

# Virtual Diversity Icebreaker workshops – facilitation in MS Teams



The Diversity Icebreaker is an excellent tool to introduce trust, positivity and improve communication skills of any team or organization. Overview below provides a step-by-step introduction to facilitating workshops using online collaboration platforms.

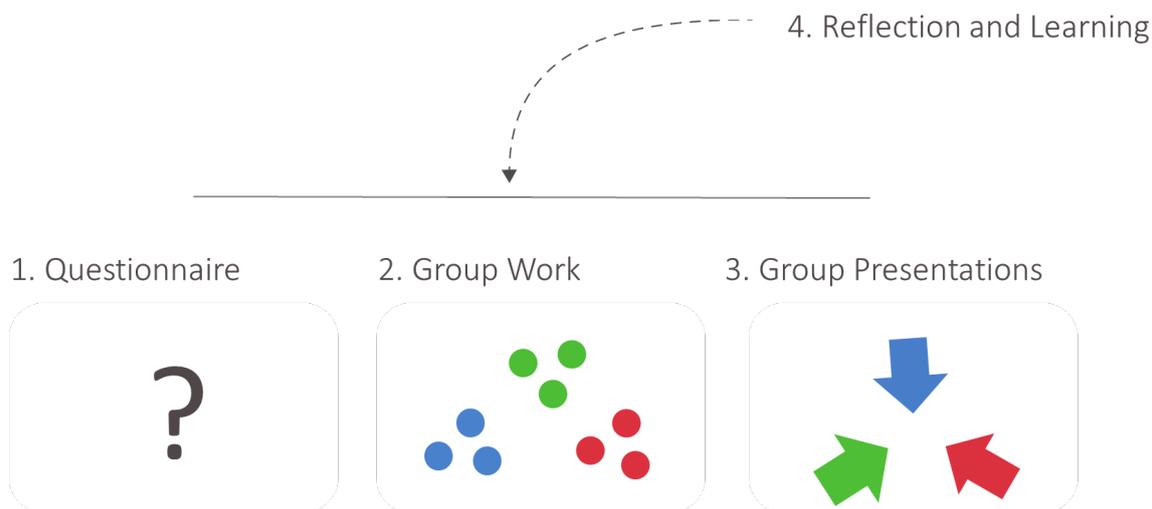
## Getting started: Preparations and Practicalities

- Create a Teams event and invite the workshop participants (members of your organization on MS Teams or as guests)
  - IMPORTANT: it should be you who invites to the Teams meeting – this allows you to control the breakout-rooms function and assign participants to different rooms. However, sometimes you will be an external facilitator and somebody from your client organization will create the meeting. In such case, agree with them beforehand that they will assign participants to the rooms per your instructions.
- Learn how to use breakout-rooms in MS Teams, e.g. via this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMfsilBhW7A>
- Start the meeting some time before the workshop begins and create the necessary number of breakout-rooms (unless you are using the breakout pre-assign option – more about it later). You can also rename them so that you have an equal number of Red, Blue and Green breakout-rooms (you can change it later should need fewer/more rooms of one color, e.g. Red 1, Red 2, etc.)
- Plan and **practice** before you *execute*! Once you set up your Teams, practice starting calls in channels and switching between them, screen-sharing (e.g. using “screen sharing” vs “window sharing”), using chat, etc.
- If possible, have a co-facilitator who can take care of the questions coming in via chat, troubleshooting and assigning participants to break-out groups.
- Remember to order the Diversity Icebreaker questionnaires (online version) for the right amount of participants.

## The Diversity Icebreaker process – overview

The DI workshops is a process where participants learn about themselves, others and about how others perceive them from their perspective – given that we are all different in our preferences for interaction and communication.

The overall process has four stages (refer to the Diversity Icebreaker User Manual for more information).



### Alternative workshop-flows

**OPTION 1:** participants fill out the questionnaire at the beginning of the virtual workshop; consequently, you divide them into one-colour groups and proceed with steps 2, 3 and 4 of the DI workshop.

**OPTION 2:** participants score the DI questionnaire beforehand; you may then either create the one-colour groups beforehand (more information below) or in the workshop and proceed with steps 2, 3 and 4.

## Stage 1: the questionnaire

### Scoring during workshop

- You share one and same link with all participants during the workshop, e.g. in MS Teams "Meeting chat"



- The link is limited to the number of responses you ordered
- Before sharing the link, remember to explain that:
  - *DI is not a competence test but a preference questionnaire: there are no right/wrong answers, no good/bad results*

**Pros:** you make sure that everybody attending the workshop answers the questionnaire

**Cons:** extra 8-10 minutes of time, you cannot prepare yourself in relation to how Red, Blue, or Green the group is beforehand.

### Scoring beforehand

- You share one and same link with participants before the workshop
- The link is limited to the number of responses you ordered
- When sharing the link, e.g. via mail, inform participants that:
  - *DI is not a competence test but a preference questionnaire: there are no right/wrong answers, no good/bad results*
  - *the link is not to be shared!*
  - *they should have their scores available for the workshop later*
  - *they should read about Red, Blue, and Green following the links below their scores*

**Pros:** you save time in the workshop, you know how Red, Blue, or Green the group is beforehand, you can focus on more advanced tasks in the workshop

**Cons:** not everybody remembers to fill out the questionnaire or save their scores - sending reminders is often a must.

## Stage 2: Group work

### Creating break-out groups

- In the DI workshop, the participants work in break-out groups with others who also score high on the same colour.
- The recommended size of a group in a virtual workshop is 3-5 participants
  - Sometimes, the group is "skewed", i.e. dominant on one colour. In such cases, you will need to ask some participants to work in groups representing their second preference.
  - Alternatively, you can create two or more groups of the same colour or forego one of the colour groups if there are no participants with this colour as primary preference.

### Creating groups when scoring in the beginning of the workshop

1. Open the group-profile on the Hexagon page ([example](#)) and share the screen/app with participants.

Seeing the group-profile helps the participants to understand the process of assigning them into one-colour groups.

2. Start with the colour that seems to be least represented and decide on a approx. "cut-off" to select the participants that will work in this colour group.

In this [example](#), Blue is the colour to focus on and the cut-off score could be 50.

3. Ask the participants who scored above that cut-off score on Blue to raise their hands (if they have the video enabled), use the "raise hand"-indicator or write in chat.

(Using chat can be esp. useful if there are many participants.)

If there are too many – go above the cut-off score and try again; if there are too few – do the opposite. Remember: you don't need to divide the whole group in three equal parts – you may have two Blue, one Red and one Green group, e.g.

Once you have a satisfactory number of participants, assign them to the Blue breakout-room.

4. Repeat steps 2-3 with the remaining two colours.

### Creating groups when scoring beforehand

When the participants score the questionnaire beforehand, you can follow the exact same steps as described to the left – i.e. asking them to recall their scores. NOTE: you have to ask them to save their scores (e.g. in the same e-mail) and take them to the workshop.

However, you can also ask them to send you their scores by e-mail. You will then obtain information about participants' individual scores and be able to divide the group in Red, Blue, and Green groups before the workshop, in simple terms: create a list of 'who goes where' for yourself. You will still have to assign participants manually once everybody has joined, but you will save time and

NOTE: Also in this case it is advisable to show the participants the Hexagon and explain how you had divided the group and why (e.g. that some of the participants will work in groups representing their secondary preference because the total group is dominant on one colour, etc.).

## Stage 2.2:

### *working in groups*

Give the participants instructions for group work before you send them to the Red, Blue and Green break-out groups:

- You can ask them to use templates available from this page to complete the tasks. You can either share the link with participants in the chat or upload them to MS Teams.
- Explain how much time they will have (15-25 minutes is usually sufficient)
- Ask them to choose a person who will be presenting the results of group work in main session...
- ...as well as a person who will be documenting the work using templates
- Explain that you will be "visiting" the groups as they work

Then, you can proceed to giving them the tasks...

1. *Describe the positive qualities of your colour.*
2. *Describe the two other colours.*

Show participants slide no 9 in the DI virtual workshop PPT (with five core qualities/central words per colour) and provide instructions:

*Use this as a starting point and elaborate: look for synonyms of these words with slightly different meaning – where do they lead you?; how do these qualities manifest when communicating, cooperating with others, etc.?; furthermore, you don't have to agree with everything – there is no one correct answer as to what Red, Blue and Green is.*

(More about facilitating of this stage in the Diversity Icebreaker User Manual for standard, face-to-face workshops – these instructions will be the same for virtual context).

## Stage 3: Group presentations

- The "designated presentors" present the results of the group work in this stage
- The person responsible for documenting shares the screen

There are three, short rounds of presentations with focus on one colour per round. For example:

1. The Blue group presents the description of their own colour
2. The Red group reads what they have written about Blue.
3. The Green group presents about Blue.

Etc. ...

NOTE: with large number of participants and multiple Blue, Red, and Green groups, you can ask the first group in each colour to present everything and then ask if other groups have something new

## Stage 4: Reflection and learning

The last stage of the DI workshop is about reflecting on the experiences from stages 1-3 and formulating learning points collectively by the group. As in F2F workshops, also here it is centered around the open question "what can we learn from this?" posed to the participants.

Depending on the available time and scope of the workshop, you can facilitate discussion around this question in different ways:

- a) You can simply ask the question and invite the participants to share their thoughts in the main session. With many participants, you may want to ask to use the "raised hand" indicator before speaking and encourage to share their learning points on chat.
- b) If more time is given, send participants to the Red, Blue, and Green groups again and discuss learning points in break-out calls. Then, share examples in main session. Another good option is to create and use random breakout-rooms for this stage!
- c) With limited time, you can ask the participants to individually think about their learning points and share them in chat. You can then read and comment on examples.
- d) With even more limited time and large group, you can prepare a list of learning points beforehand (e.g. "we are not either or", "colour are complementary", etc. – see the Diversity Icebreaker User Manual) and present them to the participants.
  - to make this form more interactive, you can launch a poll listing the learning points and asking participants "to what extent did they learn the following during the

## Follow-up work

Virtual work with DI gives an opportunity to work asynchronously using Red, Blue, and Green after the workshop. MS Teams provides a special advantage in that the team and channels created for the session can remain and the participants will be able to access the files and work created during the workshop.

You may thus create extra templates with questions, case studies, etc. for the participants to access and comment on under Red, Blue, and Green channels. You can also ask the Red, Blue, and Green groups to gather within a specified timeframe and work on specific tasks, exchange experiences or perspectives synchronously without a facilitator.

## Contact information

Should you have questions, needed help, or required assistance facilitating a virtual DI workshop do not hesitate to contact us:

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