Community Building from the Ground Up: Focusing on Relationships

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Agenda

• Introductions
• Discussion warm-up
• Describing interactions with the Simple Interactions tool
• Enhancing interactions
• Case study
• Planning activity
• Question & answer
Discussion
warm-up
With a partner, describe a memorable interaction you had on your way to the conference.
Describing relationships
Relationships matter
Having at least one relationship can make all the difference.
The power of relationships is built on simple, ordinary interactions.
Interactions don’t have to be perfect to be helpful.
What do you notice?
What do you notice?
SIMPLE INTERACTIONS TOOL
Noticing and Appreciating Human Interactions Across Developmental Settings

- **Connection**: Interacting with mutually positive or appropriate emotions
  - negative/hostile
  - indifferent/detached
  - mismatched
  - mutually present, in tune

- **Reciprocity**: Balancing roles of engagement during joint activity
  - one-sided control, with resistance or disengagement
  - one-sided control, with compliance
  - two-way "serve and return"

- **Inclusion**: Including and excluding the least likely or least able to enter
  - excluded
  - attended to separately
  - invited and included

- **Opportunity to Grow**: Presenting incremental challenges and matching with appropriate support
  - unrealistic or undemanding expectations
  - incremental challenge with scaffolding
  - scaffolding and fading

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Descriptive, Asset-Based

Framework of Shared Language

Fluidity and Flexibility

Categories for Reflection
Connection

**CONNECTION:** Interacting with mutually positive or appropriate emotions

- **X:** negative/hostile
- **Y:** mismatched
- **Z:** mutually present, in tune
In small groups:
Share examples of Connection X, Y, & Z from your work.

**CONNECTION:** Interacting with mutually positive or appropriate emotions

- **X**
  - negative/hostile
  - indifferent/detached

- **Y**
  - mismatched

- **Z**
  - mutually present, in tune
Reciprocity

RECIPROCITY: Balancing roles of engagement during joint activity

- One-sided control, with resistance or disengagement
- One-sided control, with compliance
- Two-way “serve and return”
In small groups:
Share examples of Reciprocity X, Y, & Z from your work.

**X**: one-sided control, with resistance or disengagement

**Y**: one-sided control, with compliance

**Z**: two-way “serve and return”
Inclusion

INCLUSION: Inviting and involving the least likely or least able to engage

- Excluded
- Attended to separately
- Invited and included
In small groups:
Share examples of Inclusion X, Y, & Z from your work.
Opportunity to Grow

OPPORTUNITY TO GROW: Presenting incremental challenge and matching with appropriate support

X: unrealistic or undemanding expectations
Y: incremental challenge with scaffolding
Z: scaffolding and fading
In small groups:
Share examples of Opportunity to Grow X, Y, & Z from your work.

**OPPORTUNITY TO GROW:** Presenting incremental challenge and matching with appropriate support

- X: unrealistic or undemanding expectations
- Y: incremental challenge with scaffolding
- Z: scaffolding and fading
As a learning aid, the Simple Interactions Tool helps us describe relationships so we can...

...begin to intentionally do the best of what we already do intuitively

...start to do naturally what we have learned to do intentionally

...give us ways to communicate what we look for in our communities
Enhancing interactions
Try-it-out Projects

• A (small) tweak in your practice, program, or policy
• Can build on something you already do or be something new
• Something you try out (like a mini-experiment) to see what works – it doesn’t have to be perfect.
One museum experimented with different seating layouts to promote adult engagement.
Rather than just having a sign, have patrons ask a librarian for a password.
Put names to faces with a polaroid wall in a break room...
...or maybe all a break room needs is some free coffee.
A question wall can get visitors talking to each other before a program starts.
Case Study
Sometimes challenges are
Doors not Stairs.
Simple

Interactions

Open

Community

Growth

Listen

Support

Moments

Intention

Patterns

Relationship

Reflect

Team

Together

Working
Once upon a time...

an enthusiastically chatty, middle-aged museum professional discovered the beauty of shifting her trap through the guidance of some kind, friendly helpers. She learned that simply staying quiet was a magical way to foster more quality interactions with others. By embracing silence more often and intentionally, she encouraged those interacting with her to feel invited, included and free to share their thoughts and ideas. This, in turn, led to opportunities for growth by those interacting with her and for her as a leader and educator.

And she lived happily ever after... in silence.
Plan your “Try it Out” Project
Brainstorm

Form pairs or small groups (2-6 people works best).

Take a turn on **Spinner 1** to identify a **dimension** from the tool to focus on.

Take a turn on **Spinner 2** to identify an **activity to try**.

Discuss **how the activity could be used to enhance your practice in that dimension**. Record your ideas in your packet.
Once you’ve decided, plan it out...

Use the back page of your packet to get specific . . .
Questions
Evaluation