

Tips and tricks:

Creating a Welcoming Environment

Go to people rather than having them come to you

Use only first names if everyone feels comfortable with it- *it evens the playing field*

Wear nametags- *this makes it easier to pull people into conversations and helps those who are new or aren't good with names.*

Ask people questions about why they've come and what they're hoping for - *this helps people feel valued and means you don't have to guess*

Tell any new person how your meetings are run, how they can participate, who all the people are, how your program works...

Share food and drinks

Give people something to do with their hands while they sit – *fiddling can help people feel less nervous and helps them pay attention*

Give people something to do with their brains while they sit – *keep them engaged, make sure they have a role...*

Let your guard down so that others can too- *share things about yourself and your own interests if you feel comfortable doing so*

Create a safe space for yourself and others- *set group norms together, don't plan to be perfect*

Allow enough time for each conversation so that you can really listen

Recognize each person's own unique identity- *have check-ins or icebreakers that aren't about the agenda where people can share something about their life outside of your group*

Find common drivers- *identify a theme that inspires your work and create time to revisit it regularly as a group*

Other ideas:
