

Virtual Meeting Energizers and Check-ins

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Thanks for stopping by! I started this document because I and colleagues are looking for ways to bring the human connection into our virtual meetings. ONE way is to have fun energizers and check-ins. I didn't make any of these up - they were gathered from facilitators who got them from other facilitators. Please use and contribute to this collection. If there is someone out there with a great list, there is a place to add links on the bottom. Feel free to share this!

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT:

- Please title your activity
 - Alphabetical order
 - Write step by step instructions (bullets are nice)
 - If you have a screen grab or photo, feel free to include it
 - Offer ideas about when/how to use an energizer
 - If we should give credit to the "originator" please include that information
 - Don't delete but feel free to improve the formatting to make this easier to use for all
 - Leave questions by highlighting an area and clicking the "comment" icon that appears
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Fun prompts to chat or unmute your reply:

- If you could give yourself any treat right now what would it be?
 - What has put a smile on your face over the last days?
 - What's the story behind your name?
 - What is one thing you have done during home confinement/COVID 19 that you didn't think you would be doing at this point in your life?
 - What is one funny thing about home confinement you or your family has experienced?
 - What is one thing that started during home confinement that you hope will continue after the pandemic?
 - What is one thing you have done to keep yourself sane over the past few months?
 - If you really knew me, you would know that...
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Admiration prompt

- Ahead of the meeting, each person gets a name
- Five minutes in the beginning to "illustrate" or write a few appreciative things about that person, perhaps what you appreciate about how they will contribute to the session

Build a Duck (lego serious play)

- In a post-it note program - create boxes with the same number of stickies as legos for the LSP build a duck activity
- Participants use the stickies to build a duck
- Report outs
 - Talk about the duck (not the process)
- Reflection - it's about letting go of judgment



Change Your Name/Name Tag:

- Add where you are from or a feeling to your name (Zoom - hover over your nose and the three dots ellipses shows up)
- Could add “what food you have stockpiled for quarantine?”
- You can add anything that helps either bring a group together, establish own identity or add sorting into groups later
- Variations
 - What is something you are passionate about?
 - What is your superpower?

- Aid sorting - What language are you here to learn? (breakouts for a language exchange ideally have a mix of learners of the language and speakers of the language)
- The character you relate to most right now
- Rename for anonymous Something you could talk for hours about

Chatterfall

- “Waterfall on chat”
- Ask a question but tell the group, don’t hit enter!
- Hit enter at the same time
- “REpel” through the chat

Check Out with a word and a gesture

- Everyone unmutes
- Say your word and gesture and we will repeat it back to you

Collaboration Icebreaker/energizer

The group will make up a story together, they need to pay attention to colleagues so that they build on what others have said, and the last 2-3 persons wrap-up the story.

- One person starts with a 30-second opening and tags the next person
- The person tagged follows the story and tag another person
- Each person can make up anything in the story (names, situations) and give unexpected shifts to the story.
- Fictional, utopic, drama, suspense, all types of stories are allowed and fun!

The full story does not belong to one person, but to the entire team. Hopefully it sparks creativity and collaboration for the session :)

Dance Battle:

- Inspired by Katy Grennier from DSIL Global
- Let people know we need to get energised/creative/together/whatever
- Ask everyone to raise their hand up to the screen
- Put it flat like a little tabletop
- [demonstrate]
- Get their other hand up and visible and make a little person
- [demonstrate]
- Now let's dance battle!
- [put on music]

- [Start the dancing and be encouraging for others to be silly]
- After a short moment
- Dance battle is over!
- [turn off music]
- Pick out some amazing dancers
- Go onto the next activity

Dancing Cursors

- In Mural, invite participants to “show enthusiasm” through moving their cursors really fast

Dog O’Clock

- Have a dog (all pet) happy hour.
- After work on a Friday hold a happy hour, everyone brings their pets and disconnects from work and enjoys seeing all the pets (because who doesn’t love furry babies)

Draw a Number with a Partner

- With a partner, someone starts
- Trace on the camera 1-5 and clap
- One partner leads and one follows
- Then switch partners
- Reflect on
 - What was it like?
 - Leading vs. following?

DRAWUL APP!!

Draw a pig

- Ask everyone to draw a pig while listening
- Reflect “everyone’s pig looks different”

Empathy Conversation Starter

- “It’s not about the nail” video (only 90 seconds) [It's Not About The Nail](#)

Favorite Movies:

- 1) What's your favorite movie and why?
- 2) If your life was a movie, which movie would it be? And why?

Gives some insight in the "why" portion of themselves. It is pop culture world, so everyone is familiar with at least some movies. And, creates some laughs. You're just trying to get them talking and this is comfortable without being invasive or too "deep". Even if they know people at the session this is probably a new topic that doesn't need any prep on their part. And most important, it doesn't get "preachy" or predictable about "what they want out of the class!" I found people still talking about their answers later in the day.

Gladiator Vote

- thumbs up - move on
- thumb sideways - I can live with it
- thumbs down - we need to discuss further

Group photo

- Smile and someone takes a group photo on zoom (screen shot)

Hand Breathing

- Match inhale with opening hands
- Match exhale with closing
- Then match with one person, two.... Full group

Holding hands

- Try to touch hands with the screen next to you in gallery view
- Knacky - some hands up and down... a good laugh

Leadership conversation starter:

- First Follower: Leadership Lessons from Dancing Guy - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ>

Match the Voice to Text Fail (Trent Wakenight)

- Pre-work/facilitator brainstorm - what is the funniest (above the line) voice to text fail (example “share my thoughts” > “shave my farts”)
- Use a Mural board or google slide to mix up the correct and incorrect phrases
- Have people practice using google Slide or Mural to work together to match the responses

Photo Slide Show:

- Have participants send photos that reflected their current lens and put them together on slides for sharing.
- Like a ‘live [MoodBoard](#)’ to express sense of the moment or a topic

PICCLES APP!!

Rory Story Cubes

- Go to <https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/158896002/> to access the virtual Rory’s story cube generator.
- Using the story cubes, ask participants to:
 - Describe a recent experience using the rolled story cube generator.
 - Describe the process or experience leading up to the completion of a milestone using the rolled story cube generator.

Shakedown

- Shake right hand 8 times, shake left hand 8 times while counting, shake right hand 7 times, shake left hand 7 times while counting - get down to one. Variation: do it standing and include each foot in the shake down

Share an object/show and tell (these are multiple options for the same idea)

- Share a photo or an object that is dear to you
- Hold up an object that describes
 - Your current state
 - Something that gives/holds meaning to you
 - Current leadership
 - Future leadership
- Variations
 - What's outside your window?
 - What does your mug say about you? Virtual activity
 - Could do a "design thinking" activity (disruptus) - what could you make with elements of two of the elements that were shown
 - If the facilitator "assigns" the objects to us for the above exercise, it's an opportunity to demonstrate a forced environment/conditions - we didn't ask for this to happen, but now we have constraints we need to work within
 - Go get something and bring it back (gets people standing)
 - What's the oldest item in your wardrobe, and why have you held on to it?

Speaking "in unison" – a joyful muddle

(<http://citizentools.netalyst.com/zoomwhytoguide/>)

- As with some face to face events, it may be desirable for all participants to speak at once, e.g. for shared reading of a passage or a team chant. Audio lags make this a little messy, but if you prepare participants by asking them to speak a little more slowly and to expect something of a "joyful muddle", it's workable.

Stretch

- Facilitator asks everyone to copy stretch and then asks folks to copy the stretch in the person on the right, the person on the left, a random person, etc.

Switching hands

- Write your name on a piece of paper
- Change hands
- How did that feel
- Purpose - everything feels awkward at first - we have access to new skills but it takes more energy...

Touch Blue (from Mural article)

- Pick a physical or visual attribute of an object and says it aloud (for example: "Touch something metal!")
- Everyone else on the video call has to find something with that attribute and touch it (this usually leads to people stretching out or jump out of their seat to touch something that matches the description).
- Whoever is last to touch an object chooses the next attribute to touch.

Three-in-Three (Jacob Eastham)

- Invite one or all participants to prepare a three slide presentation to be completed in 3 minutes. Used as an opener, it's a nice connection modality and useful in a standing meeting to rotate the presentation responsibility. It also allows a little buffer for late arrivals who won't miss core content.
- The topic can be anything he/she wants to share which allows for personal creativity and a sense of surprise. Or, consider a general topic for the whole group to use. (My Top Three, Past/Present/Future, You Wouldn't Believe, etc.)

Virtual applause: Please unmute and clap loudly

Virtual art-poll: put a colored sticky note over your camera

- Ask a question - yes or no...
- Yes/no - I have had a virtual failure this week
- Yes/no - I have connected with someone unexpectedly
- Yes - take off sticky
- No - keep it on

Virtual check for understanding/negative poll:

- Need more information? Unmute and say 'yes'
- Any objections - Unmute and just say "yes" or "no"

Virtual COUNTDOWN-team-activity:

- ask the group to count up or down, everybody can only say one number...
- but it's not allowed to plan before who says when which number, it's more an intuitive team activity....
- if two people speak at the same time, the group has to start from the beginning
- Activity to break the ice or energizer in between

Virtual fist of 3:

- What's your confidence level in [TOPIC]
- 1 - is low / 3 - is high
- Type in the chat

Virtual modern art:

- Have all participants play with Zoom annotations simultaneously
 - Can have a challenge like giving the group 2 minutes to draw an elephant collectively in Zoom whiteboard (with the Annotate tool)

Virtual team dance

- High five the person to your left
- Reach up to the person above
- Tap the head of the person below

Virtual tuning into the collective (motion theater exercise)

- Purpose: to connect and to move as one
- Steps:
 - Get to "gallery view" mode

- A few deep breaths - wave to your friends
- Make sure you can see me - I will start to move - simple and basic, within the screen
- Follow me, after 10-20 seconds I will call on the next person and well we follow their movement, and so on (if time is short, you may not get a turn to lead)
- Okay hand it back to me
- Now, no more voices
- If anyone stops, we all stop
- If anyone start, we all start and follow that persons movement
- Try to keep it going for a few breaths to limit too many thing happening at once
- Keep it simple and basic movement that faces the camera
- Reflect
 - What was that like
 - What was the purpose / takeaways
 - Connection is possible and fun!
 - Sometimes we lead and sometimes we follow - notice what is natural and what feelings come up
 - Right now - forced into "follow" mode but that doesn't mean we can't put our own spin on it
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Virtual workout

- Ask a question in zoom and then answer it in Mural (building muscle memory)

Walk up songs:

- I like having people send me their "walk up songs" and then I make a Spotify playlist. I play a few songs at a time throughout the sessions (especially when energy is low), and then people have to guess who's song it is.

What feels most right to you:

- Present a multiple choice questions - ask participants to chat in the number they feel most represents them

Where do you stand?

- Create a virtual spectrum line on Google slides OR Mural
- Have each person's name in a box or virtual post-it
- In the middle goes an "either/or" question
 - Here's a great resource for either/or questions:
<https://conversationstartersworld.com/this-or-that-questions/>
- Are you a morning person or a night person
- Each person moves their post-it to where they are on the spectrum
- Facilitator invites a few people to reflect
- Start light and move to more complex questions and decisions

Worry Box

- Write down anything that is troubling you right now - unpacking
- Put it in a Google document
- Variation
 - Gratitude box

Zoom drinking game (with your favorite non-alcoholic beverage):

- Drink if you know this isn't the perfect circumstances
- Drink if the camera is frozen

Further games/ resources

- Favorites from Mural: <https://blog.mural.co/online-warm-ups-energizers>
- Icebreakers & Energizers: [Virtual Meeting Check-Ins & Icebreakers During A Pandemic](#)
- Check-in Question Generator: <http://checkin.daresay.io/>
- Tools and inspiration Library, also great to create Workshop agendas
<https://www.sessionlab.com/solutions/remote/>
- Team building activities: Mail your team mini smore, graham crackers and chocolate and host a tiny campfire. <https://teambuilding.com/events/tiny-campfire>
- Random selection: <https://wheelofnames.com/>
- Draw the Pig (Personality Test):
https://www.csap.org/fall_meeting_files/Fall2012/Personality-Test.pdf
- Tina Meckel // "Online Facilitation" // <https://www.tinameckel.com/workshop>