

ACTIVITY: Yes ... And

TIME: 10-20 minutes

DESIGNED FOR: Small groups

NEEDS: Butcher paper/sticky-note flipchart sheets; markers

Description: Taking a page from [improvisation methods](#), specifically the [Yes ... And theater game](#), this activity works for positive and deep listening, and for creatively building on each other's ideas while also getting groups up out of their seats when energy might be flagging.

Setup: Form small groups, ideally of 4 people each. Place large sticky-note flipchart sheets around the walls of the room. Place a medium-tipped marker at each one (choose bright, dark colors). *Optional:* A favorite way to run this exercise is to have one sheet per person. That way, everyone can take their sheet home with them, and everyone is active all the time.

Instructions:

1. Set the topic. Let everyone know that this exercise asks for big, creative thinking, but also the building on ideas of other people. Participants must accept and consider the idea the person before them has shared and build upon it.
2. Everyone takes a minute to silently brainstorm ideas in response to the topic.
3. If using groups, have them introduce themselves very quickly.
4. Ask everyone (or group) to go to a sheet of paper on the wall.
 - a. If everyone has a sheet, everyone writes down their first idea about the topic (tell them *any idea goes* — it can be big or small).
 - b. If using groups, one person goes first and writes their idea on group's sheet.
5. Give them one minute and ring a bell to let them know time's up.
 - a. If everyone has a sheet, everyone moves to the sheet to their **left**. Participants then read what the previous person wrote — and in a minute, add to that idea by writing “Yes ... And” to continue building on that idea, taking it somewhere deeper or new. Ring the bell after a minute and a bit.
 - b. If using groups, the second person comes to the group's sheet. The second person reads what the first person wrote — and in a minute, adds to that idea by writing “Yes ... And” to continue building on that idea. Ring the bell after a minute and a bit.
6. Keep moving people through the sheets, building on the ideas until there are at least 4 ideas (6-8 is even better) on each sheet.
7. Ask people to return to their original sheet and think about what happened to their idea: Are they surprised? Did they learn something? What will they take back with them?
8. If you have time for additional debrief, ask for a few people to share their experience — the highlight of the experience.