



PARTNERS FOR YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT

Live Forum - May 16, 2019

KEEPING IT FRESH

WELCOME

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Dear 3rd Thursday Assemblers!

Welcome back, or, if it's your first time WELCOME! This is an exciting monthly online forum where people all over the world can gather to share ideas and good practice about different aspects of group facilitation.

Below you will find: A Check-in Question (please answer!); Goals and Agreements for today's session (please add anything you need/want to the agreements, and hit "like" to agree to uphold these agreements during the session); 3 discussion questions and 2 case studies (posted approximately every ten minutes; answer in any order). I will be facilitating this experience for 90 minutes. There will be a pdf transcript posted on the 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!

Remember to keep refreshing the page to read the latest comments, and scroll down the page to read all threads. The threads will appear in order of most active, which can be confusing!

This month we are discussing KEEPING IT FRESH

Facilitators often need to work with the same process, content, training programme or activities with many different groups. Have you ever had that feeling: 'oh great, this again! Booooooring!' when delivering an activity for the 10th time? Have you ever felt stuck and find yourself using the same activities for certain situations, and they have lost their magic for you? Have you ever arrived at a session tired, feeling down, or with things going on in your own life and had this impact on your facilitation? Our own relationship with what we are doing in a session, how we are in our personal life, our own health and wellbeing certainly transmits to the group. If you are leading an activity that you love, your



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body, voice and presence radiates that this will be a great experience, and your group is likely to get on board, participate fully and have a great time! As facilitators part of our work is to develop ourselves, so we have fresh new exciting ideas, activities and processes to bring to our groups; and also to find ways to shift our energy so we can match what we would like to transmit to our group. Facilitating can demand a lot of energy, and we need to make sure we have ways to sustain ourselves in this work, so we can not only hold a safe and productive space, but also help bring some magical creative sparkle to our groups, and stay well and happy!

This brings us to today! Together we will explore: how can we keep our facilitation fresh and sustain ourselves?

CHECK-IN

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Check-in Question for 16th May 2019: If the way you feel today was a kind of food... what kind of food would you be?

Helena Pye Oh my. Im sort of a mealy apple right now. I want to be crisp and bright. I think from the outside I look ok. But inside is a little mushy at the moment!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hi Helena! Thanks for joining us. Lovely to see you here....sending some empathy for the mushy parts :)

Ruth Barry A slice of watermelon, fresh and not too overwhelming

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hi Ruth! Great to see you. Nice image :)

Anuschka Ruge I feel like slightly overboiled rice. Soft and warm but also if you would take a picture of it always out of focus...



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Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hi Anuschka! Thanks for joining today! I love this image can imagine it well - like the way I always cook rice!!

Gloria J. Williams I bowl of home cooked oatmeal...

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hi Gloria! Welcome! Nice to meet you here :)

Kathy Butt-Ellwand I am some leftover Dhal :)

Sunshine Turner I feel pineapple insides, juicy, fruity, bursting with flavour and bright bright yellow!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hi Sunshine! Lovely to have you here, thanks for coming!

Hatty Sappaday Hi 'taters - I am feeling like an avocado (or am I getting mixed up with what I want to eat next?)

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hi Hatty! Lovely to see you here!

GOALS AND AGREEMENTS

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Goals and Agreements for this session on 16th May 2019:

1) To explore how we can shift our relationship with what we facilitate can transmit positively to our groups

Facilitation becomes more fun and we can increase our options and choices as facilitators when we understand how to work with way we feel about the activities we lead

2) To gain strategies to support our own energy as facilitators



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The experience we have of working with groups becomes easy and joyful when we have regular, effective ways to care for ourselves and shift our own energy

3) To get inspired with new ways to keep developing as a facilitator
When we are regularly dipping into our learning zone, everything feels fresh and exciting and our creativity can flourish and help our groups to flourish, too

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.



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DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Discussion Question #1: How can we bring fresh energy to activities that we deliver all the time? Please share a brief story from your own experience!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand



Gloria J. Williams If co-facilitating, agree to lead an activity you don't typically lead. The one that maybe you have never lead or feel a bit



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stretched in leading. By keeping trying new things and growing, I automatically am keeping things fresh within myself. I believe this transmits to the group as well. Another example, if my easel sheets tend to only have words... add drawings. Continuously, look for ways to do things with a twist.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Great ideas here...especially like the doing things with a new twist. Will try that out!

Sunshine Turner Seeing things with new eyes! Being open to suggestions! Going with the Flow! I was in Egypt recently with Gani, Nadia and the Egyptian team and we asked a similar question, how can we deepen or expand these games.. we played 'yes and..' the story telling game with our eyes closed.. it blew our minds! I had another experience playing Magic word and two people who were caught went to step in to the circle at the same time.. rather than say 'no we only need one of you' I went with it and each time someone got caught we would add them into the centre forming a central circle. The central circle then played one word story so it became two games in one!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Brilliant! Allowing the evolution!

Anuschka Ruge I love the variation of Magic Word!! I always find it a challenge to define who of those caught steps into the circle.

Sunshine Turner Anuschka Ruge I know what you mean.. I say something like, 'oh a few of us were caught, lets have one of you step into the middle and tell a new story', or I call out the name of someone who got caught and ask them to step in.

Anuschka Ruge What I try to do is to give myself a different challenge or focus for repeating sessions or pick a new method that I haven't used before, depending on the context.

In my last job, I did a row of software onboarding trainings. As I was training colleagues I knew the pax beforehand. I used this knowledge,



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to spice the sessions up with a different soft skill focus each time depending on what I found relevant to the group. So I adjusted instructions, methods, group work phase and similar each time.

Another context where I facilitate is in Youth Work. When we run multi-day trainings, we usually start always with the pattern of name games, programme introduction, group agreement, expectations & fears. I really enjoy switching out one of these parts with a method I have never used before. That feels exciting but also safe enough as I know that the frame still works due to the well tested other parts and that I could fall back on my more routine things.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand This is great Anuschka, thanks for sharing...I love the suggestion of giving yourself new challenge or focus, and keeping a framework that works the same but switching out new parts.

Sunshine Turner Hey Anushka! Great to see you here so fresh after the CF1 just gone this weekend. I like this idea of switching up the flow and experimenting with the order and methods of things. I often think about the ordering of activities but you've reminded me that switching things up can bring some excitement and potentially new and interesting insights.

Anuschka Ruge Sunshine Turner I am still really inspired from the weekend and you and was long searching for an exchange space like this live forum. So no one could have stopped me today from joining!!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand I remember using a body percussion rhythm that I learned from Charlie Murphy back when I did CF1 with him and Eric in 2009 in London...it's so effective at beginning a session, getting a group into their bodies, connected through rhythm, performing together, experiencing creative success....but after using it literally every workshop I ran I started to feel bored with it....I tried to reconnect with how I felt the first time I experienced it as a participant and embody that, and just enjoy doing the rhythm myself as I was leading it.



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Anuschka Ruge I know this feeling but when I use my go-to activities I try to focus more on discovering how the each group works with it and what it sets in motion in them. This way it always is like I am running it the first time as each group is unique in its ways.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Yes! So you can never run the same activity twice because it will always be new....maybe even with the same people on a different day!

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Discussion Question #2: How can we bring ourselves fresh energy when we need to facilitate? Please share some of the practices or ways you use to look after yourself, your energy and well being, and sustain your own relationship with your creativity.

Anuschka Ruge For me it is super important that I can have some time alone in the room at the beginning of the training day to sense it and build up the space I will hold during the session. If it is a large room, I like to sense it through dance to connect to the energy field. This way I can draw from it during my facilitation.

Also I use to add activities that charge and inspire me as facilitator as well or gives me a new/stronger connection to the group. For example the energiser Rain Making is such a powerful experience for me each time!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Nice! Love that you use dance to connect with the space. Great tip to use activities that also warm you up as a facilitator as well as the group - I love the dance circle activity that helps me in the same way! I guess choice of activity



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that will help us facilitators to bring up our energy as well as the group helps to create a shared field

Gloria J. Williams I like to arrive early enough to connect on a personal level with my co-facilitator and maybe even take in some of the place where we are facilitating. Then have set time to plan, polish and create together something new to bring to the training. Arriving early to the venue or even set-up the night before also creates a welcoming environment and starting with ease. We also have a set time when we are no longer working and have free-time to use as we please--no expectation we need to hang together. Each person speaks their truth and chooses what they need most out of their downtime to relax and rest. I am discovering the power of laughter too... seeking silliness and fun-filled times, keep things alive and fresh!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand That just sounds so nourishing and relaxing...what a great way to begin and work with a co-facilitator!

Anuschka Ruge I love it! We all need more silliness in our lifes!!! Gloria, how does your practice change when you are working alone?

Gloria J. Williams Anuschka Ruge I rarely facilitate alone. I am driven by connection and relationship. I use my time away from home to connect with friends who I may not have spoken to in a while and/or clients to make sure we start the training from a place of clarity and connection. I also spend time alone to balance by extroversion and go to bed early!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Gloria J. Williams sounds like you have found a great formula that plays to your strengths and personality

Kathy Butt-Ellwand When I facilitate alone I find it way more draining...like you have to carry the energy all by yourself but working with others you can bounce off each other



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Gloria J. Williams Kathy Butt-Ellwand It's taken a lifetime to figure out... and continually assessing to keep sharpening my practice!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand I put on music and dance round if at all possible before facilitating...guaranteed to change my state of being into a more happy one! Also like to set up the room to music. To keep my own creativity fresh I try to keep learning and take risks....lately I started a singing group for mums with young babies and this is the first time I have led a choir, it's definitely keeping things fresh for me!

Anuschka Ruge Music is so powerful! Even if it comes from tape

Sunshine Turner I use my breath to bring fresh energy into my body. I look for opportunities to go outside and connect with with my body in nature. Movement is actually foundational for me, I need to move my body, to feel energised. I practise swimming, cycling or a brisk walk to energise myself and refresh. And of course, creative play at any given opportunity!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Yes yes yes! Great. Feeling the nature connection one - even just going outside for 5 minutes or opening the window helps me.

Lindsey Turnbullet I take a class in something creative and fun, painting, pottery, whatever. It makes me use my brain differently.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Discussion Question #3: What are your top tips to keep adding to your toolkit, and keep learning, developing and growing as a facilitator?



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Anuschka Ruge Exchanging with other facilitators, inviting participants to introduce energisers, reading, going to meet ups. I also really enjoy taking methods out of their contexts and applying them into my work with a twist.

For example cooperate project management tools like the Fishbone Diagram applied to discovering root causes of social issues with a youth group.

We gave the groups double sized flipcharts with giant fishes (with the diagram shape in them) painted on them. Each fish being on of the issues they identified before. Each pax got one colour of pen and they were challenged to interact with the diagram in a creative manner turning them into representations of the causes and their connection without speaking.

I also love to make up activities or develop existing ones further.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand LOVE these ideas

Lindsey Turnbull I'm totally going to look up the fishbone diagram!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Yes Lindsey Turnbull! Anuschka Ruge do you have a link to any resources about this?

Anuschka Ruge It looks like a 'boring' tool, but it has a lot of potential used with a twist! I have and am happy to share them, but would it be okay at a later moment?

Lindsey Turnbull Yes of course!

Gloria J. Williams Asking friends what has been captivating your attention recently? Then I get a list of books, movies, podcasts, concepts, speakers, music, artists, social issues... endless possibilities! And, I seek out what interests me. Goal is to keep learning, growing, and expanding. I also keep a spiritual practice of some kind where I am filling my vessel -- this includes a wide range of practices that evolve



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and best serve me at the time. Goal is to start day grounded, centered and with intention.

Sunshine Turner I second trying things out with other facilitators! I loved the learning circle you started up in London a couple years ago Kathy Butt-Ellwand, a lot of ideas came to me in those sessions that I often use in workshops.

Anuschka Ruge Kathy, can you share some more information about the learning circle Sunshine mentioned? I am toying with setting up something similar for a while but are uncertain where to start...

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Sure- Anuschka Ruge we were a network of Creative Facilitators and friends working with UK youth charity LIFEbeat who worked on youth camps and trainings together. It was a not for profit peer led thing- I borrowed a room in a friends charity every 2 weeks, and advertised to this community of people to come and test out new activities on the group, share their best activities or just participate. The idea was to have a regular space to connect, build community, share good practice, and test things out, and receive feedback. Like a Creative Facilitation Lab. We used the feedback model from Art of Facilitation, where after someone facilitates, anyone in the group who has feedback raises their hand, and the facilitator picks 2 people to hear from, and they share something that connected them, and something that disconnected them from the activity. We had a set format with check in, goals agreements, song, warm ups, main activity, and closing, with time for feedback after each. Participants signed up to do these slots in advance, and any gaps were filled at the start of the session. There was 5 minutes or so for feedback after each activity. Myself or my friend Tunde or another friend took turns hosting each time- getting people to come and sign up to activities and opening and closing the session. Hatty Sappaday anything else to add? X

Kathy Butt-Ellwand It was also lots of fun and very nourishing!

Anuschka Ruge Kathy, thank you! It sounds amazing!!!



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CASE STUDY #1

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Case Study #1: You are facilitating an after-school arts program, and in your plan you have agreed with the school you will do 3 name games at the start of term that are very effective. Only problem is: you have led these games many times before in different settings. You know how to lead them with your eyes closed, and you know they work brilliantly but you are totally bored of them! How can you shift your relationship with these activities to make sure your new group can have a good experience of them?

Anuschka Ruge Reminding yourself of the value of the games. It is more than just learning names and playing games. It is about creating a community, welcoming people, seeing and hearing them (maybe even for the first time). It is about you and the group coming together and laying the ground for your collective work. If you lay a seed on unplowed ground the flower it carries might never grow.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Yes! We have to prepare the soil, even though digging is not always exciting! I like the idea of connecting with the intention and purpose of the activity.

Lindsey Turnbull Maybe do them in a different order, or do one, have the kids come up with one, and then do another one.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Nice, this keeps the value of the original activities, but allows a bit of novelty and improvising. What are the risks and potential gains of getting the group to choose and activity?

Lindsey Turnbull The risks are a bit high, as people are usually more shy and reluctant. The gains are that it gives the pax agency and lets them be creative and take ownership.



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Kathy Butt-Ellwand Lindsey yes - I love the idea of giving the group agency. I think encouraging participation, ownership, leadership etc works great, especially in longer programmes and once the group has formed and feels safe. I guess you also don't know what they are going to come up with, and it may or may not work for the group, but it's hard to veto something without it seeming like a put down!

Lindsey Turnbullet It's definitely something I would only try if I were REALLY feeling on top of my game.

Gloria J. Williams Linking a visual arts activity to a name game... example: everyone makes / decorates the letter of their first name -- that then gets used to build on the next name game and/or as a wall gallery that is a launching point for another name game.

Sunshine Turner I may have done these name games countless times, but I have never done these name games with this particular group of people. Who knows how they might respond to them, what new way they might interpret the instructions or what they are about to reveal about themselves through the game.

Soma Ragab I always remember that I will facilitate these games for a new group, so I get a different participation, renew my energy and gain new experience.

CASE STUDY #2

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

Case Study #2: You are planning a creative summer camp programme for teens, and find yourself reaching for the same old activities and processes. How can you bring freshness to the programme? What are the costs and benefits of changing the content of the programme?



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Lindsey Turnbull Following because this is ME! I am doing a TON of research on Google on combing thru the PYE activities.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Where are you running your programme Lindsey?

Lindsey Turnbull Rockville, MD, a DC suburb!

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Cool! Hope you get some ideas here. Hope it goes really well :)

Lindsey Turnbull Thanks, I'm excited! :)

Anuschka Ruge Remind yourself, that a process no matter how well tested and proven it is will not necessarily work for each and every group. As facilitator you are in first step there for the pax not yourself or the process. Look at it through their eyes, be their ambassador.

And most important, review, understand, adjust. Where is the group today, what do they need going from here, does my programme and the methods still serve the way we want to go. Just because you planned it in one way, it does not need to happen like it.

I also strongly belief, if you feel too comfortable with a programme you set yourself up for an average performance. As you do not put your head and heart in it, you might miss the crucial moments.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Love your responsive approach to meet your group where they are at, and the idea of being on your learning edge as a facilitator can also help bring the magic

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Has anyone experienced changing something that you've done many times, for the sake of freshening things up, and it NOT working?



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Anuschka Ruge For sure! But that's a learning moment as well. It is worth to dig into the why! Was it your instruction, did you not read the group well, was the activity not the right one, was there a flow in the original programme that you overlooked/did not recreate with the new method, ...?

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Yes! Great to try things out and then reflect - best way to learn. Do you have an example Anuschka Ruge? What were the effects on the group?

Gloria J. Williams I experienced being so committed to giving the client the full experience that I didn't step back to consider new realities -- part of the client team was 60 minutes late arriving because they had been held up by their client. Instead of reassessing the late start and modifying the plan... I kept the same agenda and didn't factor in how tired everyone would be. This was an evening workshop after a full day of work for them. I learned to not hold on so tight to a deliverable that it makes me inflexible. I was not thinking of the client and their needs at the time. The last activity was impacted by tiredness and we did wrap it up faster but the energy downer had already happened. Good news... we had a full day the next day with the client and were able to redeem ourselves!

Hatty Sappaday I agree Anuschka. For me, if a new activity doesn't work out, it's pretty tempting to go back to the tried-and-tested one. But the familiar activity probably works well because it has been improved over time, and the new one can too!

Hatty Sappaday I have often tried a new song or theatre activity that didn't work the first couple of times I tried it. The right instructions at the right time made all the difference. I also had to consider where the group were in the process and whether the activity suited that particular point - like how well do they know each other? How willing are different people to take a risk at the moment?



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Anuschka Ruge Mhhh, top of mind not one where we switched out an entire method but one we changed the approach last minute.

We were working with a group with very different geographical backgrounds. We decided to use the Power Flower to start a reflection about identity and society. The initial plan was to let the pax work individually on their flower and then share examples from the group where peeps felt comfortable. Instead we decided to work on it in a group discussion and to create a model flower that showed different identity aspects and the identity expression that holds the most power in society (race - white, gender - cis-male, religion - christian/non-affirming).

What we did not factor in is that the assumed society looked very different based on the pax's geography. That led to the group arguing about the power holders instead of working on systems of oppression and active bystandership. In the process, pax felt hurt as they saw their subjective or objective marginalisation devalued.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Thanks for sharing these experiences everyone, really useful examples to learn from. Anuschka sounds like the group discussion of the Power Flower surfaced some big differences in the lenses participants look through based on their own positions of power / marginalisation and different perceptions of each other and themselves- I imagine this was tender and confronting territory to navigate. What was your key learning from this experience?

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Hatty Sappaday, Sunshine Turner, Gloria J. Williams what do you think?

Gloria J. Williams I would assess the team leading at the camp and identify what was missing and I would engage the camp leaders to help figure out how we could change things up. I also find it helpful to have a



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camp theme to build towards-so everything ties in and builds towards it. Maybe even bring in a surprise guest for an evening event.

Kathy Butt-Ellwand LOVE the theme and surprise guest, and engaging all the people involved to get their input

Kathy Butt-Ellwand Looking through feedback from the young people from past programmes (if you have this) is also great source of ideas

END

KATHY BUTT-ELLWAND

THANK YOU EVERYONE! This has been a really useful session, thank you everyone for bringing your experience, curiosity, and presence. 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 <http://www.partnersforyouth.org/> for upcoming trainings, too, there's some new ones just posted.



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