Live Forum - *JUNE 21, 2018*

ADJUSTING ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT ABILITIES AND LEARNING STYLES

WELCOME

NADIA CHANEY

Dear 3rd Thursday Assemblers! Welcome back, or, if it's your first time WELCOME! This is an exciting format we have been developing where people contribute and discuss a niche aspect of group facilitation. Below you will find: A Check-in Question (please answer!); Goals and Agreements for today's session (hit "like" to agree to uphold these agreements during the session); 3 discussion questions and 4 case studies (posted approximately every ten minutes; answer in any order). The case studies generally come from my own facilitation experience (though I sometimes change the details to fit the questions). If you have your own case studies you'd like to use, please feel free to contact me during the month.

I will be facilitating this experience for 90 minutes. There will be a pdf transcript posted on the www.pyeglobal.org website, as well as the files of this Facebook page, in a short while. These transcripts are so great we're thinking of making a book out of them!

There are two main ways that activities and programs can be made more accessible to folks with different abilities, accommodation (making adjustments to existing plans) and universal design (making plans that are usable to as broad a range of people as possible). In today's session, each question will refer to both.

This month we are discussing ADJUSTING ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT ABILITIES AND LEARNING STYLES

One of the most important aspects of good group facilitation is creating an atmosphere of inclusion and welcome. All groups have members who have different abilities of various kinds; physical, mental,

emotional, learning styles, languages, culture and ethnicity, intro/extroversion...the list of the ways that people are included or excluded is vast. So, how do we design and deliver group sessions that are committed to working towards inclusion of all kinds?

There are two main ways that activities and programs can be made more accessible to folks with different abilities, accommodation (making adjustments to existing plans) and universal design (making plans that are useable to as broad a range of people as possible). In today's session, each question will refer to both.

In this session we will focus on particular facilitation activities. In a future session we will focus on program design as a whole (that would include registration, openings, evaluation etc.).

CHECK-IN

NADIA CHANEY
Check-in Question for June 21, 2018: Describe a time you felt truly included and welcome in a group session. Then, if that feeling had a smell and a colour, what would they be?

NADIA CHANEY I'll get us started...I felt truly welcome and included at indigeneyez(.com), when I was at a conference with them last week. I was in a personal space of transformation and self-reflection and even though I had work to do, the other facilitators gave me the space and support to take care of myself and be present in my whole self. If you've been following these chats you know that I'm very interested in questions of authenticity in facilitation! This was a big learning experience for me. For me the colour of this experience was a bright turquoise and the smell was fresh popcorn!

LINDSEY TURNBULLET Probably the PYE training in April. I haven't done much since, group wise. It was bright yellow and fresh fruit.

> **NADIA CHANEY** Hi Lindsey! Welcome!

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AMY-MARIE BABCOCK I would also say my PYE training. It felt expansive, fruit-basket colored, spring-rain scented.

    NADIA CHANEY Welcome Amy-Marie!

TIM HALL Halfway through the undergrad semester in dialogue at Simon Fraser University we had a guest 'thought leader' come in to talk with us about a politically charged topic. As we went around the room and gave our opinions on the topic, I slowly realized I was the only one who held the 'opposing view'. I felt safe enough to share my thoughts even though I was sitting directly beside the thought leader and another fellow who had just said "I can't imagine why anyone would think otherwise!"

We ended up having a discussion where all of us learned a huge amount, and all of us realized there was a deeper desire we all shared in common (even if our methods for getting there were different).

This is like a bubble to me – playful, multicoloured yet clear, very fragile.

    NADIA CHANEY Wonderful! Welcome Tim!

    TIM HALL Thanks Nadia! It's good to be here after missing the last few

BARB DANIELEWSKI In a recent retreat at an urban farm, we were surrounded by animals and greenery and fresh air. We did a super embodied stretch and release: light sky blue with hints of pink, melon smell

    NADIA CHANEY Hi Barb! Welcome!

NAOMI POMMIER when sun rose on the longest day of the year, i felt truly included. this feeling was golden peach colour and warm mango smell

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NADIA CHANEY Welcome Naomi!!

HANNAH BOUTILIER Heart of Facilitation for sure, but also at my first Masterclass in Syntonics and Authentic Movement with mentor Judith Koltai. They were so opposite. The first because of the warm welcome from the facilitators and faith they planted in us and the heart of Facilitation process. (gold, tropical fruit salad smell) The second because it was so understated. We arrived and did a constructive rest practice, and then listened to a poem and were encouraged to go for a walk and arrive in our own way. (ocean blue, smell of jasmine flowers)

NADIA CHANEY Hi Hannah! Welcome!

陈心 At the first of a series of peernet workshops, I was given the space to ask for what I needed and the support to answer questions I hadn't thought of in relationship to the land and settler occupation. It smelled like roast pork at a gathering and looked like an hombre of red melding into burgundy and black.

NADIA CHANEY beautiful! welcome!

GOALS AND AGREEMENTS

NADIA CHANEY

Goals and Agreements for this session on June 21 2018
1) To deepen our ability to create inclusive group sessions
When we work towards the most inclusive programming we can possibly create all participants can share their unique gifts and strengths to create empathy and synergy that uplifts the whole group.
2) To understand how to design and adjust activities for different abilities
Knowing how to make plans and changes quickly gives a facilitator a sense of confidence that we can do our best to meet people where they

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are. This goes beyond having a good intention to working towards understanding the impact of our choices which is a lifelong learning process for all facilitators.

3) To learn how to work with our habits of speech and body language
We may have ingrained habits of speech and body language that send messages about who is included or welcome in our groups. Being aware of these habits can help us to make more empowering choices.

4) To see our work always more clearly through the lens of accessibility and inclusion
At PYE we have always been concerned with accessibility and inclusion, yet we fail in almost every instance to make a fully inclusive space. This isn't to say it's impossible! Many groups (like Sisters in Motion here in Montreal) are much more diligent and successful in these practices. Learning from each other and being willing to see our failures as opportunities to change keeps us growing and improving. As Peggy would say: Yes! I Failed! I'm learning!

5) To support each other's learning and have meaningful fun online!
In order to achieve these, here are some suggestions for COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS to make our time together flow really well. Be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS. Let the group know or privately message the facilitator if you are concerned that an agreement is being broken.

1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe. If the facilitator finds your comments aggressive or inappropriate in any way you will receive a personal message.

2) Be willing to entertain simultaneous truths. Rather than proving a point, try to listen to understand, and be willing to agree to disagree. At the same time, if you have a strong belief be willing to stand up for it. This will make our conversations rich!

3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often. The questions move around depending on how many people are answering, so please scan the whole page for new questions now and then.

4) Maintain CONFIDENTIALITY by not sharing names or personal information about the participants in your groups, sharing from your

own perspective, and asking permission before sharing someone else's story.
5) Answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open NEW questions in new threads.
6) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!) A pdf transcript of the conversation will be provided. Feel free to continue the conversation even after the 90 minute period has ended.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

NADIA CHANEY
Discussion Question #1: When choosing activities for your groups, what are your most important considerations regarding accessibility and inclusion? Also, what would you LIKE to consider more?

BARB DANIELEWSKI How the instructions are delivered (i.e. "stand up tall" wouldn't be as good as "stretch out/up from your body".

> NADIA CHANEY I'm going to post #3, since your answer here is quite similar to my #2

BARB DANIELEWSKI ...and to make sure that there are modifications available within your game

BARB DANIELEWSKI That it can access all imaginations, not just those from a culturally specific vantage point

TIM HALL To know the group & the different abilities that make it up.

(I admit that sometimes I've just chosen activities I think are fun and haven't tuned into how the group might react to them. *Learning Moment* This question will help guide me as I brainstorm activities.)

HANNAH BOUTILIER It's important to me that I have thought through how I'm going to deliver the instructions. The more familiar I am, the simpler I can make them, the more easily understood it will hopefully be. I'm learning the value of super simple activities, and want to get better at creating them. I see how they are something that individuals and communities can more easily interpret/reflect on/reference from their own vantage points. I want to become better at waking into a space with clarity and focus, but less of an agenda about what I think we're going to "get out of something."

陈心 Encouraging full participation while acknowledging different abilities and different moods. To give the participants the permission to modify parts of the activity, which also encourages accessing the inner self. I would like to consider more of not simply sticking to the script. Sometimes I am eager to get to the activity and am 2 steps ahead of everyone!

TAYEB MOURAD Aida Gadallah Hatem El Wakeel

HATEM EL WAKEEL I consider to tell instructions as less as possible, to activate imagination as much as possible and encouraging all the time .
The language I use , the inclusion I offer and the model I introduce is highly important too.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

NADIA CHANEY
Discussion Question #2: In your practice, how do you create a sense of inclusivity in your instructions? What are some specific examples that you can think of?

NADIA CHANEY Please see some of Barb Danielewski's comments in question #1 as well

NADIA CHANEY For me I'm really thinking a lot about how to deliver the instructions as simply as well-structured as I can so that it's easy for people to question me and ask for what they need before we get started

HANNAH BOUTILIER I try to pay a lot of attention to the tone and pitch of my voice. I visualize my voice holding the space and washing the room in welcome. Other things include asking for pronoun preferences in introductions, finding a place to plant a seed for feedback early on so they see I'm open to exchange and value their take on things.

TIM HALL Often when we do check-ins, there will be pockets of conversation around the room while we go around the circle. I am less strict on bringing these conversations back into the group (because we are an informal group and I'm ok with a bit of chatter).

I hope this allows participants to enjoy this group as 'their own' / a space to enjoy and relax.

The downside to this is that I've noticed pockets of close friend groups form rather than a cohesive whole group. This actually serves to make the group less inclusive: if you are not 'in' a pocket of close friends then you feel left out.

We are going on break for the summer, so maybe I can do some learning and discover facilitation techniques that address this. I've long heard that allowing 'talking over' during a group discussion is a big facilitation 'no-no'. Perhaps that is my starting point?

> TIM HALL Oops! Probably should have posted that under discussion q #3

NADIA CHANEY Maybe it's more about creating the possibility for deep listening?

NADIA CHANEY The group might just not be quite ready for their check-in

TIM HALL Interesting thought – as-in we might need to do a few activities to let off steam before getting to that part? Hmmmm...

NADIA CHANEY Tim Hall yes, or to connect, to practice listening, to get people engaged and really interested in each other...

TIM HALL Right! I guess I've been assuming that the participants value and enjoy listening as much as I do... Ok, so my question for myself becomes "What activities will help us listen to each other?" and "How to make those activities accessible to all?"

Thanks Nadia!

陈心 I try to stand in full view and give the room a sense of balance. If I have a co-facilitator we distribute our bodies to create an envelope of the room.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

NADIA CHANEY
Discussion Question #3: What is your list of top three things that make activities LESS inclusive and accessible?

SUSANNA HAAS LYONS Only delivering instructions in one format IE written or verbal, and not including things like a flow chart or modeling the example

> **NADIA CHANEY** (also, hi! Susanna!)

> **SUSANNA HAAS LYONS** Glad I can finally attend one!

> **NADIA CHANEY** They're usually more hectic! Unusually languid, it's kind of lovely

BARB DANIELEWSKI 1. valuing the product over the process 2. assuming what participants will understand or know 3. assuming what participants will receive from the process

NADIA CHANEY 1. Doing an activity exactly as I've done it before without thinking who is in the room 2. Deciding beforehand what the outcomes should be 3. Not asking for clarification/giving options to participate

HANNAH BOUTILIER 1) Assuming that everyone knows the rules to "common" game structures or social norms. like rock, paper, scissors or tag when their incorporated into an activity. Even if most of the group is telling me they do.
2) Forgetting to observe the entire group while they do their activity and pick up on how their doing 3) Failing to mention early on how taking risks can look different for each of us and that we have to find our own edge 5) Referring to our own "norms or assumptions" without recognizing that other folks have different norms and lives. For example, making the assumption all kids in the room have biological parents in their lives, or that all folks are straight, or that someone belongs to one racial demographic because of how they look... Etc.

> **BARB DANIELEWSKI** great list! Especially love #1 & #3

陈心 For many of the cultural groups I work with, it is not being able to code shift from western to own expressions of culture for fear of being

singled out. The difficulty is in holding all identities at the same time and feeling free to share that at the table.

CASE STUDY #1

NADIA CHANEY
Case Study #1: (a partial answer or further questions will help us all think together!) You are doing a dance activity where each person in a circle offers a dance move and the rest copy it. How can you adjust this activity and give clear inclusive instructions for: introversion, various mobility concerns, blindness/vision difference, and/or different cultural approaches to dance?

BARB DANIELEWSKI Where do you feel the music in your body? What's the tiniest movement you can make?

NADIA CHANEY Broaden the definition of "dance" as openly as possible...including stillness

SUSANNA HAAS LYONS Start with a reminder that we will all have various levels of comfort with the activity, and it's really good to notice your own experience with it particularly if you're uncomfortable, because when we are working is teams or in groups undoubtedly someone is feeling that way and it's useful to be empathetic without experience

TIM HALL Modify instructions so participants are not just offering a dance move, but also saying something that describes that move (so those with blindness / vision difference are able to hear and offer their own interpretation of that move). E.g. Saying "star" while jumping into the circle with a dance move that resembles a star shape.

This might heighten the barriers for the introverts, though...

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LINDSEY TURNBULLET As an introvert/shy person, I would hesitate at that. Maybe the group leader could model the *star* while the group comes up with a name for it as a way to ease them in?

HANNAH BOUTILIER Brainstorm with the group what they think of when they think of dance, discuss the diversity of what comes up. If it's a super conservative definition that they come up with, ask them to try and think about other things outside of this box that could also be dance.

陈心 I like all these answers!!! 🤭

NADIA CHANEY I know!

> NADIA CHANEY Have you done one of these sessions before?

> 陈心 Nope! The timing never worked out. Even now my laptop is freezing. Oh, and it's Cadence by the way! Hi Nadia

> NADIA CHANEY Omg hi Cadence!! I thought I recognized that tiny thumbnail!!

HATEM EL WAKEEL All of us can move , move yourself as you like , all of us will copy .

I liked the the idea for including special sound too

CASE STUDY #2

NADIA CHANEY
Case Study #2: (a partial answer or further questions will help us all think together!) You are playing Step Into the Circle (instructions in the comment below). What aspects of inclusivity must you consider so that everyone can play?

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NADIA CHANEY
https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s...

HANNAH BOUTILIER Rename the game depending on the participants. Maybe it becomes Move Into the Circle, or hands into the circle.

Maybe incorporate theatre. Facilitators could act out a scene and individuals could move into the circle if they had had something similar happen in their lives. Theatre can break down language barriers.

CASE STUDY #3

NADIA CHANEY
Case Study #3: (a partial answer or further questions will help us all think together!) You have a group of fifteen young teenagers (13 and 14 years old) in an after school program. There are three participants whose first language is different than that of the rest of the group. They are comfortable speaking the common language but do not always catch faster or more complex speech. You have one group member whose spoken language skills are very strong but does not have a high literacy level. You want the group to experience the beauty and power of poetry through a group poetry exercise. How can you design this activity to include all members of the group?

LINDSEY TURNBULLET This is a good question. Maybe there could be a way to incorporate drawing into the poems? Would you encourage them to write in the language they feel comfortable in? I'd love to hear others thoughts on this, because I do work with diverse youth in a diverse area.

NADIA CHANEY One thing that is very important to me is to always think about how people can share without being exposed...so how can contributions be anonymous, or in pairs and written by one person then added to a group pile of contributions etc.

BARB DANIELEWSKI I'm curious what would happen if people could respond by choosing images, and then get into groups and transform the images into words...

NADIA CHANEY ooh I want to try that

LINDSEY TURNBULLET That is a neat idea!

HANNAH BOUTILIER Maybe introduce a concept like beat poetry where simple words can be used, and/or each group could make a tableau for their poem.

Also, maybe invite folks to add words or phrases that come from their first language, or their ancestors language to their poem if that comes naturally to their group. We don't always have to understand poetry in a literal sense to make it beautiful.

RAE BLOOM Love this.

陈心 I would design this so that we would use the common language as the baseline for creating poetry and invite the 3 participants and anyone else to use words or phrases from their mother tongue. I work in an English setting and participants often tell me how much more powerful it is when they are allowed to use words from their own language to contextualize the same idea the group is discussing. So, then my work is a calibration of the group experience and individual contextualizing.

Folks are exposed for what they say. So now I'm curious as to what I can do to decrease exposure while maintaining translations and cross-cultural communication.

HANNA SYBILLE MULLER How would it be to do a "dada" poem. bring some newspapers. everyone cuts out their favourite words. you throw them in a bag, shake and then pick words and write them down in the order they were picked. you can make a variation by choosing certain texts as a source.... and include texts of other languages.

CASE STUDY #4

NADIA CHANEY

Case Study #4: (a partial answer or further questions will help us all think together!) You are facilitating a community meeting about a serious neighbourhood issue that needs urgent resolution. There are about thirty participants. One participant is blind, and two are hard of hearing. There is also an elder who uses a wheelchair. One family of three are new immigrants who speak the common language but have not been to a group process like this one before. You have a great idea for a conflict transformation process that you really think will work. It brings all the voices out and helps people consider each other's opinions in an artful manner. However, it uses spoken dialogue and written flip charts. How can you redesign this process so that everyone can participate?

HANNAH BOUTILIER Become trained in graphic facilitation So there is dialogue words and pictures being used. Long term goal haha.

I think lots of group work. Getting folks into smaller groups and giving them markers, large pieces of paper, and questions to work with. Invite them to come up with the most accessible way to share information with one another Generally when people are in a small group, they notice the needs/offerings of those they are with more attentively.

Maybe create a visual solution map in each group. And then get up and share it to the rest of the group audibly while showing the picture. This could even be earlier on in the process. It could be used as a warm up -

visualize your ideal community - to get people resonating with one another prior to the harder issue coming up.

陈心 Oh boy! This is all coming up without a moment's notice! 😮 For starters, the facilitator can help create agreements that acknowledge needs and make guidelines for including individuals with barriers. This is so groups can have some degree of self-manage during activities.

SUSANNA HAAS LYONS I like the idea of small groups too. Could even start with people working in pairs doing a visual image of some kind in response to the warm up question. The visual image could include words or pictures or lines to describe their response. Be sure to pair up a visually impaired person with someone who can see

END

NADIA CHANEY
Well, thus endeth our 90 mins together this month. Thank you all so much for a rich conversation! Need a GUEST FACILITATOR next month in case anyone is interested. I'll be away at school. I'll join the conversation but won't be able to host it. Hope to see you there.
PYE will soon post the transcript and this page STAYS OPEN if you would like to add anything to any of the posts. We are always open to new topics for the upcoming sessions. If you have any ideas please feel free to post them on this page. If you enjoyed today's session please tell your facilitator, teacher, manager, social worker, group therapist, activist and social artist friends! Don't forget to check www.pyeglobal.org for upcoming trainings, too, there's some new ones just posted.

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PYE Global - Partners for Youth Empowerment ignites creativity and potential in youth and adults. Our Creative Community Model brings...

TIM HALL Thank you!

HANNAH BOUTILIER Thanks Nadia!

陈心 Thanks Nadia! 🏵️🎉