Something enjoyable that happened since the last meeting
- Something you learnt from an elder
- Something creative you do
- A place in nature you love

These questions help us to open the meeting well by connecting with things we love and enjoy, giving us energy as well as seeing each other as whole human beings!

Finish your meetings with a short reflection (10mins)

Reflecting together on how you are working is key to creating good meetings. Without this there is no way to pick up if people are feeling frustrated, excluded or confused - or anything else. It also creates a space to thank those whose good work helped the meeting go well.

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Leave 10 minutes at the end of every meeting to reflect together on how the meeting was run - not what you did but on the process, think about:

- What went well, did everyone feel included, that they understood what was happening and could contribute?
- Do you feel you have made good decisions which are clear to all?
- Is there anything that you want to change about how you run meetings for next time, or anything you want to talk about more as a group?

Make sure this process ends with appreciations (see below!) - thanking those who took notes, made tea, brought snacks, chaired and so on.

Make your meetings positive and energising (20 – 30 minutes)

When to do this:

When you've had a few meetings and are ready to really improve the quality of how they work. Or if you've been going a while and find meetings are a bit dull or tiring.

Read the following together, and discuss whether you feel it's important to include in your meetings. If so, how will you do this?

Feeling seen and valued is a large part of what many people get from volunteering in a group. Research shows that groups (and companies, and marriages!) where at least 3 positive things are said for every negative, are ones that people love being part of. A ratio of 5 positives to 1 negative is even better. (See <https://hbr.org/2013/03/the-ideal-praise-to-criticism/> as an example of this research)

Here are four things groups can do to stay positive:

- Take every opportunity to celebrate in your meetings – an event, publicity, success, a decision made, something resolved, completing the agenda on time!
- Take time in meetings to value each person's contribution, go round and ask everyone to appreciate one thing that a person or the group has done. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but notice if the meeting feels more energised after (In some cultures noticing individuals may not be appropriate)
- If people are becoming tired then do something energising (fun and physical) or have a break
- Pause the meeting if the discussion becomes charged or critical, and address this, often using steps like this:
 - What feelings are present (tension, frustration, anxiety, sadness, others?)
 - What needs might be beneath these feelings?
 - How can we address this and bring ourselves back to a state of feeling connected and open?

At every Transition Network meeting we also appoint a "Keeper of the Heart" whose job is to look after these three things – as well as everyone taking responsibility for what they notice.

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More support:

For more support and information on developing healthy groups go here:

<http://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/starting-transition/7-essential-ingredients/healthy-groups/>

Check out the 7 essential ingredients of Transition here:

<http://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/starting-transition/7-essential-ingredients/>

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End.