

Games for Civic Renewal

Author(s): Joshua Miller, Sarah Shugars and Daniel Levine

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# Games for Civic Renewal

JOSHUA MILLER, SARAH SHUGARS,  
AND DANIEL LEVINE

## Abstract

*In this article, we summarize the first civic games contest, its rules and process, and the results. We describe civics, games, and argue that there is a fruitful intersection to be had between these two fields. Finally, we introduce the winning games.*

**Keywords:** *games, civics, democracy, refugees, community organizing, dialogue and deliberations, game theory, game design, contest*

A few years ago, we hatched a plan to put game designers to work thinking about civic engagement. We let the idea stew for a while, and it continued to seem viable. So last year, we launched a small contest: with judges drawn from academic and professional game design as well as civic theory, and a prize supported by Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center, we launched the first contest with a simple announcement on *The Good Society's* website and a small event at Dreamation, a game convention in New Jersey.

The three of us are loyal members of both game design and civic engagement communities, and so the connections seemed natural to us. Yet there were many questions: why—and how—should game designers design for civics? Why does civics need games? What makes a game civic, and not merely *about* civics? We started from two fundamental ideas: (a) games can

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not only provide welcome distraction in dark times but also help us solve our problems; and (b) the heart of democracy is not just its institutions, but the convictions, skills, and commitment of its citizens.

Through this civic games contest, we hope to inaugurate a fruitful period of cross-pollination between game designers and civics practitioners. We are excited to see what happens as these two communities continue to work and learn together.

## I. Civics for Game Designers

Dewey writes that democracy is a way of living; a way of engaging deeply in the shared endeavor of living together. We argue that civics is an expansive conception of politics, understood as a response to questions like: “How can we make democracy work like it should?” or “How can we enhance citizens’ abilities to act equally as co-creators of our shared world?” Alternatively, the task of designing effective, positive institutions could be left to experts. There are good reasons for such an approach: experts certainly have expertise, and—as Walter Lippmann points out—people only have so much bandwidth and interest. We can’t all be an expert in everything.

But to turn everything over to designated experts, who themselves suffer from limited bandwidth and competing interests, invites catastrophic failure; divorcing “expertise” from the knowledge and experience of the people. Our society is fundamentally *ours*. It is our role and our duty as citizens to continually co-create it together. That’s how we spell out what it means to live democratically. That’s what we think it means to be a citizen: not a legal status, but the perpetual work of seriously asking and collaboratively responding to the question: “What should *we* do?” Civic activities include deliberation, community organizing, social entrepreneurship, protest, and—in a pinch!—electoral politics.

Too often, we neglect our agency in the realm of civic engagement. We put our power into the hands of experts because we doubt our ability to see, understand, or solve our collective challenges. A civic game, then, is one which actively seeks to support citizen players with relevant facts, values, or strategies – helping them to see or experience an injustice they hadn’t fully recognized or empowering them *as* citizens; as actors fully capable of having a collective impact on the world around them.

While any type of game could be civic, the connection is perhaps most clearly seen with roleplaying games (RPGs and LARPs, live action roleplaying games). These games are fundamentally about co-creating a shared

world. It doesn't matter whether characters are cooperative or antagonistic, because the players work together to tell and discover the story. The experience is emergent—something is created that didn't exist before and could not be predicted or detailed in advance; the unique product of a shared endeavor. These games remind us of our collective power and our individual agency. They teach us how to be citizens.

But what makes a game civic? Given the vast field of game theory beyond the prisoner's dilemma, we won't attempt to enumerate the many different ways in which a game can be civic. We restrict ourselves instead to sharing a few high-level examples:

1. A game can teach a civic skill.
2. A game can raise awareness of a civic issue.
3. A game can produce a civic experience.
4. A game can promote a civic cause.
5. A game can encourage engagement in a civic activity.

## II. Game Design for Civic Theorists and Practitioners

While its roots and lessons have faded from popular imagination, the most popular game in the world, *Monopoly*, began as a “civic” game. Its predecessor, Elizabeth Magie's *The Landlord's Game*, aimed to convey the basic injustice of rentier capitalism and promote the economic ideas of the utopian reformer Henry George. It did so through two modes of game play: a “monopolist” rule set sought to cultivate a sense of injustice by rewarding players who grabbed land while forcing the less fortunate out of the game. The “anti-monopolist” rule set, on the other hand, was built around the success of all players, thus illustrating the benefits of alternative economic systems. Notably, the “monopolist” rule set was not intended to be *fun*. In fact, the monotony most people experience while playing the modern incarnation of the game was intended to be the core civic lesson. The game is rigged to favor those with early luck; a game design approach meant to instill the conviction that we should avoid actual monopolies and the unfair economic practices that lead to them.

More recent attempts to incentivize everyday tasks by making them more fun through “gamification” provides another possible conception of civic game design. The FitBit, for instance, allows you to compete to walk more than friends and family. This is a strange kind of game: the activity is walking, but the “gamification” and challenges are designed to cause us to walk more because we enjoy incentives even when we know they're

artificial. Civic “gamification” might encourage calling and writing one’s political representatives (like the mobile application “5 Calls”), or attending protests and demonstrations.

It is difficult to say a priori just how much “fun” a civic game must be in order for it to be successful. People generally prefer to play fun games, making “unfun” a recipe for reduced impact that can be hard to overcome. However, there are reasonable critiques of civic games at all ends of the “fun” spectrum. Gamified political activity may lose some of its salience if people engage in it only for the purpose of securing some sort of “civic points.” On the other hand, the civic lessons of a game like Monopoly—while intended to be of deep educational value—may be too subtle for the mass of players to reflect upon in a civic way. In short, not all civic games will be fun, though that’s one of the categories against which they can be judged.

Another category of civic game encourage players as civic agents within the game world. We think that civics is fundamentally about finding ways for people to take an ownership-stake in their shared world, which is closely tied to the idea that there are certain kinds of commonly held resources that encourage civic engagement. Increasingly the “commons” is being depleted, as more and more things become purely private, controlled by large corporations. This makes us less efficacious as citizens because we practice politics less, instead substituting the norms of the marketplace, the school, or the church.

In an essay Elinor Ostrom wrote for *Scandinavian Political Studies*, “Crowding Out Citizenship,” she argues that current public policy is based on a theory of collective inaction, which assumes that most citizens are rational actors unable to sacrifice their individual self-interest in pursuit of the public good. Moreover, collective inaction theories assume that citizens lack sufficient knowledge to design appropriate institutions on their own, so this work must be left up to experts.

By centralizing institutional design and reserving meaningful contributions for experts, we will tend to “crowd out” the motivations that make it possible for citizens to act in pro-social and collaborative ways. The study of civic agency aims to reverse the “crowding out” effect. Instead, local self-managed communities arrange to “crowd in” pro-social attitudes and expertise. Our knowledge and power as citizens is weakest when external interventions render us irrelevant. Unsurprisingly, the opposite is also true: when we are forced to manage our affairs together, we develop the wisdom and the strength to do so.

Perhaps we can combat this by increasing the responsible usage of common-pool resources. (A standard tension or contradiction in the literature is that common-pool resources can be *over-used*, yet they require users

to survive and thrive!) For instance, Wikipedia is a massive common-pool resource whose use tends to encourage its expansion. In gaming, there is a similar kind of open-source movement around games that can be “hacked” or altered for new purposes. The most famous example of this is probably OSR (Old School Revival) *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Pathfinder*. Both take advantage of the limits on copyright law (you can’t copyright rules) or open-sourced licensing inside a familiar “operating system” to create new things.

A less famous example is the game *Apocalypse World*. The game itself encourages less of a hierarchy between the storyteller role (the Game Master or Master of Ceremonies) and the players, as well as creating more opportunities for collaborative storytelling among the players themselves in a post-apocalyptic world where the close bonds of community are paramount to survival.

“Open source” game systems have often supported the development of communities of play and design that are a little less white, a little less male, and a little less hetero- and cis-normative. For example, literally dozens of different games have been created within the deliberately simple “Powered by the Apocalypse” system created by Vincent and Meguey Baker. These include Avery Alders queered apocalypse game *Dream Askew* and *Bluebeard’s Bride*, a feminist horror game created by Whitney “Strix” Beltran, Marissa Kelly, and Sara Richardson. In the “OSR,” designers have created LGBT-friendly content that goes beyond the Tolkein-derived tropes common in *Dungeons & Dragons*, such as Kiel Chenier’s *Burlesque House Siege*, created in response to the Orlando Pulse nightclub murders.

### III. Civic Games

A civic game is any game that, in some way, aims to promote or enhance people’s ability to engage with the social and political world around them. They may be played in a variety of venues: we primarily envisioned these games played among a group of friends, but they may also be played within classrooms or organizations. Civics can be about working with and within formal structures of government, but it can also be about reforming or opposing injustice, or about being a member of a community in other ways. For the purposes of the contest, we welcomed games that address any aspect of civics, including:

- Personal: having moral integrity, taking responsibility for one’s actions, reflecting on one’s personal morality

- Communal: openness to dialogue, communal service (e.g., charitable work, helping neighbors), involvement in community organizations (e.g., religious institutions, social clubs)
- Political: engagement with or challenge to formal political structures (e.g., advocacy, protest, running for office, voting, revolution)

There are many ways that a game could address one or more of these themes. For this contest, we are interested in seeing examples across three categories of games, that we're calling **awareness-raising**, **skill-building**, and **inherently political**. We picked a winner in each category.

### *Awareness-Raising*

Perhaps the most common type of civic-minded game found among existing games is what we might call awareness-raising games. These are games that educate their players about some important aspect of civic life—they may be historical games that ask player to imagine themselves into a moment political importance, or they may call attention to a contemporary political problem.

There are a lot of very good games out there that fall primarily into the “awareness-raising” category. For example, Moyra Turkington’s *Against the Grain* asks players to take on the roles of managers and workers in a Baltimore factory producing materials for World War II, on the eve of a wildcat strike protesting the appointment of the factory’s first Black inspector. Playing the game can help players understand the dynamics of race and labor relations in the mid-20th-century U.S.. It may also have aspects of a “skill-building” game, since it encourages players to build empathy for people unlike themselves, or who may seem unlikeable or to hold odious political views.

### *Skill-Building*

A different approach, which we call skill-building, aims to better prepare the players to take political action outside of the game—a game that, for example, simulated canvassing for a political candidate and thereby made players more comfortable actually doing it, would fall into this category. Despite the term “skill,” we understand this category to include games that build dispositions to take political action as well—such as games that build empathy for people experiencing some problem, and make the players more likely to act to alleviate it.

*Nomic* was designed by Peter Suber to illustrate a conceptual puzzle about legal systems that direct and constrain their own amendment: “Nomic is a

game in which changing the rules is a move. In that respect it differs from almost every other game. The primary activity of *Nomic* is proposing changes in the rules, debating the wisdom of changing them in that way, voting on the changes, deciding what can and cannot be done afterwards, and doing it. Even this core of the game, of course, can be changed.” *Nomic* has many elements that teach and build the skills of designing and debating social rules. It may also have an awareness-raising component, of course: serious games of *Nomic* usually begin with democratic voting procedures but often end undemocratic.

The National Coalition for Deliberation and Dialogue maintains a list of participatory practices<sup>1</sup> for which practitioners might need to build their skills based on an earlier “Citizen Science Toolbox” of Process Arts.<sup>2</sup>

### *Inherently Political*

Finally, some games might be inherently political themselves, where playing the game *is* an act of civic engagement. A simple example would be “gami-fying” voting, recycling, or participation in local governance, giving points for those activities that could then be used for some in-game purpose.

## IV. Applications of Civic Games

Games have been incorporated into real-world political processes such as such as participatory budgeting. Most famously implemented in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, this process in that case allowed ordinary citizens to identify, discuss, and ultimately set budget priorities for \$200 million in construction and service projects in the city. Many American cities are also experimenting with participatory budgeting, including New York City, Boston, and San Francisco. In 2011, community leaders in San Jose, CA, were invited to an event to play a budget-negotiation game, the results of which were then used by the city government in making actual budget decisions—meaning that, at least in this case, playing the game was an inherently political act with real-world impact.

## V. The Winners of the 2017 Contest

Our judges, a mix of academics and game designers, played the games, and made their decisions. There were several strong contenders in every category. Each of the winners was invited to the 2017 Frontiers of Democracy Conference, where they presented their efforts.

*Awareness-raising: Morgan Davie's "Refuge"*

*Refuge* is a storytelling game for 2 to 4 people. Players become refugees as they struggle to create new lives for themselves in an unfamiliar land. What might it be like to flee your home to a new land? It is a powerful testament to what games with simple rules can do to put us in the shoes of those who have lost almost everything. This game is perhaps best played among a small group of friends interested in collaboratively exploring a variant life experience.

*Skill-building: Shawn Roske's "Last Item on the Agenda"*

*Last Item* is a LARP (a live-action role-playing game) for 4 to 6 people. The players are staffers at a group home for the developmentally disabled, struggling to discuss the sexuality of the residents. The game design creates a frustrating and difficult matter for deliberation, assigns roles to different players guaranteed to lead to conflict, and then asks these players to create a clear corporate policy to deal with the matter. This game was a contender for awareness-raising, but ultimately the mechanics make it particularly powerful as a tool for building deliberative skills. This game could be played among a group of friends or among colleagues facing deliberative challenges on any issue.

*Inherently Political: Mike Capron's "Long-Term Community Organizing, Abridged"*

This is a simulation game for at least 8 people. It creates an abridged format for "one-on-one" meetings to show how such meetings can be used to create affinity groups that can work together to plan events and collective actions. It was a strong contender for "skill-building," but the judges decided that if you played this game with people you don't know, you'd probably end up in a political action network. This game is perhaps ideally played in settings directly intended to build the skills of community organizing and participating in one-on-one conversations.

## Appendix A: Refuge

By Morgan Davie ([morgan@taleturn.com](mailto:morgan@taleturn.com))

This is a storytelling game for 2 to 4 people. Players become refugees as they struggle to create new lives for themselves in an unfamiliar land.

## I. Preparing to play

Gather paper, pens or pencils and a few ordinary six-sided dice. Then explain the following:

- Together we play an incomplete family from a place we'll call Oldhome, who become refugees and settle in a place we'll call Newlandia.
- Our family has been given a place to live. Younger refugees are in school, adults are in language classes. We have some support, but we will have to figure most things out for ourselves.
- Oldhome is a lot like right here, where we are playing in the real world. Bad things happened there, but we'll leave them vague and undefined as we play.
- Newlandia has a different language, different food, and different ways of doing even simple everyday things. Oldhome language and culture are little known.

### Communication

Explain the two special rules for communication:

- Whenever your refugee talks with someone from Newlandia, **just describe**. The active player and the guide give simple descriptions of what is being said without using the exact words, like a narrator giving a summary: "I tell John I've been looking for him." / "He asks why."
- Whenever your refugee talks with a fellow refugee from Oldhome, **say everything**. This means the active player and the guide both say the exact words their refugees are using, like actors performing on stage: "Hey John! I was looking for you." / "Oh really? What's up?"

### Peace

How difficult was your journey, and how heavily does it weigh on you?

- The player born furthest from here chooses another player and a category to divide their refugees:
  - Faith, Generation, Gender, Sexual orientation, Route taken from Oldhome to Newlandia

- Next they roll a die and record the result for their refugee. The other refugee takes whichever number would bring the total to 7 (e.g. if the first player rolled a 5, the second would take a 2).
- Finally, the other player decides how the category applies for their refugee: how old are they? What is their gender? The first player then decides for their refugee, making sure to be different.

Repeat this process for the next player on the left. Keep going until every refugee has two results. Add them, then find the total on this table and record your PEACE.

11-12 You were lucky. Your journey was difficult but safe. Your PEACE is +3

9-10 Your journey was hard and exhausting, but you didn't encounter the cruelty and inhumanity that others did. Your PEACE is +2.

6-8 You went through nasty and harrowing times on your way here. These experiences stay with you. Your PEACE is +1.

2-5 Becoming a refugee was a horrific experience, and you are haunted by some of the worst moments. Your PEACE is +0.

### *Fluency*

How fluent are you in Newlandian ways?

- The oldest player rolls a die on behalf of the whole family. Everyone takes the result.
  - A high number indicates the refugees find Newlandia somewhat similar to Oldhome.
  - A low number indicates many differences. Newlandian life is a constant challenge.
- Each refugee rolls a second die for their personal capability.
  - A high number means you are ready for Newlandia. Maybe you're open-minded, or highly educated, or you have a helpful philosophy of life.
  - A low number means that you will not have an easy time. Perhaps you are stuck in your ways, or very traditional, or you find Newlandia confrontational or upsetting.
- Add the numbers and find the result on this table:
  - 11-12 You have everything going for you. Newlandia isn't so different, and you are confident of your future. Your FLUENCY is +3

- 9-10 You have some work to do before you feel comfortable in Newlandia, but you think you'll be okay. Your FLUENCY is +2
- 6-8 You feel like it will be a long journey before you feel comfortable in Newlandia, if you ever will. Your FLUENCY is +1
- 2-5 Fitting into Newlandia is challenging, and every day is a battle. Your FLUENCY is 0

### *Heart*

How strong is your connection to other Oldhome refugees?

- Each refugee determines their refugee's symbolic connection to Oldhome.
  - Subtract your Fluency and Heart from 6, giving a result from 6 to 0.
  - Higher numbers mean fellow refugees see you as representative of their struggles.
- Each refugee now rolls a second die for their personal charisma.
  - Higher numbers mean you are easy to like and people listen to you.
  - Lower numbers mean you are socially awkward or reserved.
- Add the Numbers together and find the total below:
  - 11-12 You are a much-loved member of the Oldhome community, and people expect much from you. Your HEART is +3
  - 9-10 You are an important part of the community. Your HEART is +2
  - 6-8 You are part of the community, but not central to it. Your HEART is +1
  - 2-5 You feel distant from the community. Your HEART is 0

### *Stress, Alienation and Disconnection*

Each refugee has three other numerical scores:

- Stress: Roll a dice and add three. This is your starting Stress.
- Disconnection: this indicates how close you feel to your culture. Your starting Disconnection is 0.
- Alienation: this reflects how welcome you feel in Newlandia. Your starting Alienation is 0.

## 2. Creating the family

### *Who are you?*

Talk together about how your refugees make a family and share ideas about what kind of people you are.

- Your family is probably incomplete. This is common among refugee families.
- Name your refugee after someone from your earliest school days.

### *Ambitions*

Invent an ambition for your refugee. Your ambition can be grandiose or humble, but you must interact with Newlandian society to achieve it.

Example ambitions:

- Work as a doctor here, like I did back home.
- Get a Newlandian boyfriend.
- Establish a garden that can feed our family.

### *Goals*

Think of some possible goals for your refugee to pursue this week. A goal is a step on the path to your ambition. It might be a small and humble step, but it is important to you.

Example goals:

- Complete an application for my medical degree to be recognised here.
- Get invited to a popular boy's party.
- Clear junk out of the garden area.

### *Tasks*

Decide some tasks that face your refugees this week. Decide one for each refugee, and one additional task that you can assign during the warm-up scene.

Example tasks:

- Tell the neighbours to be more considerate with their music at night.
- Get the oven fixed.
- Get a banking fee reversed.

### *Warm-up scene*

The game begins with a simple scene of the refugees sharing a meal. Starting with the eldest refugee, everyone describes one thing about the scene.

- Where you are having your meal? (At home? Outside? At a cheap restaurant?)
- What do you see around you? (Unfamiliar things? Wealth? Poverty?)
- What are you eating? (Oldhome food? Newlandian food?)

Following the communication rules, the eldest refugee will begin the conversation by asking other family members about their plans for the week ahead.

- Continue the conversation, talking as a family about your goals and tasks.
- Listen to everyone else. Show how your refugee feels about the plans and choice of others.

Once everyone has chosen a goal, and the “extra” task has been assigned, end the scene, and begin play.

### 3. Playing days

We follow the refugees through five days in their Newlandian lives.

#### *Refresh actions*

Each day, every refugee has an allowance of *two actions* which they fit around the chores, classes and responsibilities that take up much of their time.

#### *Assign guides*

Every day you will also be a *guide* for one other refugee. If you have three or four players, rotate guide assignments daily, and extra players are *helpers* when needed.

#### *Tasks & Troubles*

Every Guide rolls one die for *Tasks & Troubles* to introduce while guiding that day. (Sometimes you will be instructed to roll more than one, which could mean multiple tasks or troubles that day.)

- 1-2: The refugee encounters trouble.
- 3-4: Nothing unusual.
- 5-6: The refugee must accept a new task.

The guide decides on a task or trouble when introducing it into a scene. (They can discuss ideas with helpers, or even with the refugee player, if they wish.)

#### *Start taking turns*

The player who was born furthest away takes the first turn. Play then passes around the table. (As an option, you could follow the day's events in order, jumping around between refugees as needed.)

After every refugee has used both actions, and all tasks and troubles are introduced, end the day.

#### *Ending the day*

At the end of the day, the family get to talk to each other. A refugee can do any of the following:

- Transfer a task to another willing refugee.
- Transfer one (and only one) point of stress to another willing refugee.

#### *Sleeping through the night*

When your refugee try to sleep, roll two dice and add your Peace score. Then add your Stress score to your number of unfinished Tasks and compare:

- *Resting roll plus Peace is higher:* You sleep through the night.
- *Equal:* Your sleep is uneasy. Increase your Stress by one. Your Fluency and Heart scores have a maximum of +1 for tomorrow.
- *Stress plus tasks is higher:* You can hardly sleep. Increase your Stress by two. Your Fluency and Heart scores have a maximum of +0 for tomorrow.

## 4. Playing turns

#### *Choosing actions*

The player chooses one action for their turn:

- *Venture:* the refugee leaves their comfort zone and tries to get something done in Newlandian society, pursuing their goal or trying to complete a task.

- *Observe*: the refugee quietly moves around the edges of Newlandian society, learning how to get things done.
- *Community*: the refugee spends time with the Oldhome community, to reduce stress, help others, or seek help of their own.
- *Escape*: the refugee hides away from all kinds of interactions.

### Questions and answers

When they choose an action, the refugee player will give the guide some information about where they are and what they are doing. The guide then asks questions to fill out the scene.

- The refugee player does most of the work as they answer the guide's questions. They will imagine the scene and describe what happens. They can always pass on a question if they aren't sure.
- The guide is welcome to ask challenging or loaded questions that spin the scene in unexpected directions: "Why do you start crying?" Or "Why do you slip over, and who sees you fall?"
- Two or three questions will often be enough to get a good picture of a scene.

Work together to establish what happens. Helpers can step in with suggestions or advice.

Example questions:

- What does the office look like?
- What is bothering you this morning?
- Who do you meet at the supermarket?

### Playing scenes

Many turns will not be complete with just questions and answers. Often you will need to play through the moment-to-moment detail of a scene. Venture actions will almost always require at least a short scene.

- The guide takes over the work of imagining and describing the situation. The refugee player describes only what their refugee says and does.
- Follow the communication rules, and invoke any special interaction rules as given under the different action types. The guide speaks for all characters the refugee meets. (Helpers can be assigned to help here too.)

- The scene continues until either player, or a helper, calls it to an end. In particular, after an interaction roll is made, start looking to end the scene.

### Interpreting interaction rolls

After an interaction roll, keep playing the scene to show what happens to the refugee. The refugee player makes the final decision about what happens in the scene and what a roll outcome means.

Sometimes a fantastic roll will allow a refugee to operate smoothly in the foreign culture of Newlandia, but they will still fail to get what they actually want.

### *Interruptions*

If the guide needs to interrupt the day with a new task or trouble, they can do this at any time. New tasks or troubles can be added during or after a turn, or at any other time as appropriate.

### New Tasks

Unlike the normal run of play where the refugee player does most of the creative work, the Guide will come up with a problem and introduce it to the refugee. The refugee player can define the exact task needed to deal with the problem.

### Troubles

Refugees are outsiders, and Newlandia offers plenty of unpleasantness for those who look different or those who haven't learned when to be wary. Incidents of rudeness, exploitation and abuse will occur.

As with new tasks, the Guide will decide on a trouble and introduce it, asking questions of the refugee to establish how they respond. There is no need to go into detail on the troubling experience.

At the end of the interaction, increase the refugee's Stress by one. The refugee also selects one further cost:

- Increase Alienation by one.
- Increase Stress by two instead of one.
- Take on a new task to respond to the trouble.

## 5. Handling Actions

### *Venture*

Your refugee pursues a goal, or attempts to deal with a task. They must deal with Newlandian ways.

- Tell the Guide what you set out to do, then answer their questions.
- When you try to achieve something in Newlandian culture, make an interaction roll.
- If an interaction roll never seems appropriate, you can swap to an Observe action.

### *Culture clash?*

The Guide must decide if the refugee faces a culture clash during this action.

- Evaluate what is going on and what has been established already.
- Sometimes it will be obvious one way or the other.
- If the Guide doesn't want to make a decision, they can roll a die.
  - When pursuing a goal, culture clash is common (1-3 on the die).
  - When dealing with a task, culture clash is less common (1 on the die).
- If the Guide decides on a culture clash, they will ask you what form it takes.

If you face a culture clash, and you are under pressure to behave in a culturally challenging way, you must decide if you stay with Oldhome cultural expectations or break them to fit in.

- If you hold to Oldhome ways, make the interaction roll as if your Fluency is -1
- If you act Newlandian, increase your Disconnection by one and make the roll as normal.

### *Newlandian interaction roll*

Whenever you try to achieve something while communicating with a Newlandian, roll two dice and add your Fluency score.

10+ You communicate or do what you want. Tell the guide how it works out.

If this action was towards your goal, reduce your Alienation by one if you wish.

7-9 Things aren't going smoothly, but you can push harder. Choose one:

- Walk away. Increase your Stress by one. You can try again another day with a +1 bonus.
- Keep trying. Increase your Stress by two, and get part of what you want. Another part-success (or better) is needed to finish the job. Tell the Guide what you still need to do.

6- Things go poorly. You do not get what you want, although you might not realise this at first. Choose one of the following:

- You have missed something important. Increase your Stress by two. Tell the Guide what you think you have achieved. The Guide tells you what you have missed, and adds a Task to your list as a consequence of your mistake.
- You communicate or do entirely the wrong thing, causing offence or upset. Tell the Guide what you do. The Guide will tell you how people react. Increase your Stress by three and your Alienation by one, and tell the Guide how the interaction works out.

### Observe

Your refugee works on their ability to understand Newlandian ways.

*Tell the guide what you do to learn about Newlandia. Declare a planned interaction with Newlandian culture, and gain +1 on the interaction roll when it arrives.*

*If you wish, reduce your Alienation by one but increase your Disconnection by one.*

### Community

Your refugee spends some time with the Oldhome community, helping out at a community centre or visiting relatives or gathering to play some music from home.

*Tell the guide what you do with the community, and answer their questions. At an appropriate point, make a community roll. After resolving it your turn ends.*

### Community interaction roll

When you engage with your fellow refugees, roll two dice and add your Heart.

10+ You get what you need from the community. Tell the guide how, and choose two:

- Lower your Stress by one point.
- Choose another refugee and lower their Stress by one point when you talk at the end of the day.
- Choose a task or a step toward your goal. Someone in your community can help you with it.

Take +1 for all future rolls to complete it.

Also, if you wish, lower your Disconnection by one.

7-9 You are active in the community. Tell the Guide how and choose one of the 10+ options.

Your Guide will roll a die immediately. On a 1 or 2:

- You are pressured to reject Newlandian culture. Tell the Guide what you are asked to say or do, and how you respond. At the end of the interaction, increase either your Alienation or your Disconnection by one.

On a 5 or 6:

- You are pressured to take on new responsibilities in the community. Tell the Guide what you are asked to do, and how you respond. If you accept, add another Task to your list for the week. If you refuse, increase your Disconnection by one.

6- Things go poorly with your community. Tell the Guide how things go wrong.

Increase your Stress and your Disconnection by one each.

### Escape

Your refugee takes a break, away from difficult interactions.

*Tell the Guide what you do to escape, and choose one:*

- *Reduce your Stress by one, but make an extra Task or Trouble roll tomorrow.*

- *Reduce your Stress by two, but make an extra Task or Trouble roll tomorrow, and also increase your Disconnection or Alienation by one.*

## 6. Life in Newlandia

What is Newlandia? Any game of *Refuge* will only show a thin slice of Newlandia, and will leave many questions unanswered. However, it's crucial to bring that slice of Newlandia to vivid life. This section discusses the challenges you'll face dealing with Newlandian culture.

### *Culture conflict*

Cultural conflicts are not provided in advance, and players must generate them on the fly based on what is happening in the game. Here are some ideas and suggestions to get you started.

### Make it big

Don't make your cultural conflicts small or quiet. Go for big, obvious problems. If the refugee wants nothing more than to run away and hide forever, you're doing it right.

### You don't need to make sense

As a guide, it is not your job to ensure Newlandian culture makes sense. Your job is to put the refugee in an uncomfortable situation, so don't worry about anything else.

### Abuse social scripts

We all live our lives following social scripts. When you're heading for a culture clash, start playing out one of these innocuous scripts. Just choose a very ordinary moment and go through the detail of it, step by step. Then give the refugee one of these experiences:

- A Newlandian does something really unexpected and shocking. A shopkeeper seems to be ignoring you when you're alone in the shop together;

an old lady shoves you out of her way and you fall down; a friendly woman in the elevator starts looking through your purse.

- A Newlandian reacts as though you have done something unexpected and shocking, and you have no idea what. They gasp and point or even slap you!
- A Newlandian follows happily along with the social script, but instead of giving you your shopping or letting you come inside, they stare at you expectantly. Apparently there is something else you need to do here, but what?

### Violate Boundaries

To really highlight cultural differences, violate the boundaries of the refugee. Every culture has slightly different rules around certain sensitive issues, so pick one and do something that would be unacceptable in your (Oldhome's) culture. Here are some areas in which cultures can set very different boundary lines:

- *Hygiene*: Can you blow your nose or fart in public? Do people share food as they eat it? Is handwashing essential? Do people say they need to use the toilet or only use a euphemism? Do people talk to each other in a toilet area?
- *Sex and gender relations*: Do men and women talk to each other freely? Are chaperones expected? Are different standards of behaviour expected of women and men? Do people acknowledge sexuality in casual conversation? Would a boss tell their employees about her sex life?
- *Social distance*: Do people use formal manners with strangers? Do people touch each other? What parts of the body is it okay to touch? Is eye contact disrespectful or respectful? Do people stand close together?
- *Hierarchy*: Do people defer to higher-status others in obvious ways? Do higher-status people treat lower-status people in a friendly way or a distant way? How is status signalled, is it obvious or subtle, and what happens if you miss a cue?
- *Directness*: Do people ask others to do things, or just give them clues and expect them to work it out? Do people speak directly about problems and tell people they are wrong, or do people signal challenging messages indirectly and maintain a polite interaction?

## 7. Ending the week

After five days of play, it is time to finish. Follow these steps to close the game.

### *Behaviour*

Going around the table, the group considers each refugee in turn. Are they keeping their own culture? Are they adopting Newlandian ways? Are they doing both of these, or just one, or neither?

On your turn, remain silent while the other players discuss their impressions of your refugee's behaviour. They might interpret situations differently, and see things in your refugee's behaviour that you didn't notice. Don't explain anything or defend your refugee, just listen.

### *Scores*

Each player now considers the Alienation and Disconnection scores for their own refugee. These scores give some ideas about how the refugee is experiencing life in Newlandia.

- Both scores 0-1: the refugee is tending toward *integration*.
- Alienation 2+ but disconnection 0-1: the refugee is tending toward *marginalization*.
- Alienation 0-1 but disconnection 2+: the refugee is tending toward *assimilation*.
- Both scores 2+: the refugee is tending toward *rejection*.

### *Outcomes*

After considering the evidence discussed above, each player secretly makes a decision about their refugee and chooses an outcome for them. You can choose any outcome for your refugee, for any reason.

### *Integration*

A refugee who integrates finds a way to maintain their Oldhome cultural identity at the same time as embracing a new Newlandian identity. This is a very positive result, as the refugee is able to keep hold of their background

while also making the most of present circumstances. Refugees who manage to integrate tend to do well in their new societies. However, it can be very hard to get to this point, and finding ways to balance two cultural identities is fraught with difficulty.

### Rejection

A refugee who takes a pathway of cultural rejection is in trouble. Avoiding the obligations of their old culture while evading the pressures of the new one can deliver short-term comfort but it closes off the refugee's options quickly, and can lead to major difficulties for the refugee down the road.

### Assimilation

A refugee who moves towards assimilation will find life in Newlandia opens up in many ways, but at the cost of their cultural identity and their connection to their old community and country. Older refugees often fear that their children will go too far down this path and forget where they came from. Refugees who take this path often do well in Newlandia but they still have problems in reconciling their identity.

### Marginalization

A refugee who accepts a life of marginalization will face difficulties constantly in Newlandian society. If the refugee community is large enough, they will often be able to live happily enough in that cultural enclave, but it will be hard to move beyond it and to take advantage of new opportunities. Younger refugees often fear that their elders will be stuck on this path and will be trapped in unhappy circumstances. Refugees on this path are often very settled in their identity but face constant material difficulties.

### Ambition

Evaluate how your refugee stands in regards to their ambition. Did they achieve their goal for the week? Did they fail to do so? Are they still working toward that goal, or have they changed to something else?

Sometimes it won't be clear whether a goal has been achieved or not. When that happens, it's up to the you to decide how the refugee is doing. You can always poll other players for advice!

### Closing Scenes

Go around the table one last time, taking turns as the active player. On your turn, describe a closing scene involving your refugee. In the scene you describe, give a glimpse or a hint of at least one of the following, or both if you prefer:

- How the refugee is progressing toward their ambition.
- How the refugee is coping with life in Newlandia, i.e., the outcome you chose for them.

Do not show too much. In particular, don't show whether or not they achieve their ambition, or whether they ultimately thrive as refugees, or collapse under the pressure. Leave this open to your imagination.

*Thanks to Simon Carryer, Steve Hickey, Ivan Towlson, Karen Wilson, and the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research at Victoria University of Wellington. Morgan Davie, 2017. [www.taleturn.com](http://www.taleturn.com)*

## Appendix B: Last Item on the Agenda

*A Committee Larp by Shawn Roske*

### Overview

This is a larp (Live-Action Role-Playing Game) for four to six players. Five players are recommended. No separate facilitator is necessary. One player is in charge of delivering the instructions. It is a challenging game about the corporate management of sexuality. It is not a game about abuse or rape, but rather about how frustrating and difficult it can be to be fair and compassionate in the workplace when the crux of the matter is messy human nature.

**Recommended time:** 2–2.5 hours

**Pacing:** 15 minutes for warm-up, 30 minutes to build the fiction, 40 minutes for roleplay, 30–40 minutes for debrief (or longer)

**Objects required:** Table and chairs, paper, pencils and scissors, a timer, a copy of these rules, and printouts of the resident file (at least 6 copies), the character sheets, the incident cards and the agenda.

**Keywords:** *Sexuality, consensus, power, ableness, gender, perception, frustration*

### The Pitch

The monthly staff meeting is almost over, but it's about to get heated. Working in a group home, living where you work, gets intense. Everyone knows how messy it is to deal with the daily affairs of residents. Staff want to be protected by rules and guidelines. Live-in staff are banned from having private visitors, and it seems impossible to deal compassionately with sexuality.

At a group home for developmentally disabled adults, company policy is silent on guidelines to handle any expression of a resident's sexuality. Live-in staff bristle under strong rules preventing them from having intimate friends visit with any allowance for privacy. Everyone at the table cares deeply, but not everyone cares about the same things . . . The last item on the agenda for tonight's staff meeting is the need for a sexuality policy.

### A word about the subject matter

This larp is about sexuality as part of human nature. Sexual harassment and abuse are not the subject matter of this larp. In Canada, group home staff are trained to safeguard themselves and the people under their care. Health Canada regularly reviews and inspects organizations dealing with vulnerable sectors of the population, as well as trains and certifies staff. This larp assumes this kind of watchful and attentive environment. Many players of this larp will not have a background of knowledge about persons with these kinds of disabilities, nor the laws governing them. It is not necessary to have such knowledge to play this game. What is necessary is to bring forth an attitude of care and respect. Be aware that everyone carries misinformation and prejudice. It is not wrong, and no one is on trial. The larp safety techniques and out-of-character gesture is present to navigate our limitations.

Please have a short discussion on how comfortable people are about the themes in this larp, and if there are any aspects that need to be avoided. Emphasize that the safety tools are there to be used in play without guilt or judgement.

The author has worked in the field of mental health in Canada since 2006, working closely with persons with developmental disabilities. I wrote this larp to examine my professional experiences through the lens of larp, and to share a unique perspective. I chose to focus on sexuality because it is a hot topic, and I have witnessed the problems of corporate management of sexuality first hand. This larp is my challenge to those who are progressive or conservative when it comes to sexuality. I rarely see consideration in popular sexuality discourse for the developmentally disabled population, nor for the staff and caregivers on the frontlines. There is no simple answer to this difficult scenario. Yet, it is a common issue inside the mental health community worldwide. How much can be asked of staff, and how do staff provide the most compassionate and holistic care?

## Setup

Print out the materials

Cut out the incident cards and character sheets

Arrange the space

A timer set for 40 minutes

If you are playing with fewer than six players, remove Support Staff C and/or D,

Orient players to the available characters

Discuss who plays which character

As a group, create some details about the characters, the home, and its residents

The Canadian Setting

## Someone read the situation out loud

It is the monthly staff meeting of a group home for multiply disabled adults—adults with developmental disabilities and comorbid complications of behavioral, physical, and/or mental ailments. A resident's capabilities can range from non-speaking or non-mobile, to moderately functioning and working in custodial or factory employment. None are medically fragile. Ages range from mid-twenties up to senior citizen.

The agency that owns the group homes holds power of attorney on each resident's finances. Although sexual relationships for residents are not discussed, there is an unspoken undertone that they are not encouraged. Staff are not permitted overnight guests in the home, nor have visitations behind closed doors. The House Leader has set the agenda for the meeting and a new

item on the list is a request for a sexuality policy for both staff and residents. Presiding at the meeting will be the Housing Coordinator from head office.

### Someone read the background out loud

Over the course of its 40 years in operation, Rainbow Community Housing has earned a reputation as a welcoming and well-run place of residential living for multiply disabled adults with developmental disabilities. It hires both locally and internationally, and some staff live in the homes with the residents. It is a nonprofit corporation and Christian based. Staff are not required to adhere to any specific religion. However, all residents attend church services with staff support.

Rainbow runs six group homes across the city. Staff and residents regularly socialize at a company run community center, circulate work shifts between the homes, and enjoy taking part in activities within the broader municipality through public events and specialized programs for the disabled.

Tonight is the monthly house meeting, which consists of a routine check-in by head office to hear about any pressing needs for the home. The House Leader has included a request for a more robust sexuality policy on tonight's agenda because staff and resident sexual activity cannot be ignored any longer.

### What to do

The first hour deals with safety mechanics, improv-style warm-ups, and building characters, the home, and residents. Play lasts exactly 40 minutes. Incident cards are used to pace the conversation and inject details when things get slow. This is followed by a 30–40 minute debrief, or longer.

The following rules are a script to be read in sequence.

### Larp Safety

#### *The Door is Always Open*

These are the basic safety rules. Every player's well-being is more important than playing this game. Any player may excuse him or herself to take a break at any time for water, toilet use, etc. The door is always open, and you may walk away from playing at any time, no questions asked. Please let the facilitator know.

### *Emergency Stop*

If a player says, “Stop the game” during play, the game immediately stops. If the player wishes to explain why they called “stop the game,” they may do so, however, the reason for wanting to stop the action may be personal and no player is under any obligation to explain why they called “stop the game.” Anyone may call a halt for any reason, even on behalf of someone else. Should the game end early, players should still continue with the debrief.

### *Out of Character (OOC) Gesture*

To negotiate anything out of character during play, any player may hold a fist to their forehead. This gesture means that what the player is saying is said as themselves, the player. It may be to ask for clarification, to negotiate the flow of the narrative—or for any reason. Every player must respect this gesture. Dropping the gesture signals play to resume at the point the gesture was made.

### *Warmups*

Because this game is played around a table and does not require a large playing area, expansive and physical warmups are not required, however, players may want to begin with two simple exercises:

*“No, but . . . Yes, but . . . Yes, and . . .”*

The facilitator has everyone pair up with the objective of planning a party. One person from each pair goes first and states what kind of party they will plan. The partner then responds by saying, “No, but . . .” and completes the sentence. The pair alternates in this way for about two to five minutes. The pair then does the exercise again using, “Yes, but . . .”, and again using, “Yes, and . . .”. This will help everyone recognize the difference between using these different kinds of communication. The idea is to accept whatever is put forth and add to it. For example, “Yes, and . . .” propels the scene forward.

*“Once upon a time . . . and then . . .”*

Have everyone circle up, standing or around the table. Similar to the first warmup, the group tells a story together with each player adding a sentence, one by one. The first person starts with, “Once upon a time . . .” and completes

that sentence. The person immediately to the left of them says, “And then . . .” then the next person says, “And because of that . . .” until the last person ends the story by saying, “And in the end . . .” Players should not use the names or personal details of anyone present. This helps stimulate collective storytelling.

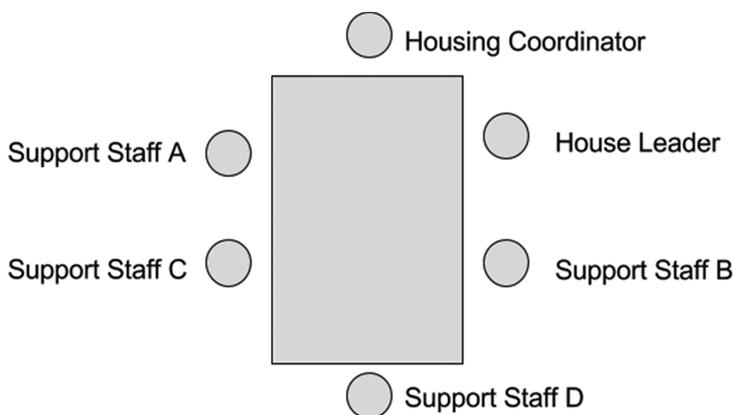
## Build the Home, Create the Residents

### *Characters*

Ask:

- Who wants to compromise? Give that player the House Leader
- Who wants to make a difference? Give that player Support Staff A
- Who wants respect? Give that player Support Staff B
- Who wants control? Give that player the Housing Coordinator
- The remaining one or two players are Support Staff C and D

Each player takes their seat at the table according to the diagram below. Seating order is important.



Each player looks at the character sheets. At this point, players are allowed to exchange roles with someone else if they decide they'd rather play a different character. Each player should take a couple minutes to read the characters' bios and make a few general decisions, such as a name and a few ideas about past history. For the most part players are informing the role they are playing with their own personal knowledge and histories.

It is important to note that the experience of a character matters in terms of how much weight their words carry at the meeting. Staff with more

experience may bring up events with residents occurring prior to newer staff's employment. Newer staff tend to have fresh perspectives, and may freely offer more radical solutions.

## The Home

The home is created together to feel connected to it. It is a place of work and a place to live. Try to feel the strain of this paradox. It must be both comfortable and professional at the same time.

*What is the name of the home?*

This could be an animal, a flower, a street name, or something historically significant. All other homes in the agency will have a similar naming scheme. Write this on a piece of paper. Continue to record the names of staff and residents. Add the details being decided by the group as the home is created, and any future details generated in play. Place this paper somewhere accessible to everyone. Any player may write on it, although it might make it easier to designate a scribe.

*Who lives in the home and who commutes to work as external support?*

International workers most typically are live-in workers, and have the fewest local connections outside the agency. Live-in staff are under great pressure. They can be on call at any time of the day or night. Some homes will have designated staff who are the first responder to an emergency at night, or who is put in charge of performing any nightly medical requirements, such as emptying a urine bag or responding to an alarm if a resident has a history of nightly disruptive behavior. There can be overnight asleep, or overnight awake shifts. Are there any overnight shifts and why?

The home is large enough so that each live-in staff and resident will have their own bedroom. It has all the amenities, such as a full kitchen, sitting room, dining room, full size bathrooms, bedrooms for everyone, a backyard, driveway, possibly other things, and most likely has been renovated to accommodate wheelchairs.

Is there a yard with a garden?

Is there a piano in the home, or exercise equipment?

Is the home close to a nice park, or right beside a busy freeway?  
The home has a company van, and not all staff are insured to drive it.

## The Residents

Except for the Housing Coordinator, each staff at the home is assigned to a specific resident, and that staff person works with that resident more often. The primary staff for a resident attends all meetings about that resident, and is up-to-date on that person's file. As a player, create this resident by filling out a resident file. This is a group discussion. Don't worry about not knowing the names or attributes of actual disabilities. The Incident Cards are there to help you. In actual play you will use the OOC gesture to decide in the moment some detail. In fact, it is a very common experience as staff to be unfamiliar with these details, as diagnoses change and certainly the many medications being used are too numerous to everything about. Many outside specialists and experts are involved.

In the case of fewer players, such as four players, the Housing Coordinator may wish to create a resident. If the Housing Coordinator creates a resident this represents the home is short staffed. A short staffed home is more stressful to work at, and this is an issue upper management is obligated to correct as soon as possible. Include this option, if the group wishes to explore this dynamic in play. The Housing Coordinator cannot be assigned to any specific resident.

Place the resident files in the middle of the table for everyone to see and reference. Each player draws an incident card to help inspire them in preparing their character and creating the resident they are assigned to. Aim to build a cohesive narrative for the home. Talk it out. Some of the incident cards specifically refer to staff or other issues. This is fine. Incorporate whatever is there into your character, and create your resident. If the incident card text can't be incorporated, place the incident card at the bottom of the deck and draw a new incident card.

Players should put their focus more on creating and developing the residents rather than spending too much time shaping the characters they are playing, because their personal ideas and bias inevitably bleed into the characters being portrayed. This game challenges a player's position on sexuality with a difficult real world dilemma, so the role player's take on will be enlivened by each player's own concepts. The residents are the substance and background that players must contend with emotionally and intellectually

during play. Notice how their voices are absent from the meeting, yet their issues dominate the discussion.

**Resident File**

Name:

Age:

How long they have been in organized care:

How long they have lived in the home:

Baseline (How the person usually behaves.)

EXAMPLES:

social talkative slow	playful oppositional withdrawn	Bitter paranoid helpful
sarcastic stubborn silent	angry sad manic	Innocent devoted mischievous

Preferred activities (This is important for their compliance and happiness.)

EXAMPLES:

coffee shop going to work house chores	sports eating attending church	community events gossip television
computer device arts and crafts out in nature	walking sitting puzzles	watching people watching machines watching animals

What are the resident’s current medications for?

(There can be only a few drugs, or many.)

EXAMPLES:

Pain self-abuse illness	aging body seizures addiction	family insists severely anaphylactic seasonal allergies
obsessions sleep problems dental work	keep them calm court ordered respiratory	new, unknown purpose to ease dying experimental

## The Issue

By now, everyone has together created a web of dilemmas and complications.

## The Structure of Play

Players may draw an incident card from the deck at any time. A player should draw an incident card when they feel they need to obtain more details. Draw only one to three incident cards over the course of the whole game. The goal is to not draw all the incident cards. Play does not stop as each player reads their incident card. It is intentional and expected that a player's attention is distracted by the incident card while they digest the information on it. Each player must incorporate whatever is on the incident card as their character's knowledge—be it a past experience, something read about that day, or a sudden realization. Names and some details such as age or gender may be changed to fit the narrative. Some incident cards may seem irrelevant to your character or the discussion. An incident card may seem more appropriate for another player at the table. In that case, you may offer it to them out of character. Use the OOC gesture to pause the game if an incident card is problematic.

After 30 minutes, when there are only 10 minutes remaining in the game, the Housing Coordinator must stop the previous argument and offer a temporary policy for the players to negotiate. The Housing Coordinator should push for consensus and agreement; any “good-enough,” temporary solution will do. The larp ends with the Housing Coordinator calling the meeting adjourned and promising to get back to the home with an official response very soon.

## Beginning Play

The staff meeting has been going on for at least an hour or more, all items on the meeting agenda have been discussed except the last item. One-by-one around the table each player uses a short statement to say what issue was resolved earlier in the meeting. This is an opportunity to telegraph to other players the kind of character you are playing and to add more history to the home. It may be something about themselves and another staff, something with the residents, or something with the home. It can

be something mundane, such as the fact that a resident is regularly missing their bus, or something ongoing and complex, such as a disagreement between staff about out of work activities. Avoid bringing up a sexuality issue. The Pandora's box on that topic is about to be opened . . .

Start to the right of the Housing Coordinator with Support Staff A. Continue counter-clockwise until the Housing Coordinator ends the round with their statement.

*Set the timer for 30 minutes and start it.*

The Housing Coordinator now proceeds in character to continue the meeting and reads the last item on the agenda. The Housing Coordinator asks the House Leader to explain why sex is on the agenda. Let the conversation flow as it would naturally with all these power dynamics present.

### *Debrief*

The facilitator holds a 30 to 40 minute (or longer) debrief at the end of the game. Clarify that the purpose of the debrief is to support the players' emotional safety. It is highly recommended to participate in the debrief, however, players may leave if strongly adverse. A debrief is not about telling war stories and going over what was just said in the narrative. It is about deroleing, and aiding digestion. It should be stressed that people keep contributions to a maximum of three to five minutes during the process, and continue with more elaborate discussions at some later time (in the hotel bar, at a coffee shop, whatever . . .).

The facilitator, unless they did not participate in the game, ought to go first during each part of the debrief.

Ask each person to state their real name, express—in this order—something they like about themselves, something they dislike about their character, and something about their character they would like to emulate.

Request each person to symbolically, as a silent gesture toward the center of the table, leave something from their character behind. Then state something they will take with them.

If anyone has a burning desire to speak about some aspect of the larp, now is the time. Then, in turn, each person may speak about their character's most intense moment in the game and then, again in turn, the most intense moment for themselves as a player.

As an option, find a “debrief buddy” and exchange contact information. Make it clear that sometimes emotional stuff comes up a week or more after the event. The facilitator may offer to make themselves available should anyone wish to go over anything that came up during the larp, should the need arise, for safety purposes.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you Jason Morningstar, Mylene DiPenta, Satkiana Shaw, Alexzandra Roberts, Jason Pitre, Tayler Stokes, Ben Milton, Kevin Farnworth, Liz Roper and all my playtesters and helpful advisors!

### Housing Coordinator

Name:

You have worked for the company for many years, and you know the residents very well. You are directly involved in hiring all staff. You know the staff and residents by name. You are the first person everyone calls when there is trouble. Take a moment to think about the social fires you put out on a weekly basis, and how much you know about everyone’s personal and professional lives.

Your primary concern is meeting government mandates, the integrity of the corporate public image, and ensuring the residents’ well-being. You desire the smooth operation and delivery of service by your staff. Your responsibility and history in the industry has made you conservative. You may agree or disagree with what you know about the company’s attitude toward sex and sexuality.

When you call the meeting adjourned, promise to take the matter up at head office and that you will get back to the home with an official response very soon.

### House Leader

Name:

You have worked in the home the longest. You are presently providing live-in support. You manage the staff and residents. You are responsible for the budget and make all major domestic decisions. You know the residents very well. You are primarily concerned with harmony in the home between staff and residents. Take some time to think about the residents of the home. They have seen many different staff come and go over the years.

Think about what it means to live where you work, and the intensity of day after day caring for people's most fundamental necessities, such as feeding, washing, socializing, etc.

You are the one to introduce the central issue that has made you put the need for a sexuality policy on the agenda. Be sure to conclude your opening remarks by saying other homes have similar issues and this is a direct request for clear guidelines from head office on these matters.

Support Staff A

Name:

You have worked in this field for a few years. This is at least your second year working for the agency, in this home or another. You have a real interest in advocacy and progressive social action for people with disabilities. Your primary concern is seeing a sexuality policy that is fair and respectful. Think about what experiences you may have had that shaped you into an activist. Where else have you worked? What is your personal connection to the developmentally disabled?

You are the one who is pushing for residents' rights.

Support Staff B

Name:

You have worked in this field for a few years. This is at least your second year working for the agency, in this home or another. You want to focus on practical matters in the home and think sexual issues should be left for staff to deal with on a case-by-case basis without corporate micromanagement. Your primary concern is maintaining security and safety for staff and residents. Think about issues of employment and what your employer can ask of you. You are a front-line health care worker. Think about what risks you must face. Where else have you worked? What emergency situations might you have experienced or know about?

You are the one who is pushing for employee rights and safety.

Support Staff C

Name:

You are working at this place for personal reasons. This is your first year living and working in the home. You enjoy the work, but it is secondary to your interests. You might be an academic putting yourself through

school, or perhaps you enjoy travelling. Your primary concern is staying employed. You do not want work to interfere in your other interests: such as school, travel, social life, or earning enough experience to move on to other employment. You might be a migrant worker from outside North America. If so, you primarily socialize through workplace relationships.

Your primary concern is to be unaffected by what transpires at this meeting.

Support Staff D

Name:

You are working at this place for personal reasons. This is your first year living and working in the home. You enjoy the work, but it is secondary to your interests. You might be an academic putting yourself through school, or perhaps you enjoy travelling. Your primary concern is staying employed. You do not want work to interfere in your other interests: such as school, travel, social life, or earning enough experience to move on to other employment. You might be a migrant worker from outside North America. If so, you primarily socialize through workplace relationships.

Your primary concern is to be unaffected by what transpires at this meeting.

### The Agenda

1. [Agenda item]\*
2. [Agenda item]\*
3. [Agenda item]\*
4. [Agenda item]\*
5. We really need a sexuality policy!!!

\*The content of these or any number of additional agenda items is irrelevant to the game; the point is that a sexual policy is necessary.

A resident has great anxiety about waiting for her bus. She is high functioning, and usually very eloquent and polite in her speech. Around the same time every morning, the local special-needs public bus comes to the home to take her to a day program. The bus takes her back to the home at the end of the day. Sometimes the bus arrives late. She often handles the stress of waiting by kicking up quite a fuss—often swearing and openly masturbating,

which staff find particularly disruptive. Staff at the home make her go to her room when she does this. Staff at her day program have done what they can by putting up a barrier around her when she is masturbating, or trying to have her wait in a back room with a staff to talk it out . . . until she starts to masturbate, then they leave her alone. Staff at her day program have asked if she can be medicated to control her anxiety. The resident's mother doesn't accept that her daughter has a need for medication, and she has been to a doctor who has recommended the non-medical measures currently in place. Do we insist on medication because it is more convenient for staff?

Some of our residents are fairly high functioning and independent. They are competent enough to manage almost all aspects of their lives, except those requiring support such as their finances and time management. We do not monitor every aspect of their lives, but still our company policies have a blanket impact on them. Should we include them in our discussion of a sexuality policy?

One evening I was at work and noticed that a resident—a 34-year-old man with Down syndrome who lives in the home—and another resident—a 37-year-old woman who has a developmental delay and cerebral palsy—were cuddling on the couch while watching television. They didn't know I was watching from the other room. I saw him touch one of her breasts and she smiled and laughed. He was laughing too. Another staff walked into the living room and when she saw them she said loudly, "What are you doing?"

The two residents broke away from each other and the staff said, "It's time to get ready for bed."

The female resident got up immediately and went to her room. The male resident refused to go to bed. He got really angry and pushed the TV over onto the floor. I went to help my co-worker. After the incident was over, I wanted to talk to her about what had gone on, however, she didn't want to discuss it and said not to mention it in the incident report.

There is a female resident at one of our agency's homes who used to live in her own apartment. During this time, she had a boyfriend who she was having sex with; he would regularly stay overnight. Her family members became extremely distraught and ordered her to break off the relationship. The parents were very religious and the idea of premarital sex was morally wrong in their eyes. This woman now has a mental illness and lives in one of our homes. She would like to have a relationship yet feels such a strong need to please her family that she represses this desire.

I have a friend who works in another group home with disabled adults who require a lot of physical care. She was the primary counselor for one of the residents. This resident was a young woman who used a wheelchair and

had no voluntary use of her arms, hands or legs. She was also non-verbal. My friend noticed that when she was bathing her and the water from the shower spray touched her genitals, the young woman would smile broadly. They had a long-term rapport and the staff felt she knew this resident very well and understood her non-verbal communication very well too. My friend wondered about what kind of support is available to allow the resident to experience sexual pleasure without it being sexual abuse. She was sad about how there is no policy or training that she knew of that would allow her to empower the resident in this way.

Before working here, I was working privately for a family. I was supporting a couple in their 30's. They both had Down syndrome and were married. The family had purchased instructive sex videos for them to watch and learn from. This family was very supportive in giving the young couple as normalized a relationship as possible.

We all know how a particular resident—a man in his early 50's with Down syndrome—is always charming the female staff. One day he and I were talking and he was saying how he wanted to take one of the female staff members out for dinner. I reminded him that she is his support worker and explained why it would be inappropriate for her to date him. I suggested he go out to some dances at the “Friendship Club” (they hold monthly dances for developmentally delayed adults) to meet women who have Down syndrome, or another disability, like he does. He got really offended and told me he did not have “that,” meaning Down syndrome. Well, we had that conversation five years ago; he now calls one of his fellow residents his “girlfriend” and they've been a couple for three years now. Staff have not been very proactive in supporting that relationship.

A 46-year-old resident was sexually abused in an institution in the 1980s. Her behavior with male staff is very inappropriate—she asks new staff to help her with her bath and gets them to do things for her that she can do for herself. She obsesses over each new male staff member and says she is going to marry them. She has shown no attraction to her male peers. It is really challenging for new male staff to be constantly hit on by this woman.

What about us as live-in staff having our boyfriends and girlfriends stay over? When one staff member's girlfriend was visiting from Germany last year, she was not allowed to stay at the house and yet everyone knows he sneaked her in for a few nights—and she stayed the night.

I heard that our agency was approached by the caregiver of a married couple who both have a developmental delay, requesting if the couple could be supported in one of our homes. The caregiver is getting old and needs

support herself and can no longer have them living with her. Our agency refused to take them, saying we weren't set up to welcome couples into our homes.

We support a young man who is delayed from congenital hydrocephalus and suffers from seizures. He participates in many athletic programs, despite having mobility issues, including difficulty with walking. When I took him to his basketball program recently, I met a male staff member from another agency. His client had a similar large build and temperament to my client. I could tell they were longtime friends and they called out to each other happily on the court. This other resident asked me about why my client never came to his swim program anymore. His staff was amused at this and confidentially told me how there once was an incident where the young men got "too frisky" with each other in the pool. It was decided to separate the young men permanently. The staff member left much unsaid and told the story like it was an amusing anecdote. I found it rather sad that the young men have their friendship blocked because of this.

A resident asked for access to his money for this weekend so he can stay at a hotel with a friend who he bowls with. We don't really know if this request is sexual or not. He's very excited about it. He's independent and has a job stocking shelves. He's allowed to come and go as he pleases. However, many day-to-day choices have to be made for him. How involved in this decision are we supposed to be? Do we insist he buy condoms? Does he know what to do? We don't know.

A female staff member told me the other day that a certain male staff member, an international employee from Ivory Coast, has been insisting on clear divisions of labor in the home. He wants the women staff to do all the cooking and cleaning, while he changes diapers, helps residents use the bathroom and goes on outings with the clients. He also makes sexist comments to her, but her house leader thinks she's being too sensitive and unfair to a person of color. One of the residents has started echoing the male staff member's behavior.

Our community pastor from our neighbourhood our Catholic church, who often comes to our events, came out as gay last Sunday in his sermon. Later, some of our residents expressed confusion. How do we explain the situation across widely varying levels of cognition and belief?

You've been learning about anti-ableist activism and feel strongly about questioning the ways that language can be used as a practice of mindfulness about our assumptions and values. Other staff are complaining of being "language policed" and are tired of trying to keep up with whether they're

supposed to say “handicapped” or “disabled,” “people with disabilities” or “people labelled with a disability” and so on.

A staff member at another home has been wearing gender non-conforming clothing, and has changed their name. Some of our residents have made remarks indicating their confusion, and some staff have wondered what to make of it. What, if anything, is to be said or done?

A young man who is a resident at another home has taken to wearing flowing dresses, dangly earrings, and high-heeled shoes. His body language has changed too—he swings his hips when he walks and bats his eyelashes. At first all the staff supported him and felt that it wasn’t hurting anybody, but now some think he’s going too far—that it’s just “drama.” Some are starting to find his behavior inappropriately flirty and they’re uncomfortable. Other staff are frustrated that non-conforming gender expressions are seen by most staff to be theatrical, “performed,” and a come-on, while conforming gender expressions aren’t. Yet, our job is to provide stability for our residents who cannot do so themselves.

One resident, whom you’ve known as a woman, has started identifying as male, insisting on being referred to as “Joe” and wearing clothes that everyone finds surprisingly masculine. The resident has a known history of abuse. There are concerns that the resident is reacting to a history of trauma, and isn’t unsettled by their body because of gender dysphoria but because of post-traumatic stress disorder. Staff are divided about it, with some using the new name and male pronouns; some staff using the new name when pointedly reminded by the resident but otherwise lapsing into using the old name; and some staff pointedly insist on using the old name because they think the whole thing is silly, manipulative, or attention-seeking. Staff are also divided about whether the resident should be allowed to see a gender identity specialist.

What should we do about the resident who, according to their file, has, three times over the years, changed their appearance and behavior to match that of one of the staff or fellow residents—male or female. They became attached to the person in such a way that they lost all interest in things that had previously been very important to them. That resident often talks about being afraid of dying or not existing. No one knows how to handle the resident’s constantly changing identity and gender.

A queer and out staff member has occasionally been sneaking their partner into the house to spend the night. They’ve been lying about it and it’s starting to cause tension among other staff and clients. It’s becoming more and more clear that they will be fired for breach of contract. Although straight staff have also been doing this, all the other staff have ignored this

behavior. Now that this queer staff is doing it, however, some of the staff who have ignored the same behavior in straight staff before, have all-of-a-sudden become rigidly by-the-book. Some people see this attitude as homophobia, while others accuse the ones calling out the staff as homophobic of “playing the gay card” and acting like they’re above the rules.

We make sure intimate personal care, such as bathing, using the toilet, changing diapers, and getting dressed, is provided by a staff member of the same sex as the resident. A new staffer has just been hired and they identify as agender. Now what? Some staff say this should be addressed in a sexuality policy. Others disagree, because it has nothing to do with sexual orientation or sexual behavior. Yet others are wondering if same-gender care even makes sense, because ostensibly the reason why it exists is to prevent sexual behavior, which only makes sense if everyone is assumed to be straight and cisgender.

One of our residents racked up a fairly large bill calling telephone sex chat lines. We called in a behavioral specialist. At first the specialist tried to redirect the resident’s behavior toward using pornographic magazines. We were not comfortable with this, but we followed the recommendations as instructed. When we received the next telephone bill we discovered that the resident had still managed to access the sex chat lines. One day, the specialist happened to be on-site when the resident was using the phones. The specialist listened in and was shocked to discover that the resident wasn’t masturbating at all; he was using the chat lines only to talk about his hobbies. Everyone was embarrassed, and we now make sure the resident gets ample social time. There have been no more incidents of him using sex chat lines.

## Appendix C: Long Term Community Organizing, Abridged

### LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR. FACILITATOR’S OVERVIEW

Welcome to “*Long Term Community Organizing, Abridged!*” The goal of this simulation-game is to show the power of relationships in responding to community needs. As the facilitator, you will help a group of people learn about community organizing and practice key skills in a fun way, with just enough competition to keep it interesting. My hope is that playing this game will help people more deeply think about civic life and result in them getting to know each other better. Community organizing is all about relationships!

There is a longer introduction further down. The purpose of this sheet (front & back) is to let you know the game requirements and to give you a detailed outline of all the steps involved in this game. Feel free to adapt the rules for your particular group. Just make sure you have read through ALL of the materials before getting started.

Rev. Mike Capron MikeDaPastor@gmail.com

Mike is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA), located in Verona, NJ

This game was written for the 2017 Civic Games Design Contest

### *Game Requirements*

- At least 8 people. 10–20 people would be better. There is no hard upper limit.
- A large open room (possibly supplemented with adjacent smaller rooms). People will need to walk around.
- Name tags.
- Dice.
- Method for deciding which players become organizers. (See below.)
- Copies for each player of: INTRODUCTION & POINTS SHEET, CONDUCTING A ONE-ON-ONE.
- Copies for each organizer of: CRISIS GENERATOR, CRISIS NARRATIVE & RESPONSE.
- Index Cards (or scrap paper).
- Pens/Pencils.
- The total time will likely be between 3 and 3.5 hours. (If you have a regular gathering, like a class, this could easily be broken into multiple parts.)

**Community organizing** is a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organization that acts in their shared self-interest.

(en.wikipedia.org)

**Community organizing** is characterized by the mobilizing of volunteers. Staff roles are limited to helping volunteers become effective, to guiding the learning of leaders through the process, and to helping create the mechanism for the group to advocate on their own behalf. Community organizing almost always includes confrontation of some sort. [Often when]

*people-who-want-something* get themselves together to ask for it, *the-people-who-could-give-them-what-they-want* get jumpy. Community organizing strategies include meeting with corporate or government decision makers to hold them accountable for their actions, designing programs for others (not the group) to implement that meet the needs of the community, and aggressive group action to block negative developments or behaviors (highway construction that leads to neighborhood destruction, etc.).

(<https://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers97/beckwith.htm>,  
formatting changes mine)

### Step-by-Step Outline for Facilitators

1. **INTRODUCTION & POINTS SHEET** Introduction & Points Sheet (15 minutes): As each participant arrives, give them a name tag and one of these sheets. Ask them to read the introduction, tally their points and hang on to it.
2. **Welcome, Introduction, Explanation** (10 minutes): Give an overview of the game in your own words.
3. **Relationship Building Through One-on-Ones** (45 minutes):
  - Note about **locality**: Most community organizing happens within a geographic area no larger than a single city. If your group comes from disparate areas, you may need to agree that everyone will pretend to be from the location you are meeting in, or some other mutually agreed place.
  - a. Explain that: “A *One-on-One* is a friendly, informal interview where the interviewer learns some things about the person being interviewed. The most important thing to learn is what the person cares deeply about, what motivates them.”
  - b. “In this game, you will only be able to invite people to join your team if you have interviewed them as part of a *One-on-One*. We are going to divide you up and let you do *One-on-Ones* with each other. The person doing the interview should record what you learn on your *One-on-One* record sheet. It takes some effort to find someone to do a *One-on-One* with; that is part of the game!”
  - c. Pass out the CONDUCTING A ONE-ON-ONE sheet and give them time to familiarize themselves with it.
  - d. Divide participants into two groups: Ones & Twos.
  - e. Conduct the *One-on-Ones*. There will be 6 rounds. Allow 5 minutes for each *One-on-One*, with a little time in between for people to find

their next partner. At the start of rounds 1-4, have everyone put their hand in the air, with Group One showing one finger and Group Two showing two fingers.

- i. Have everyone from Group One initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group Two.
    - **Odd number of people?** If the groups are not exactly even, someone will wind up sitting out. If this is a confident group, that is okay. If working with a younger, more-sensitive crowd, just work it out for one pair to become a triad.
  - ii. Have everyone from Group Two initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group One.
    - The game will more effective if you **don't let people interview the person who just interviewed them**.
  - iii. Have everyone from Group One initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group Two.
  - iv. Have everyone from Group Two initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group One.
  - v. Free-for-all. Half the large group interviews someone else. Half are interviewed.
  - vi. Free-for-all. Half the large group interviews someone else. Half are interviewed.
    - In the free-for-alls, some may be interviewed twice, some may interview twice; some may do one of each.
4. **Choose the Organizers** (5 minutes):
- a. There should be **one organizer for every 5 people in the group + 1 additional organizer**. (8–9 people -> 2 organizers; 10–14 people -> 3 organizers; 15–19 people -> 4 organizers; etc.)
  - b. Use some method like drawing lots to choose the organizers. (For example, if you have 10 people, put 7 blank index cards into a deck with 3 that have a giant letter 'O' on them. Deal them out randomly. The ones who get an 'O' are organizers.)
5. **Break** (15 minutes): Have everyone who is not an organizer take a 15 minute break.
6. **No break for organizers!** Give each organizer a CRISIS GENERATOR sheet, a CRISIS NARRATIVE & RESPONSE sheet and a dice. Have them follow the instructions for generating a "Crisis Narrative". Assist them as needed, but explain they will need to be ready in 15 minutes.
- Some organizers may need help generating their crisis narrative. You can work with them, or perhaps tell them they can have a friend help them generate the narrative.

7. **Recruitment** (20 minutes): Once everyone is back together, there will be three recruitment rounds of 5 minutes each. Each round will usually double the number of people involved—although this depends on how many people approached agree to help.
  - a. Round #1: Each organizer approaches one person they did a One-on-One with, explains the Crisis Narrative and invites them to an “Event Planning Session” to respond to the situation.
    - Facilitators, please emphasize: **Their pitch should include something about the person they learned during the One-on-One.**
  - b. Round #2: Both the organizer and the person they approached in round #1 simultaneously approach someone they did a One-on-One with and invite them to the Event Planning Session.
    - This assumes that the person approached in round #1 agrees to help. They may not, in which case that person does nothing this round and the organizer tries again by themselves.
  - c. Round #3: The organizer and up to 3 other people who have agreed to help all approach people they did One-on-Ones with to invite them to the Event Planning Session.
    - By this time (possibly as early as round #1), several people will have received **multiple invitations**. They should choose who to help based on the crisis narrative and how well the invitation was personalized for them.
8. **Noting People With No Invitations** (5 minutes): Facilitators, do not miss this teachable moment!
  - a. Ask people to raise their hand if they have not received an invitation to a planning event. Note for the group that there are unutilized human resources out there!
  - b. Wonder out loud why these people have no invitation. Were they interviewed less by other people? (It is possible to be interviewed only twice and to have done four interviews.) Note that when it comes to relational power, being known by others is vital, or you will never hear about things happening in your community.
  - c. At this point, you probably want to just assign these stragglers to planning sessions.
    - **OPTIONAL:** However, if the group dynamics are right, you could assign all the stragglers to a new group, the “**Go See a Movie Group**.” They could plan a social outing and try to invite others in their network to come with them. This would represent

the fact that community organizing around serious issues faces competition from more idle pursuits. (Yes, the “Go See a Movie Group” could win the game.)

9. **Event Planning** (20 minutes): The event organizers should work with their group to plan an event using the “Event Planning Worksheet”.
  - **OPTIONAL:** It is possible that people with multiple invitations might choose to attend a different event than the one they planned. Give them a chance to shift groups now.
10. **Sharing the Events** (10 minutes per event): Each team explains their crisis narrative and how they are responding to it with their event.
11. **Scoring; Winner; Debrief** (15 minutes): Each team totals the number of points of all people who attended the event. The team with the highest score wins. Give a round of applause. Then spend some time asking participants to reflect on the experience.

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
INTRODUCTION & POINTS

Thank you for playing “Long-Term Community Organizing, Abridged.” In this game, you will learn about community organizing and practice key skills in a fun way, with just enough competition to keep it interesting. The game is “Abridged,” because community organizing is a long term process, taking months and years to build relationships.

Before I was trained in community organizing by the Industrial Areas Foundation ([www.industrialareasfoundation.org](http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org)), I thought people always organized around issues. You pick an issue and then you find the people. The training suggested a different view. By the time an issue comes up, you don’t have time to start finding the people. You have to find the people first. The primary capital of organizing is relationships. You build a network of relationships first and then when an issue (or crisis) arises, you utilize that network to respond quickly and effectively.

This simulation/game makes this point by walking participants through a relationship-building technique called a “One-on-One,” where participants get to know each other in an intentional way. Then a few randomly chosen participants are presented with a random “crisis” which they are to respond to utilizing their network. These “organizers” will invite people to plan an event and then to show up for the (simulated) event. The team who attracts the most points worth of people to their event wins!

*How knowledgeable and connected are you about politics in your community? Whenever you get points for a line, put the number in the right hand column, then total your points at the bottom. (These questions assume a USA governmental structure. Please adapt them for your country.)*

Are you a citizen of the country in which you reside?	30 points	
How many languages can you speak?	20 points each	
Have you lived in your current area for more than 10 years?	20 points	
How many parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles live within 1 hour of you?	3 points each	
Do you work or go to school within 10 miles of where you live?	20 points	
How many voluntary organizations do you belong to that have face-to-face meetings? (churches, sports leagues, arts groups, civic organizations, etc.)	15 points each	
Can you name the US Senators from your state?	5 points each	
Can you name your US congressional Representative?	10 points	
How many state or county representatives or elected judges can you name?	10 points each	
How many officials serving your municipality can you name? (mayors, clerks, councilmen, zoning officials, etc.)	15 points each	
Have you ever been to a municipal building to do <i>anything</i> ? (dog license, building permit, court, pay tax bill, etc.)	5 points	
Did you vote in an election within the last two years?	5 points	
Have you contacted any elected representative in any way in the last two years?	30 points	
Have you ever spoken to any elected representative (or a member of their staff) in person on any issue of concern?	30 points	
Have you ever marched or protested about a political issue in any way?	30 points	
How many <i>local</i> newspapers do you read regularly? (National news doesn't count!)	20 points each	
How many professional journalists could you call and they would know who you are?	50 points each	
	TOTAL:	

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
CONDUCTING A ONE-ON-ONE

The most vital tool in community organizing is the One-on-One meeting. You might wind up having some of these spontaneously, but more often you will have to call someone and make an appointment. When introducing yourself, don't identify yourself too narrowly. For example, introducing yourself as an animal right advocate will stimulate people who share your interest, but may turn others off. For this type of community organizing, building relationships precedes working on issues. Most One-on-Ones in real life should be about 30 minutes, but for this game it will be closer to 5, so get to it!

Here are some example lines you might use to initiate a One-on-One.

- *"I'm new to the neighborhood and I'm trying to get to know people."*
- *"\_\_\_\_\_ told me that you have lived here for a long time. Could I come speak with you and hear your story?"*
- *"I'm a member of \_\_\_\_\_ church. We are trying to find out more about community needs. I'd love to sit down with you and hear your perspective."*

Once you sit down with the person, you need to say enough about yourself to be polite, but mostly you want to listen. Ask open-ended questions: "What brought you to this neighborhood?" or "What do you want others to know about you?" or "What do you think are the biggest problems this community is facing right now?" Questions of motivation are great too, "What gets you out of bed in the morning?"

Stories and experiences are the best. Let's suppose the two of you share a passion for children. If they have stories about how the playgrounds used to be safe in a now-dangerous neighborhood, or can tell an impactful story about something wonderful or tragic happened to a child, that is golden! These are the kinds of core narratives that shape a community. Community organizers need to learn them.

*In a Real One-on-One . . .*

It would be vital to exchange contact information. You can do that if you want to, but since this is a game, no one should feel obligated.

Another essential question for a real One-on-One, would be: "Who else do you know that I should speak to?" followed by, "May I tell them you gave

me their name?” For purposes of this game, this is unhelpful. But remember it when you are doing the real thing!

In a real One-on-One, you wouldn't take notes. Your note taking might make the person nervous and interfere with the conversation flow. Instead, you would take notes the instant the conversation ends, while things are still fresh in your memory. Sit down in your car and fill out a One-on-One record form. Since this is a game, it is okay to take notes during the One-on-One. You should use the log sheets on the back of this page to do this.

Remember that you only keep a log for the people you interview, *not* when you are the one being interviewed.

You will be interviewed twice and interview at least two other people. Then there will be two “free-for-all” rounds where you either interview or are interviewed. Being interviewed more times gets you more invitations. Interviewing gives you more people to invite.

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
ONE-ON-ONE LOG SHEETS

Their Name: (contact info)	Their Name: (contact info)
What do you love about this neighborhood/city?	What do you love about this neighborhood/city?
What are some concerns that you have?	What are some concerns that you have?
What are you passionate about?	What are you passionate about?
(What gets you out of bed in the morning?)	(What gets you out of bed in the morning?)
Your own questions . . .	Your own questions . . .
(In a real life One-on-One, you would ask who they know you should talk to.)	(In a real life One-on-One, you would ask who they know you should talk to.)

Their Name: (contact info)	Their Name: (contact info)
What do you love about this neighborhood/city?	What do you love about this neighborhood/city?
What are some concerns that you have?	What are some concerns that you have?
What are you passionate about? (What gets you out of bed in the morning?)	What are you passionate about? (What gets you out of bed in the morning?)
Your own questions . . .	Your own questions . . .
(In a real life One-on-One, you would ask who they know you should talk to.)	(In a real life One-on-One, you would ask who they know you should talk to.)

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
CRISIS GENERATOR-INTRO

Congratulations, you are an organizer! Now we are going to generate a crisis for you to organize around. You are going to use dice and the tables on the back of this sheet to get some facts about your crisis. Then you will use your imagination to produce a crisis narrative. Your narrative will help you recruit people for the team you are building to respond to the crisis. Here are some examples of crisis facts and a crisis narrative that might emerge from them . . .

EXAMPLE #1—The problem has to do with: “*Violence by protestors/rioters*”

[We rolled a 1 and a 6 to get this from Table #1]

The people suffering from this are: “*A group defined by economic status, immigration status, profession, age or veterans.*” [Table #2]

So far, government has: “*Delayed/Not responded at all.*” [Table #3]

- Here is where you get to apply your imagination. You need to decide who is protesting and committing violence. You also need to decide who is being hurt by this. There are lots of choices for this one: “*Anti-immigrant protests by white supremacists turn violent.*” Or you could flip

- it, “*Immigrants upset by anti-immigrant rhetoric vent their frustration in poor neighborhoods. (This brings in the economic status.)*” Or, “*People under 30 invade Wall Street demanding student debt relief and things get badly out of hand. Banking staff are barricaded in their offices.*”

EXAMPLE #2—The problem has to do with: “*Too many panhandlers, homeless people sleeping/sitting in public spaces. (Or homeless not allowed to sleep in public spaces.) Lack of homeless shelters.*”

---

[We rolled a 2 and a 1 to get this from Table #1]

The people suffering from this are: “*Adherents of a religion.*” [Table #2]

So far, government has: “*Underreacted.*” [Table #3]

- Tricky one. Are the adherents of a religion the homeless people or are they the ones suffering because of the homeless people? How about, “*Muslim women with hijab are being denied space in shelters that receive government funds.*” You could do something similar with Sikhs in turbans, but there probably has to be a way of identifying the religious group for them to be discriminated against. Or, perhaps “*Panhandlers are congregating in a Jewish business district.*” Do local government officials dislike the religious group? Is that why they won’t do anything?

EXAMPLE #3—The problem has to do with: “*Under or Over Enforcement of Health, Safety, Zoning Codes (Consequences might include Unsafe buildings, inability to construct low-income housing & churches. Over-worry about things like traffic and parking.)*”

---

[We rolled a 5 and a 1 to get this.]

The people suffering from this are: “*An individual or family.*” [Table #2]

So far, government has: “*Overreacted.*” [Table #3]

- Since we are dealing with code issues and a single family, it sounds like local government may be the presenting problem here. How about, “*Home of poor family found unsafe for children.*” If the family lives in an expensive area, they may have to move to another school district, perhaps one less safe or with worse schools. Thinking ahead, there are a range of options for your response. You could try to change the actions of the local government, or you could coordinate an effort to fix up the house so it was safe.

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
CRISIS GENERATOR-TABLES

Table #1: The problem has to do with . . . [Roll dice once for the macro-category and again for the specific problem area.]

1. Violence
  - 1.1 By police/law enforcement
  - 1.2 By gangs
  - 1.3 By terrorists
  - 1.4 Domestic violence
  - 1.5 Ordinary crime
  - 1.6 By protestors/rioters
2. Housing/Homelessness
  - 2.1 Too many panhandlers, homeless people sleeping/sitting in public spaces. (Or homeless not allowed to sleep in public spaces.) Lack of homeless shelters.
  - 2.2 Existing housing is unsafe/undesirable. Many vacant buildings. Drug houses.
  - 2.3 Development is leading to gentrification of neighborhood. (Neighborhood getting too expensive for existing residents.)
  - 2.4 Lack of businesses in neighborhood: banks, grocery stores, pharmacy, health care.
  - 2.5 Lack of vital services relevant to area: Veterans, unemployment office, social services, drug treatment)
  - 2.6 Problems with landlords.
3. Social & Physical Environment
  - 3.1 Contaminated Water Supply
  - 3.2 Industrial Accident
  - 3.3 Natural Disaster (Flood, Forest Fire, Earthquake)
  - 3.4 Lack of Public Spaces: parks, public pools, libraries. (Or such places are unsafe.)
  - 3.5 High levels of tension between ethnic, religious or political groups.
  - 3.6 Concern over children: teenage pregnancy, need for family planning services. (Or want to protest abortions/abortion services).
4. Education
  - 4.1 Under-funded public schools. (Or property taxes too high.)
  - 4.2 Local school ranked poorly.

- 4.3 Need more (or less) school choice, vouchers, etc.
- 4.4 Objection to particular program or curriculum.
- 4.5 Problems in school environment: bullying, drugs, etc.
- 4.6 School Administration Scandal: embezzlement, sexual abuse, discrimination, hostile environment for teachers.
- 5. Economic Opportunity / Legal Problems
  - 5.1 Under or Over Enforcement of Health, Safety, Zoning Codes (Consequences might include Unsafe buildings, inability to construct low-income housing and churches. Over-worry about things like traffic and parking.)
  - 5.2 Lack of public transportation.
  - 5.3 An important business in the area is closing, or threatening to close.
  - 5.4 People lack basic skills: job-finding, parenting, English language.
  - 5.5 Police, legal system or government services treating people unequally.
  - 5.6 Lack of child care.
- 6. *Re-Roll.*

Table #2: The people suffering from the problem are . . . [Roll dice.]

- 1. An individual or family
- 2. A neighborhood
- 3. Adherents of a religion
- 4. An ethnic group
- 5. A group defined by sexuality or gender
- 6. A group defined by economic status, immigration status, profession, age or veterans.

Table #3: So far, government has [Roll dice.]

- 1-2 Overreacted.
- 3-4 Underreacted.
- 5 Had a mixed (or balanced) response.
- 6 Delayed/Not responded at all.

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
CRISIS NARRATIVE & RESPONSE-FRONT

*“What Happens Next?” – Information for Organizers*

1. Using the CRISIS GENERATOR TABLES you are going to find the facts about your crisis and write your Crisis Narrative, using the section below.
2. Then the facilitator will announce a series of *Recruitment* rounds where you and the other organizers will seek out people to help respond to your crisis. **You can only recruit people who you did a One-on-One with.** Then they can help by recruiting people they did One-on-Ones with.
3. After the recruitment, you and your *team* will gather to do **Event Planning** using the worksheet on the back of this page.
4. Finally, all the organizing teams will describe their event to the whole group. We will tally points to see which team wins.

*Your Crisis Narrative*

Get this information by consulting the CRISIS GENERATOR TABLES and rolling dice.

Table #1: The problem has to do with . . .

Table #2: The people suffering from the problem are . . .

Table #3: So far, government has . . .

Write Your Crisis Narrative . . .

**IMPORTANT:** You need to agree with the facilitator about a **location for your event planning meeting.** This could be a corner of a large room, a spot in the hall or a breakout room. You need to be able to tell the people

you recruit where this is. You might want to hand them a note, or perhaps put a sign up with your name on it in your location. (Things will be confusing when everyone needs to go to their meetings all at once. Plan for this!)

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.  
CRISIS NARRATIVE & RESPONSE-BACK

*“Most people will do the right thing most of the time given the opportunity. My job is to give them the opportunity.”*—Community Organizer at IAF training

*Event Planning – Do this with your team after recruitment!*

1. What does the team want to accomplish?

(Answer this for the short-term and the local! For example, it doesn't matter if you want world peace. Instead of attaining world peace, you will convince two groups of parents to cooperate at a school board meeting, or two politicians from different parties to vote together on a particular issue.)

2. Who needs to change their mind for you to accomplish your goal?
3. What action do you need that person (or group) to take?
4. What benefit will come to that person (or group) if they do what you want?
5. What problems will they face if they do what you want?
6. What sort of an event will help persuade this person (or group) to take the action you want? (If this person is doing something wrong, you

could ask what sort of event would shame them into taking the action you want.)

Examples: A quiet, polite meeting where you ask for their help. (In someone's home?)

An already-scheduled event that your group attends, like a public hearing.

A public demonstration or protest?

A service project where you fix up a house or pick up trash or paint over graffiti?

7. Where and when will your event take place?
8. What is your basic plan for what will happen at the event?
9. What kind of publicity will amplify the effect of your event?
10. How will you get that publicity?

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**Joshua A. Miller** is a past editor of *"The Good Society."* He is the Director of Education for the Prison Scholars Program at Georgetown University and adjunct lecturer in philosophy.

**Sarah Shugars** is a doctoral student at Northeastern University's Network Science Institute. A computational political scientist, her research focuses on using network analysis and natural language processing to study political dialogue and deliberation.

**Daniel Levine** is the School Program Coordinator for the Baltimore Community Mediation Center, and a member of the Community Oversight Task Force, which is charged with reforming civilian oversight of the Baltimore police under the city's consent decree. He is also an avid role-playing gamer,

*and the author of several games, including Outrageous Youth (a Jem and the Holograms-inspired hack of Misspent Youth) and a forthcoming game about the Jane abortion service.*

#### NOTES

The designers of the games described below submitted their entries with full knowledge that winning designs would be published. Neither the editors, the feature authors, nor Penn State University Press are liable for any misuse of the game designers' intellectual property.

1. National Coalition for Deliberation and Dialogue, "Participatory Practices," NCDD Resource Center, accessed March 2nd, 2018, <http://ncdd.org/rc/item/category/participatory-practices>.

2. Atlee, Tom, "Participatory Practices," Process Arts, accessed March 2nd, 2018, [http://processarts.wagn.org/Participatory\\_Processes](http://processarts.wagn.org/Participatory_Processes).