

## **Community Building**

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(Revised: 19 January 2004 by Clinton Callahan)

### **FORMAT:**

Duration: approx. 2,5 to 3 hours

### **PURPOSE:**

To have the direct experience of building authentic community.

### **SETUP:**

Community Building is a two to three day process. People sit in a circle. Co-facilitators sit across the room from each other. There are two posters already up on the wall and two boxes of tissues on the floor near a plastic bucket. Facilitator has bells and a watch.

### **INTRO / BACKGROUND:** (20 minutes)

Welcome to Community Building.

We will be here together for \_\_\_\_ days.

The hours are from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_.

We ask that you commit to stay for the whole process.

We will have a lunch break and a dinner break. (Give details.)

We are going on an adventure together. As on any adventure, we will encounter all kinds of unknowns. We cannot predict what these things will be. We will experience them together. During the adventure, the adventure will work on us.

This is not Alcoholics Anonymous.  
This is not Narcotics Anonymous.  
This is not psychotherapy.  
This is not a process to fix you.  
This is not a process to solve your problems.  
This is Community Building.

**TRUST  
THE  
PROCESS**

**SPEAK ONLY IF IT IS  
A NECESSITY  
  
AND  
  
IF IT IS A  
NECESSITY, SPEAK.**

In Community Building you can deal with difficult issues.  
In Community Building you can learn to communicate in new ways.  
In Community Building you can come to accept other people's differences with respect.

But everybody comes to Community in different ways.

**There are some rules:**

- Do not leave until the process is over. Do not go to the toilet except on breaks if you can at all help it. Stay in the space and let it work you.
- No physical violence – clasp hands and keep talking.
- No sleeping - if you are feeling sleepy stand up behind your chair.
- No alcohol or drugs.
- No smoking in these rooms.
- No drinking or eating in the room.
- On each break please drink a big glass of water.
- No note taking, reading or writing.
- Speak one person at a time.
- Use “I” statements, not “we” or “one”. Say “I feel \_\_\_\_\_ “ or “I think \_\_\_\_\_.

*SPEAK ONLY IF IT IS A NECESSITY, AND IF IT IS A NECESSITY, SPEAK.*

If it is necessary to speak, please use the following form: “My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am moved to speak.” Then say what you need to say.

**\*\*\*Everybody is responsible for the task of Building Authentic Community.**

If you are feeling frustrated or have complaints, voice them in the circle, not during breaks or meals.

*TRUST THE PROCESS.*

**INSTRUCTIONS / PROCEDURE:**

“I will take us into three minutes of silence and then we will begin.”

Use bells to start and stop.

“Let’s begin.”

At end of session, ring the bell and say, “We will break for 20 minutes.”

**Coaching for facilitators:**

Community Building is a deep and subtle process. It is very profound.

The process is not lead. You are not the leader. You are the facilitator.

This is a circle process. You will say almost nothing.

You are a rescuer. You are trained to try to save the day. Don’t do it.

Your job in Community Building is to sit there and hold space. That is your job. That is all.

You will not make distinctions. You will not say the right thing at just the right time.

You will not tell them the right thing to do.

You will sit there and hold space.

You will be.

You must let them go into chaos and conflict. That is a natural part of the Community Building process.

You too must TRUST THE PROCESS!!!

It is an art to facilitate Community Building.

Even if people are screaming at you, you will say nothing unless you are authentically moved to speak. Do not fool yourself about this or you will get hooked and then you will be killed and buried, and if you are buried you will not be able to dig your way out. You will speak only if you are moved to speak, and then only a sentence or two. You say, "My name is (Clint) and I am moved to speak."

During each break you meet with the co-facilitator. Ask: where is the group? What does the group need now? When you come back in the room you may say: I spoke with the co-facilitator on the break and we have a **comment**: (for example)

- People are doing really good work.
- We invite you to go much deeper.
- We remind you that Community Building is not a conversation between just a few people.

Every now and then you may need to make an **intervention**. For example, if after an hour someone has been speaking and not using "I" statements you might make the intervention: "Please use 'I' statements."

That is all.

People will often attack the facilitators, something like, "What are you doing, just sitting there? You are going to let this happen? They are paying you for this?" They may try to kill you because you are not doing anything. When one facilitator is getting killed, the other facilitator holds space, because anything you would say would be defending yourself, rationalization, justification, etc.

All of your control stuff will come up for you. The basis of Community Building is your ability to let go. The space can only go as far as you can go.

**CLOSING:** (60 minutes)

**SHARING:** (30 minutes)

There are four phases to Community Building:

- 1) Getting present.
- 2) Chaos, conflict and crisis
- 3) Pseudo Community
- 4) Authentic Community

Authentic Community happens when you are willing to let yourself be known.

Authentic Community is a space. The doorway into this space is people feeling safe enough to be willing to let themselves be known.

Letting ourselves be known is not teaching what we know, it is not preaching, not the weather, observations, politics, or discussion. This is all Pseudo Community.

Community Building involves no manipulation and no convincing.

If people in any Organization get to know each other and continue the process of letting themselves be known they will create Authentic Community and Real Relationship as a lasting part of the culture of their organization.

Community Building is a true example of creating something for yourself. People do not tend to destroy what they create for themselves.

Signs of Authentic Community: People do not buy into Pseudo Community.  
Do not allow the sharing to be trivial or intellectual.

Take your time.

Someone may notice a contact with the others more rich than physical contact. Some say it is like soul contact.

Some may report that they could feel the space shift to one of invention.

These spaces can be re-invoked for people through sharing about the experience of it.

**DEBRIEF:** (30 minutes)

Statements of learning, gladness and responsibility.