

Erin O'Brien

Authentic Relating Games Workshop

Tips:

Make sure that everyone is welcomed warmly when they arrive, and that a centering exercise is introduced early on. It is difficult to suddenly get into a mindset where one is ready to share and be vulnerable, so facilitating an exercise where you invite everyone to reflect on their current state is vital. Ask them to feel the sensations in their body, notice the pace of their breath and the tension in their muscles, and ask themselves "What am I bringing to this circle?" This will help to create a container to work within.

Going around the circle and encouraging each group member to give a preliminary check-in proved to be very important for setting the tone. Alongside a basic check-in, encouraging people to state their needs is helpful (emotional or physical needs). This may include "I'm feeling extra sensitive today about my job/body/family/etc, so maybe stay away from asking questions about that" or "I am pretty tired." This gives people the chance to be really recognized and met.

Additionally, if you are not always actively participating in the games as the facilitator, make sure you do not appear to be overtly eavesdropping on people's conversations (even if you are)! If you are sitting to the side with a timer and obviously looking at someone who's speaking, this will make them feel weird and not want to open up entirely to their partner. Being watched doesn't feel very good.