



# THE 5 FACILITATION GAME CHANGERS



Use Creative Facilitation to take your group activities to the next level. A guide for people who work with youth and adult groups.

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**Want to make the most of the time you spend on ice-breakers and warm up games? In this e-book, you will learn how to use 5 Game Changing elements to do just that.**

Partners for Youth Empowerment is a US non-profit and UK Charity dedicated to unleashing the creative potential of young people. Thousands of teachers and facilitators around the world use our Creative Empowerment Model. This dynamic learning approach combines experiential education, group facilitation, and arts-based practices to create inclusive learning environments where people thrive.

Think you're not creative enough to use the arts in your work? Never fear. Creative Facilitation is based on the premise that every one of us is creative and that you can use the arts in your work with no previous arts experience. You just need the courage to try something new and see how it works.

Use these Game Changers to transform typical facilitation activities into experiences that delight and engage your participants.

## Introducing the 5 game changers:



IMAGINATION



VOICE



RHYTHM



MIRRORING



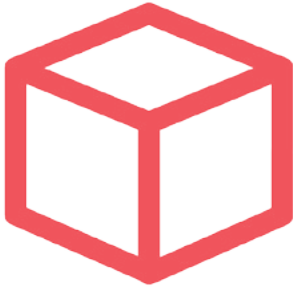
MOVEMENT

In this e-book we'll show you how you can use these game changers to transform a typical warm-up activity. We are using a group check in as our example.

### GAME CHANGING THE GROUP CHECK-IN

Typically, facilitators start a program or a new day with a group check in. Participants sit in a circle and one person speaks at a time. The facilitator might ask people to respond to a question like: How are you feeling?; What's one thing you are looking forward to today?; or What is something you learned from our last session?

All too often, this kind of group check-in becomes flat and boring. People talk too little or too much. To boost the impact of your check-ins, add one or more of these game changers and see what unfolds.



Game Changer #1

## IMAGINATION

### WHY IT WORKS

A mundane activity becomes magical when you infuse it with imagination. Engaged imaginations activate whole parts of our brain. Our attention moves away from ourselves, time and space seems to expand, we relax, and our defenses go down.

### TRY THIS TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF

**IMAGINATION:** Stretch your right hand as high as you can. Now your left. Keep going back and forth trying to reach higher and higher. Notice how it feels. Now, rather than focusing on stretching your arms, imagine you are reaching up to pick fruit from high up in a tree. Notice the color of the fruit and how it feels in your hand when you pick it. Notice the difference in how your body and your mind react when you engage your imagination.

#### **One way to use this game changer in a check-in:**

**METAPHOR FOR HOW YOU ARE FEELING.** Ask participants say their name and choose a metaphor that represents how they are feeling. Here are some examples of metaphors you can ask them to use: if you were a landscape what would you be? If you were an animal? A vehicle? A kind of weather? A style of shoe? Ask participants to share their metaphor and talk a bit about why they chose this image.



Game Changer #2

## RHYTHM

### WHY IT WORKS

Rhythm connects us with our heartbeat and the rhythms of nature.

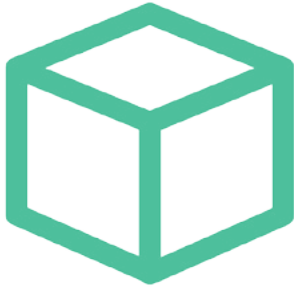
Rhythm connects us with others and creates group cohesion.

Research psychologist Henry W. Maier puts it this way:

“Have you noticed that when people jog, dance, or throw a frisbee in rhythm with each other, they seem to experience momentary bonding and a sense of unity? At these and other moments of joint rhythmic engagement, they discover an attraction for each other regardless of whether there has been a previous sense of caring. In fact, it is almost impossible to dislike a person while being rhythmically in ‘sync.’ Rhythmicity provides a ‘glue’ for establishing human connections.”

#### **One way to use this game changer in a check-in:**

**BALL TOSS.** Hold an imaginary ball in your hands. Say your name and how you are feeling and then pass the ball to someone else in the circle. Remember who you tossed the ball to. That person says their name and how they are feeling and tosses the ball to someone else. Continue until everyone has received the ball. The final person passes it back to the first person. Now toss the ball in the same pattern with each person saying their name and feeling as they toss. Continue repeating the pattern going at a slow, rhythmic pace. The whole group begins to chime in and say each person’s name and feeling. This is also a good game for learning names.



Game Changer #3

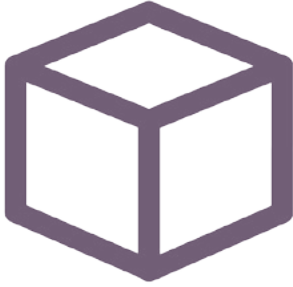
## MOVEMENT

### WHY IT WORKS

Our bodies are meant to move. Studies show that even moderate exercise increases mental acuity and cognitive ability. As John Medina says in his book *Brain Rules*, “All of the evidence points in one direction, physical movement is cognitive candy.” Studies also show that people typically can only focus for ten minutes before drifting off or checking out. When we move our bodies, we wake up. We release tension, our blood flows, our breath expands, our attention moves out of our minds, and we feel more spacious. Movement brings us into the present and ready to focus once again.

#### **One way to use this game changer in a check-in:**

**INTO THE CIRCLE.** Stand in a circle. The leader says their name and a word for how they are feeling and then walks into the center of the circle choosing a special walk that demonstrates that feeling. They walk back out, and then everyone walks into the circle and back out with them, copying their walk. Go around the circle with each person taking a turn.



Game Changer #4

## VOICE

### WHY IT WORKS

Voice is an essential aspect of speaking for ourselves, articulating our wants and needs, and standing up for what we believe in. When we add voice to an activity, even if it is just one word or one sound, it can begin to free the locked-up power of our voices. Vocalizing also gets our energy moving.

**One way to use this game changer in a check-in:**

**FEELING SOUNDS.** Stand or sit in a circle. The leader says their name, a word for how they are feeling, and a sound that demonstrates that feeling. Everyone repeats their name, feeling, and sound. Go around the circle with each person taking a turn.



## Game Changer #5 **MIRRORING**

### WHY IT WORKS

Copying or reflecting back a person's creative idea or movement provides a way for people to be seen, heard, and appreciated. You can think of it as the universal game changer because you can add mirroring to almost any activity you lead. Even when someone thinks they've come up with a silly idea, their eyes light up when they see their peers enjoying their idea and reflecting it back to them. Mirroring develops empathy by giving people a chance to feel another's movements. It expands our vocal and movement vocabulary by inviting us to vocalize and move in new ways.

#### **One way to use this game changer in a check-in:**

**FEELINGS WITH SHAPES.** Stand in a circle. The leader begins by saying their name, one word for how they are feeling, and making an exaggerated movement to demonstrate that feeling. To make it even more powerful add a sound. The entire group then repeats back their name, word, and movement. Go around the circle with each person taking a turn.

### HOW TO APPLY THESE GAME CHANGERS TO OTHER FACILITATION ACTIVITIES

Experiment with adding two or more different game changers to an activity. As you become more comfortable embellishing your activities, you'll be able to improvise in the moment to meet the needs of your group.

**Have fun!**





## STAY ENGAGED

We hope you enjoyed this e-book and see some great results when you implement one or more of these techniques in your next program. The world of Creative Facilitation is vast and this is just the beginning.

**We invite you to continue your learning journey.**

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