

Building Community

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BUILDING COMMUNITY

Facilitators build community in a wide variety of ways, by providing snacks with every meeting, celebrating early and intermediate wins (along with major achievements), periodically recounting the DAT's history, providing a "Thank You" message at the end of a DAT's facilitation, and hosting events that bring different DATs together. In addition to these, facilitators guide DATs in sharing their stories by using Community Builders. This set of Community Builders can be drawn upon when planning DAT agendas.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Facilitators use Community Builders to open Departmental Action Team meetings. A prompt is written at the top of the agenda, and displayed as members come in. One way to start the meeting is to say, "How about we start with the community builder? Does anyone want to kick us off?" Facilitators might offer their own if no one else jumps in. Members aren't required to share, but facilitators make eye contact with everyone to check that they have had enough time to think and share.

Community Builders can be viewed by some as silly or wasting time. However, they serve an important purpose in giving DAT members information to connect around outside of their working relationships. Often, they lead to laughter or to heartfelt statements of support. In these ways, Community Builders help DAT members form a closer community. To help the group understand their function, make "What are Community Builders?" an early process skill before introducing the first one.

Community Builders can vary in length depending on how much DAT members engage with them. If members are impatient with the Community Builder, or if they tend to take a long time to complete them, you may want to only offer the "Easy Community Builders" below, as they can be answered quickly. If members express displeasure with Community Builders, facilitators can ask the group to decide whether to discontinue them. Sometimes a group will pause doing Community Builders once they feel comfortable with one another, then resume them after they add new members to the group.

EASY COMMUNITY BUILDERS

- A favorite Fall Food?
- A favorite National Park?
- What are you thankful for?
- A great course you took in undergrad?
- A favorite book?
- A fun field location or conference location you've traveled to?
- A favorite non-human species?
- A movie you like?
- If you could watch a movie again for the first time, what would it be?
- A spring vegetable/fruit/flower you like?



- I need to make more time in my life for ____ (e.g. outdoorsy stuff, cooking, etc.).
- A human achievement that wows you?
- Something great about summer, for you?
- How do you beat the heat in summer?
- Share something you are home cookin' these days...
- A favorite easy and fast recipe?
- A favorite show, musical, etc.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS THAT CONNECT TO A PROCESS SKILL

Sometimes, a community builder can be created that relates directly to the process skill that will be introduced later in the agenda. This can allow for deeper engagement in the process skill.

- Community Builder: A moment in time where you had to be brave/courageous.
- Process skill: Hierarchical versus Networked Structures, Digital Toolkit Slide 9.1

This pairing of Community Builder and Process Skill primes students to draw on their courage to become an important member in the networked structure of a DAT.

- Community Builder: A moment you will never forget.
- Process skill: The Power of Moments, Digital Toolkit Slide 12.4

This pairing primes DAT members to think about how they can design experiences to create heightened moments.

- Community Builder: What is a favorite DAT memory?
- Process skill: Sustaining DATs, Digital Toolkit How-To Guide 9

PROBING COMMUNITY BUILDERS

- Something interesting about you or your family
- A "silver lining" for you, these days
- A pet, or an animal encounter you had?
- Your thoughts on New Year's Resolutions
- Something you are thankful for...
- What is something you are looking forward to?
- Something only your friends know about you?
- A common belief/misconception about your field that infuriates you?
- A future scientific breakthrough you'd want to see in your lifetime?
- When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- What are you up to this summer?



- A moment in your life you'll never forget (outside births and weddings!)
- A comfort food that reminds you of home.
- Turn and talk to your neighbor and share a favorite book or movie

FUNNY COMMUNITY BUILDERS

- A moment where you thought "I'm old"?
- Favorite bathroom on campus?
- What is the stupidest way you've hurt yourself?
- A weird traveling or vacation story.
- If you could have a lifetime supply of one thing, but each unit is under \$10, what would you choose?
- If your friends were to say "Pulling a __(your name)_" what would it mean?
- Something inconsequential that you have strong feelings about?
- What is your patronus?
- An odd, but inconsequential, skill you have?
- An out-of-date trend you participated in.
- What is a funny tradition in your family?
- A pet you would like to have?
- Your favorite Beatle or favorite beetle?
- What is your theme song?
- What weird food hang-ups do you have?
- Something that tickled you recently.
- A joke you enjoy telling or hearing...(PG rated)
- Pumpkin spice: Yay or Nay?

WEIRD COMMUNITY BUILDERS

- Bear Ninja Cowboy tournament (google it for a how-to video)
- How do you chortle? How do you guffaw?
- What Pokemon would taste the most delicious?
- A good story about something you put in a microwave.
- How comfortable are you with food touching other food on your plate?

