

Anonymous Q&A

Large Group – 101 – Low Trust – 10 mins – szp.guide/anonymousqa

Materials

- Scrap paper/index cards
- Pen/pencils
- (*optional*) Hat or some kind of vessel to put questions in

Setup

- Pass out index cards/ scrap paper to all participants and ensure everyone has a pen/pencil

Facilitator Framing

- This activity is best when you feel comfortable fielding most questions that participants may ask. You can always skip or come back to a question that is asked as you'll have them on the cards and may not get to all the questions regardless of ability to answer them.

Goals & objectives

- Provide an opportunity for all participants to ask the questions they are most curious about and have them answered
- An opportunity to generate scenarios for the activities later in the training

Process Steps

1. Hand out scrap paper or index cards.
2. Let participants know that this section of the training is called Anonymous Q&A and they should use the paper in front of them to ask you any question they like. Let them know (if you are comfortable) that this question can be about anything. Personal, political, social, curiosity, misconceptions, random ideas, or a scenario that they would like to go over as a group. Ask them to fold their cards, then leave the cards on your desk or pass around a "hat" of some sort. Make sure you collect an index card from everyone (even if it's blank).
3. Once the questions have all been handed in, review them (quickly) and see if there are any that are on a similar topic to address all at once.
4. Read out the questions verbatim and answer them to the best of your ability. Alternatively share the questions with the group and ask for input if you think others would also have interesting thoughts/input on the questions.

Notes

It is important to wait until the vast majority (if not all) hand in their questions so that people don't feel like you will know which question is theirs because you've already begun to read through them.

If you receive a question that you are not comfortable answering - don't read it aloud. Only you and the participant that asked the question will recognize that you did not answer the question.

Alternatively, leave a number of questions unanswered and let participants know that you will get back to them via email about questions you did not get to answer. This will allow you time to discuss optional answers with others before answering the question(s) - but it is important to follow through on this.

Remember it is important not to phrase your opinions as if you speak for an entire group identity. If you're answering personally (e.g., the question is about bisexual people and you're bi), be explicit in grounding your answers in *your* experience with your identity, or *your* understandings.

Unlock the Magic

This activity can create a lot of opportunities to facilitate discussions that the participants *really* want to have. They wrote down the topic so you know at least one person is interested. As you move forward in your facilitation skills you can really allow these conversations to go and just help focus the conversations to be productive dialogue.

Reading out the questions verbatim allows you to practice your "Yes... and's" (szp.guide/yesandrul). Often participants phrase a question in a way that uses a word that sounds awkward, or in a way that others may find offensive. Practice rephrasing or correcting without shutting someone down. If someone writes, "Why do all queers go to pride?" You could read that out loud and then say, "Right. Okay, so this question is asking why do all queer people go to pride. I just added the word 'people,' in there because we encourage using the word queer as an adjective. So, why *do* all queer people go to pride?" Then answer the question. (Spoilers: they don't)