

ACTIVITY: REALIZING GRACIOUS SPACE

Defining Gracious Space and exploring its different elements is crucial to incorporating Gracious Space into your group's interactions. However, to be able to create true Gracious Space within your group, members must evaluate the ways in which gifts of Gracious Space are already in play within the group's dynamics.

OVERVIEW

This activity is designed to be used in tandem with the previous activity, **Defining Gracious Space**. It identifies the gifts of Gracious Space that already exist within your group.

OBJECTIVES

- To help participants identify the aspects of Gracious Space they already do well, and those they would like to work on
- To make participants accountable for bringing their gifts of Gracious Space to the group
- To identify aspects of Gracious Space on which your group can improve

TIME REQUIRED

Approximately 30 minutes

SUPPLIES

For this activity, you'll need copies of **Handout 4A** for all participants.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Setting the context	3 min	<p>Say to the group, "We just defined the four elements of Gracious Space and what we mean by Gracious Space for our gathering. Now we want to identify some of the gifts we bring to this gathering."</p> <p>Pass out Handout 4A. Tell the group, "This list of characteristics was generated from the responses of those who participated in past Gracious Space seminars. It contains words used by different people to describe what helps them create Gracious Space."</p>	Handout 4A
Step 2: Identifying individual strengths	10 min	<p>When everyone has a copy of the handout, ask group members to look over the list on their own.</p> <p>Then ask them to "circle all those items you feel comfortable and competent with. How do you already bring Gracious Space to your leadership and interactions with others and yourself? Put a star next to the items that are difficult for you. These are the areas you may want to work on to bring Gracious Space more fully into your life."</p>	<p>Flip chart</p> <p>Markers</p>

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WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 2: Identifying individual strengths (cont.)	3 min	Next say, “Now underline a few of the characteristics that you believe you need to receive from others in order to be your best.” Give a personal example, such as: “For example, I need to talk with others to think through some of my ideas. When I first have a thought, it’s often half-baked; I may not even be sure if I believe it yet myself. What I need from others is for them to be patient and listen to my idea without being judgmental or defensive. I need them to ask questions to help me finish ‘baking’ my thought.”	
Step 3: Pairing up	10 min	Ask that group members find a partner and share a few highlights from their assessments. Tell them to “identify one or two items from the list of things you do well and make a commitment to bring those into the room today. Identify one that you want to work on and share that with your partner.”	
Step 4: Bringing it back to the whole	5 min	Tell the group, “Let’s bring back your insights to the full group. I want to invite you to be accountable to yourself for bringing one or two of the aspects of Gracious Space you’re good at into work or family – wherever Gracious Space is needed. This is an opportunity for you to name one aspect you promise to bring into the room today to help build Gracious Space for this group.”	
Step 5: Reflecting	5 min	Close with a few comments about the activity: “We have many strengths and gifts in this group. Thank you for sharing them. As we experience the rest of our time together, I also want to invite you to work on the items you identified as difficult. Focus on those, and seek opportunities to experiment with them. This will enable you to expand your Gracious Space repertoire. You might want to commit to work on one of these for a month and see what happens. Thank you for your time. Are there any final questions?”	

HANDOUT 4A: GRACIOUS SPACE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Gracious Space is a spirit and setting where we invite the stranger and learn in public.

Below is a list of values and behaviors that are helpful when creating Gracious Space.

Circle those you feel competent with. **Star** those that represent a development opportunity. Discuss with others your strengths and development opportunities with respect to creating Gracious Space.

- Establishing norms
- Interjecting humor or fun
- Affirming others
- Being open to feedback
- Accepting of different perspectives and ideas
- Innovating approaches
- Being present
- Being aware of my impact on others
- Assuming others' best intentions
- Being intentional
- Being reliable
- Trusting others
- Being trustworthy
- Willing to change my mind
- Willing to slow down
- Reflecting on assumptions
- Actively seeking others' opinions
- Being curious
- Asking open-ended questions
- Discerning patterns emerging from a group discussion
- Learning and sharing rather than just advocating
- Listening deeply
- Being willing to be influenced
- Being comfortable receiving lots of questions
- Being comfortable not knowing
- Being able to detach from outcomes
- Being collaborative
- Being able to stop, reassess, and redirect
- Being curious about differences
- Being open to different and conflicting views
- Welcoming others not in my comfort zone
- Being compassionate
- Empowering others
- Being authentic
- Feeling comfortable with community wisdom
- Building community
- Bridging boundaries
- Extending respect to everyone
- Sharing power
- Seeing everyone as gifted and capable
- Holding off on judgment
- Steering conflict toward positive, creative results

