

WHAT'S YOUR PROCESS?



OBJECTIVES

- Introduce the concept of “group work” and “group process”
- Explore how group process takes place even when we aren't fully aware through a Bus Stop roleplay
- Explore and make explicit how we build and lose trust in interpersonal relationships



TIME

- **60-90 minutes:** The “Riding the Bus” activity typically takes 20-30 minutes, so any extra time to play with is in the “Building Trust” section.
- **Add 15-20 minutes:** If beginning or ending your engagement with a group using this training, you will need to incorporate an opening and/or a closing session similar to those in “Beginning the Work” and “Bringing It All Together,” respectively. Refer to those sections for tips on how to introduce and close workshops.



PREPARATION

SUPPLIES

- Chart Markers

MATERIALS

- Signs or Props for Bus Roleplay (optional)
- Turf, Trust, Time

POSTERS

- Turf, Trust, Time

RIDING THE BUS

This section describes the invisible processes that take place when people come together to work in a group. It also shares key tools for improving the group process by making it more democratic.

- 1. SET UP THE SPACE:** Before beginning, set up in a row of three chairs to represent a bench at a bus stop in an open and visible space in the room. If you would like, you can also post a sign that says “Bus Stop” or include other details to make the scene more interesting.
- 2. FRAME:** Introduce this section by underscoring the importance of working well in a group. This message sounds simple, but is often one of the most challenging aspects of cooperative development.
- 3. SOLICIT VOLUNTEERS:** You will need at least five people to move to the front of the room to role play getting on a bus. Invite the five volunteers to the bus stop set-up in the room.
- 4. ASSIGN ROLES:** Explain that, except for one person driving the bus, each person is waiting to take the next bus arriving at the bus stop. Then, assign each of the following unique characteristics to each of the volunteers (if any of these descriptions are also true of the volunteer, go ahead and have them role playing using their own characteristics):
 - **Driver:** Is the bus driver, will drive the bus up to the stop, as well as operate the door, lower the ramp (if needed), and complete any other tasks reasonably expected of a bus driver
 - **Rider 1:** Just went grocery shopping - has two heavy bags; Has dollar bills for fare
 - **Rider 2:** Has visibly limited physical mobility (e.g. on crutches); Has a bus pass
 - **Rider 3:** Is anxious to get home after a long work shift; Has a bus pass
 - **Rider 4:** Is listening to headphones; Has all coins for bus fare
- 5. PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS:** Explain that the role play will start with the driver approaching the stop, those waiting at the bus stop will board the bus and pay fare, and they will then find a spot to sit or stand.
- 6. CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** Ask if any clarification is needed before the group begins the role play.

7. BEGIN ROLE PLAY

8. **DEBRIEF ROLE PLAY:** After the role play completes, keep the role play participants at the front of the room and lead a debrief conversation using the following prompts (some are directed at specific people) -

- Are there any immediate reflections or observations from the role play? (*all*)
- Did you think about how you were going to board before beginning to board the bus? (*ask Riders 1 & 2*)
- Were there any decisions you made during the course of the role play? (*ask Riders 3 & 4*)
- Did there appear to be any disagreement among the riders about the order in which the riders should board the bus? (*ask audience, then Riders*)
- Who had the most power in the role play? Did anyone take advantage of their power for their own or the group's larger benefit? (*all*)

9. **THANK VOLUNTEERS:** Direct the volunteers to return to their spots and thank them for participating.

10. **REFRAME ACTIVITY:** Share that what was just role played is a form of group process. Even mundane, everyday activities undertaken with no or very few words can include a group people making decisions on their own and collectively in order to achieve shared or similar goals.

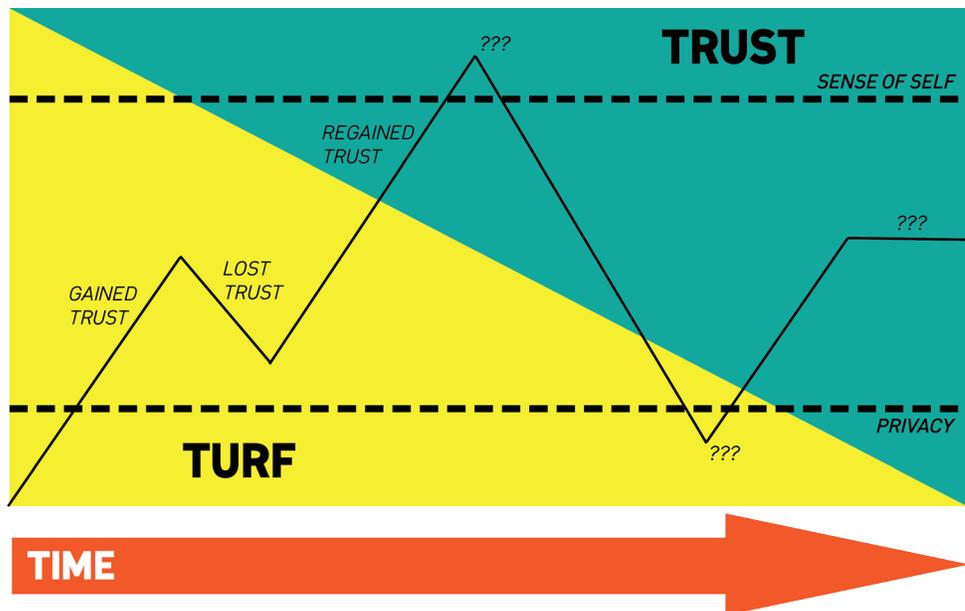
11. **PRESENT:** Despite how ubiquitous group process is in our lives, democratic process in groups it is not something that is routinely taught in most conventional educational institutions. Still, it remains an incredibly important skill set most people need to be successful in their life.

- Group process is an intimate reflection of how we operate in the larger society - symptoms of systems of oppression (such as racism, sexism, classism) are often augmented in group work.
- Since these kinds of behaviors are more easily identified in small spaces and individuals can communicate with one another directly, they have greater potential to be addressed. It is often more challenging to address them in larger and less intimate spaces.

BUILDING TRUST

Trust is a necessary element in group process, and this section walks participants through exploring how trust is created and destroying in our relationships. Many of us have learned how to manage trust in relationships with ourselves and others only “by doing,” so this activity seeks to draw on our collective experiences to explicitly identify patterns and methods for how trust can be gained, lost, and regained.

1. **FRAME:** Open up the activity by explaining that trust is a necessary component of successful collaboration, but we often don’t talk about how we go about building and maintaining trust.
2. **SHARE & PRESENT:** Direct participants’ attention to the Collaboration Continuum. To guide participants in understanding what the continuum presents, move through the following -
 - A. **DEFINE CONCEPTS:** Break down the following definition of “Collaboration” by applying concepts used in the continuum -
 - » **COLLABORATION:** the process that makes it possible to reach a goal that cannot be achieved by one person or agency alone. This implies a need for negotiation and agreement about the goal and strategies.³
 - **TURF** is control over your own resources, ideas, and plans.
 - **TRUST** in one another and the shared process that is foundational for giving up any Turf.
 - **TIME** it takes to develop process, build Trust, and share Turf.



³ ACT Center for Youth Excellence
<actforyouth.net/youth_development/communities/collaboration.cfm>

3. DISCUSS: Frame the discussion process by explaining that the group is going to track what happens as a relationship evolves over time (x-axis) and as trust is gained or lost (y-axis). You will map the real-life relationship dynamics of participants on the poster of the Collaboration Continuum. Use the following questions to move through the discussion and draw out mappable points.

- What is a story of a time that you **gained trust** with you a person - when you felt you crossed a threshold to be able to deepen your reliance or relationship with the person (e.g. loan them money, tell them a secret)?
- What is a story of a time that you **lost trust** with someone?
 - Did you ever **regain trust** with that person?
 - If so, how? If not, why not?
- Do you have a **lower bound of turf** that you feel the need to maintain?
 - If so, what does that turf represent to you?
 - Does “sense of self” resonate with regard to the lower bound?
- Do you have an **upper bound of trust** that you would not cede to another person or persons?
 - If so, what does that trust represent to you?
 - Does your personal privacy resonate with regard to the upper bound?

A. MAP STORIES: As participants are sharing their stories, draw a line mapping trust built and lost across time on the chart. Label surges and drops in trust with key phrases or words (e.g. “did not apologize,” “betrayal,” “kept their word,” etc.).

→ Work with the group to attempt to identify if and what the upper and lower bounds are - often, the bounds are seen to represent the boundaries we have to protect our “Sense of Self” and maintain our unique “Identity.”

4. CLOSE OUT: Wrap up discussion by soliciting questions and general comments on what the group mapped together. Take the time to mention some of the key learnings or observations that came up during the process.

