

A Leader's Guide to Inclusive Group Conversation





THE BUZZ

1-2-4-All is a Liberating Structure – a simple but powerful facilitation tool that gives every person in the room a chance to think, speak, and be heard. It replaces the traditional "who wants to share?" dynamic with a structured process that draws out ideas from everyone, not just the most vocal voices in the room.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The single most important thing you will do in this activity is craft your starter question. A weak question produces weak conversation. A strong question unlocks thinking that surprises everyone at their own answer. This activity is a great way to lay the foundation and set the tone at a staff or board retreat.

CRAFTING YOUR QUESTION:

-  **Open-ended:** it can't be answered with yes or no. "What's working?" is better than "Is this working?"
-  **Specific enough to focus:** too broad and people won't know where to start. "What's one thing getting in the way of our team's effectiveness?" beats "What do you think about our team?"
-  **Genuinely unanswered:** don't ask a question you already have a fixed answer to. People can tell, and it kills participation fast.
-  **Relevant right now:** the question should connect directly to something the group is actually facing, deciding, or trying to understand in this moment.

SAMPLE STARTING QUESTIONS

- What is one thing we could do differently that would have the biggest impact?
- What is something about our organization that surprises people when they hear it?
- If you could pick up one skill instantly that would help you at your job what would it be?
- When was the last time you felt like an outsider in our organization? **[RISKIER QUESTION]**
- **DEB'S FAVORITE QUESTION:** What is the one thing we should be talking about in our organization that we are not?

Visit the resources page on my website for more starter questions for a variety of activities.






MAKE IT HAPPEN

This activity has four rounds and takes a minimum of 15 minutes to be effective.







STEP 1: INDIVIDUAL THINKING TIME	STEP 2: PAIR UP	STEP 3: PAIR UP THE PAIRS	STEP 4: ALL IN
<p>INSTRUCT THE GROUP TO: Silently reflect on the question. Jot down your thoughts. No talking yet – this is your individual thinking time.</p> <p>Silence is sacred & important here.</p> <p>TIME: 1 MINUTE – SET A TIMER WITH AN ALARM</p>	<p>INSTRUCT THE GROUP TO: Find a partner. Share your ideas. Listen as much as you talk. Clarify, test, & strengthen ideas.</p> <p>Consensus is not the goal here. Clarity is.</p> <p>TIME: 4 MINUTES: GIVE A TWO MINUTE WARNING.</p>	<p>INSTRUCT THE GROUP TO: Two pairs join together. Notice similarities & differences. Look for themes & strong ideas worth keeping.</p> <p>Don't repeat what you said as a pair, refine it.</p> <p>TIME: 4 MINUTES. GIVE A TWO MINUTE WARNING.</p>	<p>INSTRUCT THE GROUP TO: Share 1-2 key insights with the whole room. Prompt each group to share something new or different if possible.</p> <p>Bring your best, most buzzworthy ideas!</p> <p>TIME: 5-10 MINUTES. CAN DO A SECOND SHARE.</p>

WHEN TO USE IT

-  You want active participation and contribution from everyone.
-  You are tackling something complex as a team that would benefit from diverse perspectives.
-  You have too many giant pieces of paper with endless brainstormed lists lying around.
-  You sense that there are quieter team members whose voices aren't typically being heard.
-  You want to build toward consensus and get collective intelligence from the group.




DON'T USE IT IF...

-  You have less than 10 or more than 40 people in the group.
-  You need a yes or no decision.
-  You don't have at least 15 minutes to give to the activity.
-  You think the topic is too sensitive to be discussed in pairs.



HOW TO USE IT TO SOLVE A SPECIFIC PROBLEM INSTEAD OF AS A GENERAL ICEBREAKER

1-2-4-All is far more than an icebreaker. It's a structured thinking tool that works best when your group is wrestling with a real challenge, a difficult decision, or a question that doesn't have an easy answer. The examples below are drawn from the real work of public servants and nonprofit leaders – use them as starting points or adapt them to fit your situation.




COMMUNITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

-  What are some ways we should be communicating with the public that we haven't tried yet?
-  What do the people we serve need from us that we're not currently delivering?
-  What barriers are preventing residents or clients from engaging with our services or programs?



FUNDRAISING & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

-  What fundraising techniques are no longer working for us – and what should we retire?
-  What relationships should we be cultivating that we haven't prioritized?

POLICY & DECISION MAKING

-  What unintended consequences might this policy have for the people it's meant to serve?
-  What information do we still need before we can make a good decision about this?
-  Who is not in this room whose perspective we need before we move forward?

STRATEGIC PLANNING & PRIORITIES

-  What are we spending time and energy on that isn't moving our mission forward?
-  What does success look like a year from now – and what would have had to happen to get us there?

LEARN MORE

<https://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all/>

<https://medium.com/@carljrogers/1-2-4-all-kata-d8f180b58b8e>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ensuring-every-voice-heard-1-2-4-all-facilitation-brown--eyuye/>

<https://thevianovagroup.com/the-1-2-4-all-technique-why-its-in-every-facilitators-toolkit/>



WELCOME TO THE HIVE

Free tools for leaders who want to facilitate with confidence.



Right Tool. Right Time. Right Results.

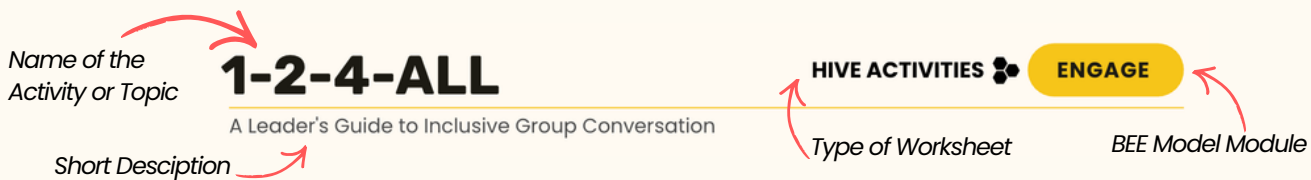
Most people don't hate activities. They hate activities that go nowhere or seem forced.

You've been in that room — the one where someone announces a quick icebreaker and half the group quietly checks out. It's not the activity's fault. It's that nobody stopped to ask the most important question first: *what are we actually trying to accomplish here?*

Every worksheet in this library is built around that question. You'll find a clear purpose, honest guidance on when to use the tool, and when to skip it entirely. Because the right activity, used at the wrong moment, with no clear intention, isn't team building. It's just noise.

HOW TO USE THESE WORKSHEETS

Each worksheet is tagged two ways — by category and by BEE Model module — so you always know what kind of tool you're using and where it fits in your leadership work.



TYPE OF WORKSHEET



HIVE ACTIVITIES

Facilitation guides for structured group activities — Liberating Structures, icebreakers, and team exercises.

HIVE PRACTICES

Instructional how-to guides for everyday leadership moments — agendas & meetings, 1:1s, feedback, and more.

HIVE WISDOM

Leadership lessons and reflection tools — concepts, mindset shifts, and skills for leaders to keep growing.

BEE MODEL MODULE

BUILD

Foundational skills and self-awareness — developing yourself and the people around you from the ground up.

ENGAGE

Connection, culture, and communication — how you show up with and for the people you lead.

EXECUTE

Getting things done with intention — planning, accountability, and running effective operations.

These worksheets are a taste of what's possible when facilitation is done with intention. If you're ready to build a leadership culture where every voice is heard and every meeting has a purpose — let's talk.



BUILD | ENGAGE | EXECUTE

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