

The Connection Project

INTRODUCTORY PRACTICE SERIES

AR Practice Sessions

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References:

	ART International	The five practices of Authentic Relating
	Authentic Revolution	Games for Group Connection
	Ryel Kestano	Authentic Relating

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Introductory Practice Sessions

LO

An Introduction to AR

- Five practices
- Establishing a practice rhythm
- Understanding the role of context



MODULE OVERVIEW

- This is a series of 5 introductory practices, intended as a prerequisite for joining.
- The sessions are rooted in the 5 practices used by ART International plus 2
- These are 60 min sessions.
- The games are mostly fairly light, we are wanting to kickstart a positive spiral.
- The game instructions are short and concise, because people cant digest much when off reservation.
- Start with a warmup exercise, introduce the theme, then do the practice a couple of times with different partners, then harvest.
- “Two slides, two games”
- There is a notes page with each session to give facilitators food for thought on the theme of the practice.



YOUR ROLE AS HOST

- How you start the call sets a certain tone. Welcoming newcomers, asking how they got here, if they have done any AR before is a simple way to create engagement.
- Confirming they read the practice guidelines (primer, VB etc) is also a way to engage with them.
- Remember: hosts are not experts, we are all our own best teachers, Our job is to make a space where you all can practice the art of relating. If we do it right, hopefully it will be fun and connecting.
- Remember to only give theory in small small bites. You cant teach anyone anything. Let folk figure their own conclusions out from the practice, and the subsequent harvest.
- Avoid the temptation to 'helpfully' explain peoples shares. Reflect!
- Slides help the visual learners but work against relationship. Two rules, max 3 teaching slides; and one idea per slide



ZOOM TIPS

- As host rename yourself, so you aren't The Connection Project
- Make sure the waiting room is enabled (more button bottom of Participants sidebar).
- Check the breakout settings are good to go. Set the countdown timer to 60s, to give people time to say goodbye. Ending the breakout always gives the countdown timer. Some might need reminding to wait it out.
- Explain games first. Then paste whole game instruction into chat. But beware phone users cant easily access the chat. The alternative is to show the game slide. But this is early in the session, and they need to see you. Theres no easy solution to this. If there are no phone users, use the chat.
- After opening the zoom room have the first prompt ready to go so they arrive with prompt 1.
- There is no way to see which prompts you have given, so try to be extra focused with the prompts, people hate oddly timed or muddled prompts. Pasting them from this file works well enough.



MODULE CONTENTS

S1. Welcome everything, assume nothing

S2. Own and reveal your experience

S3. Honour self and other

S4. Prioritise regulation

S5. Lean into growth



SESSION PLAN (APPROX)

Settle	3	3
Welcome + warmup or C2S	7	10
Theme	10	20
Game 1	15	35
Harvest	5	40
Game 2	15	55
Harvest	5	60





1 Welcome everything, assume nothing

- Greet newcomers
 - = have you done some AR?
 - = how did you get here?
- I'm your host, this isn't a seminar,
 - = we our own best teachers.
 - = who has read the practice guidelines?



Warmup

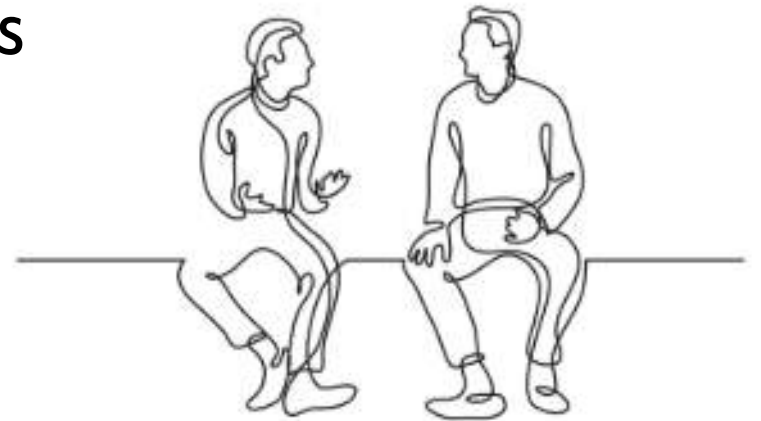
Instructions

- 1) Decide who is A and who is B
- 2) A: I came along today because... 2min
- 2) B: I heard you say (3 words).. 1min
- 3) Swap roles





- ➔ “I am terrified of people seeing that I don’t have it all together.”
- ➔ “I notice that I am a bit dysregulated.”
- ➔ “I’m hearing that X is really true for you right now, and... I also notice it feels a bit uncomfortable for me.”



Welcome everything game

Instructions

- 1) A: Something I am wrestling with lately is... 3min
- 2) B: Reflect the essence, in 1 sentence. 1min
- 3) A: What I am learning to welcome is... 3min
- 4) B: What touched me about your share was... 1min
- 5) Now switch roles



The assumptions game

Instructions

- 1) A: I have an assumption about you that...
I'm curious if that is right?
B. Hand score: 1 - 5
Keep doing this for 2min
- 4) B: The ones that resonated were... 1min
- 5) Switch roles
- 6) Debrief. What that was like... 2min



5 Practices: Welcoming Everything

NOTES

- Most of the pain is our resistance to it. Surrender to challenging experiences is what shifts them. The integration of darkness with light brings us back to wholeness
- Slow it down helps with noticing, not getting lost in story
- As I welcome my own quirks, welcoming others' quirks gets easier
- Its helps to have an idea about the kinds of things that i tend to resist welcoming.
- Particularly useful when faced with emotionally triggered people
- It stops me judging, fixing, rescuing, advising
- Welcoming an experience is more important than the truth of stories. In AR we value connection over being right, Agreeing to disagree is connection!
- Porges: do i feel good, of do i feel bad
- In AR two opposite things can both be true
- The game is about being confidently vulnerable. There are times when we are a hot mess, Theres a time and place for that. But this is not that



5 Practices: Assume nothing

NOTES

- Our brain is an assumption making machine. We assume as a way to create predictability.
- We create stories about people that we just met, Some assumptions are right, some are wrong
- Is my story based on what my actual experience in this moment. Or, is it based on my values, beliefs, and past experiences?
- Part of exploring assumption is self transparency, shining some light on my beliefs, biases, patterns, my values, needs and desires
- To what extent do I project those things I repress in myself upon others (mirrors). Eg if i see someone taking up too much space or whatever is it that fear of that same quality within me that i'm just repressing
- Setting context is helpful to avoiding assumption
- Seeking permission is also relevant
- AR: shining some light on the unwritten rules of relating, making the implicit explicit
- AR traps:
 - checking assumptions is especially important online where there are less non-verbals
 - beware taking for granted how much someone might choose to reveal, or relate
- By not revealing assumptions: we are perpetuating the dynamic of separation. we are laying the foundations for conflict





2 Reveal and own *your* experience

- = anyone new?
- = 2 slides, 2 games
- = Today we will begin with a C2S



Connect to self

Instructions:

- 1) Guided grounding
- 2) Direct your attention from the outer world to your inner world
- 3) What is it like to me? Just noticing
- 4) 4min



What's it like to be me just now?

Body sensations

What is unspoken or unacknowledged?

Lean toward the relational level of conversation

If I want to be seen, I have to show myself!

~~Radical honesty~~



BENEFITS

- It widens our surface of connection
- Revealing creates permission for others to do the same.
- Naming can be regulating
- Creates a rich space of shared exploration



The what, how, why game

- 1) A: My day has been... 2min
- 2) B: Reflect in one sentence. 1min
- 3) A: Something I am longing for is... 2min
- 4) B: Reflect their non-verbals. 1min
- 5) A: Something I really believe in is... 2min
- 6) B: Reflect their why: What's important to you is...
1min
- 7) Now switch roles



The noticing game

Instructions:

- 1) Use stems:
 - Being here with you now, i notice...
 - Hearing that i notice...
- 2) Go back and forth for 8min
- 3) Debrief (what was that like) 2 min



5 Practices: Reveal your experience

NOTES

- “As we practice and develop, revealing what we’re working on in ourselves is very useful. It humanizes us when we can see each other as fallible and with work to do. Rather than assuming and/or naming what others are working on, we encourage you to name what’s unfolding for you”. - Ryel Kestano
- Freedom, is when you have nothing left to hide. — Susan Campbell
- Important: only share what you can hold
- This is another way of making the implicit explicit
- Talking out loud can helps us wiggle at what is not only unspoken but unconscious
- Authenticity is not absolute
- When in doubt is my share in the service of connection
- Another game that can work here is 3 levels of conversation / what, how, why



5 Practices: Own your experience

NOTES

- Life and relationships are unbelievably rich in nuance and complexity
- Of which at any one time we can only grasp so much
- Its easy to fall prey to thinking our experience is everyones experience
- Practice taking responsibility for our own experience
- “Explore it, find the source of it, let it guide me into knowing myself as deeply and fully as possible”.
- Focusing on our stuff, means we can allow others to have their own experience
- Which means we can let go of care taking
- The PVT caveat is that we have a duty of care
- Not getting lost in my experience
- “Contained, intentional”





3

Honour self, honour other

- Welcome chit chat , any one new?
- Name facilitator's role and the theme



C2S

Instructions:

- 1) Guided breathwork exercise
- 2) Transfer your attention from the outer world to the inner world
- 3) 5min





Honour self

My needs

Expressing my truth

Honour other

Others' needs

Listening to get their world



Honour self

- Notice and name feeling
- Ask for what i want
- Say no, if need be
- Share only what i can hold



Honour self

- Notice and name feeling
- Ask for what i want
- Say no, if need be
- Share only what i can hold

Honour other

- Welcoming what is alive in them
- Not advising, fixing or explaining
- Seek consent
- Confidentiality



The curiosity game

Instructions:

- 1) A: What do you love about {XYZ}...
B: Either answer briefly, or PASS.
Do this for 6 min
- 2) Prepare to switch roles...
- 3) Now switch roles
- 4) Debrief 2min



The self and other game

Instructions:

- 1) A: Ways I'm strong at honor self are... 3min
- 2) B: Reflect using 3 words. 1min
- 3) Switch roles and repeat
- 4) A: Ways I'm strong at honor other are... 3min
- 5) B: Reflect using 3 words.
What I get about you is... 1 min
- 6) Switch roles and repeat



5 Practices: Honor self and other

NOTES

- People often have a tendency to do one more than the other, humility and dignity, listening and speaking, Taking up too much space, and making too much space for others, co-dependency and narcissism
- This is not an easy thing to own or notice, it goes very deep into our psyche
- We want to create opportunities where participants can feel their way into their bias, and try to figure out a solution to the dilemma
- The curiosity game is a way to do both at the same time. What do i want to know, what does the other enjoy talking about? Its a lighter game before the more serious game after it.
- Self and other game is about self reflection and testing the water sharing vulnerably. Its as close as we get to shadow work at this practice level.
- Equanimity: Consider both self and other, Equally, and at the same time. Lean in or lean back, or upright.
- Honoring self means we dont have to caretake. let them ask for help This overturns the be nice rule of society.
- What is the difference between caretaking and caring/kind/thoughtful?





4

Prioritize Regulation

- Welcome chit chat, any new folk?
- If so how did they get here, and have they done some AR?
- Name my role and the theme



C2S

Instructions:

- 1) Guided breathwork exercise
- 2) Transfer your attention from the outer world to the inner world
- 3) Focus on your breath
- 4) 4min



~~Learning~~

~~Thinking~~

~~Curiosity~~

~~Creativity~~

~~Collaboration~~



~~Offer cues of safety!~~

~~Communication~~



Non-verbals ✓

Appreciation ✓

Sensation, breath,
movement ✓

Reciprocity ✓



Seek support,
co-regulation ✓

Slow it down ✓

Timeout,
distraction ✓



The what's alive game

Instructions:

- 1) A: "What's alive is..." (go slow) 3min
- 2) B: Reflect essence and non-verbals, 1min
- 3) A: Take a couple breaths.
"And..." 3min
- 4) B: What it was like for me to listen... 1min
- 5) Enjoy a stretch, then switch roles
- 6) Use the countdown timer to find a way to say goodbye.



Angels in my closet

Instructions:

- 1) A: A skill, goal, or milestone that I have achieved lately is... 4min
- 2) B: Reflect the essence. 1min
What i loved about your share was... 1min
- 3) Now switch roles and repeat



5 Practices: Prioritise regulation

NOTES

- Regulation is the place we call home, where we are present, connected, content
- It is not about always staying regulated, but becoming aware when we are dysregulated
- We cant keep from getting upset. Because of our pasts each of us have certain things that trigger us.
- Does this mean that we cant exchange challenging feedback , no it doesnt. So long as we maintain a bias strongly in favor of positive feedback, gottman 20:1 ratio
- “Safety is the treatment” is a polyvagal idea. That we dont need anxiety drugs or therapy, but creating safe social spaces. Good therapy does this, but so can we.
- From PVT, prioritising regulation implies prioritising connection. For mammals the group is where we find true safety. Trauma gets in the way of this, hence the anxiety, its a double bind.
- Neuroception: By becoming aware of the nonverbals we emit, and the impact of others nonverbals we can start to rebuild the connection=safety association
- A vision and culture of co-creating safe(r) relational spaces





5

Lean into growth

- Welcome chit chat
- Briefly summarize the point of practice
 - = muscle memory
 - = setting our own context



“ You need someone else to help illuminate your relational blindspots, you need someone who is there to say, what was that. That there.

- Jordan Allen



- Can i try getting less lost in my story?
- Can i embrace connection over self-sufficiency?
- Can i get more comfortable in discomfort?
- Can i say what i want in a non-attached way?
- Can i learn to love repairing when i mess up?



The identity game

Instructions:

- 1) A: Who I am is... 2min
- 2) B: Reflect the essence 1min
- 3) A: How i feel about who i am is... 2min
- 4) B: Reflect the essence 1min
- 5) A: What it's like to tell you this is.... 2min
- 6) B: What touched me about your share.... 1min
- 7) Now switch roles and repeat all 3 parts
- 8) Debrief 1min



Choose your own adventure

Instructions:

- 1) A: Propose, and seek buy in, for a game
- 2) B: Consent (or negotiate).
- 3) 2min to negotiate, 5min to play the game
- 4) Switch roles
- 5) How was that to do? 2min

Context setting



5 Practices: Lean into growth

NOTES

- This comes from AR-Go's commit to growth tenet, but it also speaks to the integral theory idea that the change is the nature of the cosmos
- Growth mindset – Carol Dweck
- ART terms the phrase: lean into my edge.
- Eg; If i tend to speak often, try being quiet. If I am shy, try taking up some space.
- Some more growth themes are:
- Speaking out needs. Holding boundaries. Admitting mistakes.
- Having positive regard, even if theres dissonance
- Wearing our identities lightly
- Choose your own adventure is a game that integrates several types of AR skillset. You get to set context. You get to say what you want. You get to say yes or no. You get to speak and listen. You get to hold diversity. You get to be in connection in a reciprocal way.
- BTW, “lean in” comes from the feminist movement, it originally was a call to women to be more assertive.



