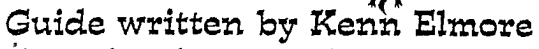


# COMMUNITY BUILD!



Exercise developed by Maureen Hurley &  
Gordon Mansergh



# **COMMUNITY BUILD!**

**Guide by**

Kenn Elmore

**Exercise Developed by**

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# CONTENTS

<b>OVERVIEW</b>		7
<b>PREPARING FOR A COMMUNITY BUILD! SESSION</b>	Why Are You Holding This Session?	8
	Circumstances Characterizing your Session	8
	Prepare to Conduct the Session	9
	Number of Participants	9
	Assemble Materials	9
	Simulation Facilitators/Personnel	9
<b>CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY BUILD! SESSION</b>	Upon Arrival at Session Site	10
	Construct Playing Grid/Arrange Room	10
	Distribute/Arrange Starting Materials	10
	Brief Facilitating Personnel on Roles	11
	Stereotypical Description of Communities	12
	Greeting Your Group of Participants	13
	Divide Participants into Communities	13
	Introductions	13
	Orientation to the Exercise and Their Roles	13
	Explain Roles of Personnel	13
	Ending the Session	13
	Formation of Circle	13
	Opportunity for Each Community To Showcase Itself	14
	Hand out Award	14
<b>FACILITATING DISCUSSION</b>	Opportunity for Communities to Share Experiences During the Exercise	15
	Opportunities to Express Frustration	15
	Expose the Big Picture to the Group	15
	All Participants Forced into Roles	15
	No "Bad" People	16
	Discussion of Pertinent Issues	16
<b>APPENDIX:</b>	Community Build! Reference Sheet	





# Overview



**COMMUNITY BUILD! IS A TRAINING GAME IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS ARE PLACED IN A SIMULATED COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE. AS PART OF THEIR EXPERIENCE, PARTICIPANTS PLAY ROLES AS COMMUNITY PLANNERS, AUTHORITY FIGURES, AND CITIZENS. THE OBJECT OF THE GAME IS FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS TO BUILD THEIR IDEAL COMMUNITY WITHIN THE LIMITS OF APPLICABLE RULES AND VALUES APPLYING TO THEIR OVERALL COMMUNITY OR "WORLD" STRUCTURE.**

*Community Build!* was developed as an exercise to facilitate serious discussion about flaws within American society which promote discrimination and stereotyping within our lives and communities. The simulation was originally designed at Boston University for use with college and university student leaders and has been successfully adapted to also be an effective learning tool for young adults in high school and for the general adult population. The simulation has been widely used within high schools, in college and university settings, and under the auspices of community agencies.

*Community Build!* is also meant to facilitate emotional and intellectual responses to issues of discrimination and cultural stereotyping. It is an experience designed to


encourage a framework for discussing perceptions to pertinent issues and possible personal and organizational responses to these issues.

The experience is best suited for 40 to 60 participants. Prior to beginning the experience, participants are separated into four groups and placed onto a playing area. Each playing area has a designated amount of supplies and resource materials. After receiving information sheets, participants are instructed to use their supplies in order to physically build their ideal community within the boundaries of their designated areas of play.

In order to structure game play, facilitators play roles as authority figures. Unknown to the other participants, the facilitators do not give equal portions of resource materials and supplies to each of the four groups of participants. Similarly, each group does not receive the same treatment "within the system" for accomplishing their community building goals. Discriminating treatment in varying degrees is given to three of the four groups while one group receives favored status from the facilitators.

The simulation experience takes approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete. Two to four hours should be permitted for immediate discussion/debriefing of themes which arise from the simulated experience. Here is a suggested outline for the flow of the exercise and its discussion segments:

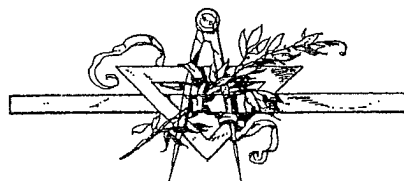
1. Participants experience simulation 45-60 minutes
2. Facilitate discussion about simulation situations and experiences 60 minutes
3. Identification of appropriate themes and points to understand 60 minutes
4. Consider personal and group goal-setting, projections, and vision for addressing real-life issues 60 minutes

This booklet will give you useful suggestions and information for preparing for and conducting the *Community Build!* sessions. 



*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

**Margaret Mead**





# Preparing for a Community Build! Session



*All humanity is  
one undivided and  
indivisible family,  
and each one of us  
is responsible for  
the misdeeds of all  
the others.*

**Mohandas  
Karamchand  
Gandhi**

**B**EFORE ACTUALLY CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY BUILD! SESSION, YOU MUST DO A LOT OF PREPARATION. THE PREPARATION INCLUDES THE GATHERING OF MATERIALS AS WELL AS THE GATHERING OF YOUR THOUGHTS. A FEW MOMENTS OF THOUGHT BEFORE YOU START WILL SAVE YOU MANY FUTURE PROBLEMS.

*Community Build!* is most effective when used as part of planned meeting or gathering or individuals with a common affiliation (i.e., group of social studies classes, annual meetings, training of college student leaders, community agencies or action groups, etc.). *It is best not to place a random group of people together in order to have them experience this simulation.* Random individuals do not tend to share a common goal which may carry through after the simulation experience ends. Furthermore, random individuals may be hesitant about discussing a topic such as discriminatory treatment in society with each other. Simply stated, a group of people with a common affiliation are better able to discuss topics which arise from the simulation and can also "take their collective thoughts back" to their group or community for further learning or education. Before conducting a *Community Build!* session a few points must be considered.



## Why Are You Holding This Session?

Sometimes you see an item with a great sale price and even if you don't need the item, you still decide to buy it anyway. You justify your purchase of an un-needed item by saying to yourself, "There was no way I was going to be able to pass up such a great bargain!" Exercises and educational materials are often "purchased" and used poorly because no one took a moment to consider the best way to make use of the item for their group.

*Community Build!* is an experience which raises issues regarding discrimination and disparate treatment of individuals. During the course of discussion after the actual simulation it is not unusual for the following issues to be raised by participants: institutional racism, sexism, poverty in the society, the role of authority in our lives, the dynamics of workforce demographics, violence in society, and leadership within an increasingly diverse society (these are only a few of a number of issues which have been raised by participants during discussions).

It is important for you to consider why you (or your group, institution, or agency) are conducting a session of *Community Build!*. Get together with colleagues from your group and make sure you are able to answer these questions: Do we want to raise the above-mentioned issues as part of our collective goals for our group? How comfortable will we be as a group in dealing with such issues? Do these issues fit into the mission/purpose of our group's outcomes/products? Will conducting a session which raises these issues be too much of a stretch for our group? Will conducting this session be a risk? (How large or small a risk?) Do we have a mechanism to deal with these issues as part of the day-to-day operation of the group? What sort of follow-up will be necessary for the group? What action(s) do we expect from the group after the session is completed? Are these issues for the group to consider collectively? Why are you holding this session?

## Circumstances Characterizing Your Session

Now that you and colleagues from your organization have had a chance to consider why you want to conduct a *Community Build!* session, you've got to consider at least one more important question - what are the circumstances characterizing your session? This is the time to consider the degree of difficulty involved with actually conducting

the session. two simple questions are at hand: what are the potential hindering factors associated with conducting this experience? And what are the potential facilitating factor associated with conducting this experience?

When answering these questions you need to be creative and think of all possible answers to each of these questions. This is the time to consider logistics associated with conducting the experience. Logistics include: space and time constraints, organizational resources, knowledge base of your group, and politics associated with such an exercise (these are only a few examples of logistics - you'll think of the rest). Once you have the answers to these two basic questions, use them to guide you in your "action plan" to conduct the session. Utilize facilitating factor to your advantage and find ways to minimize the impact of hindering factors.

### Preparing to Conduct the Session

The information in this session will assist you with final preparations for conducting a *Community Build!* session.

### Number of Participants

Experience demonstrates that 40 to 60 participants is the ideal number. This includes 45-50 participants split into four community groups, 1 neutral facilitator, 4-6 facilitators in the role of police officers, and 2 facilitators in the role of housing personnel. This number of participants permits ideal discussion capabilities.

### Simulation Facilitators/Personnel

For a group of 45-50 participants facilitators are needed to play different roles. The roles are as follows:

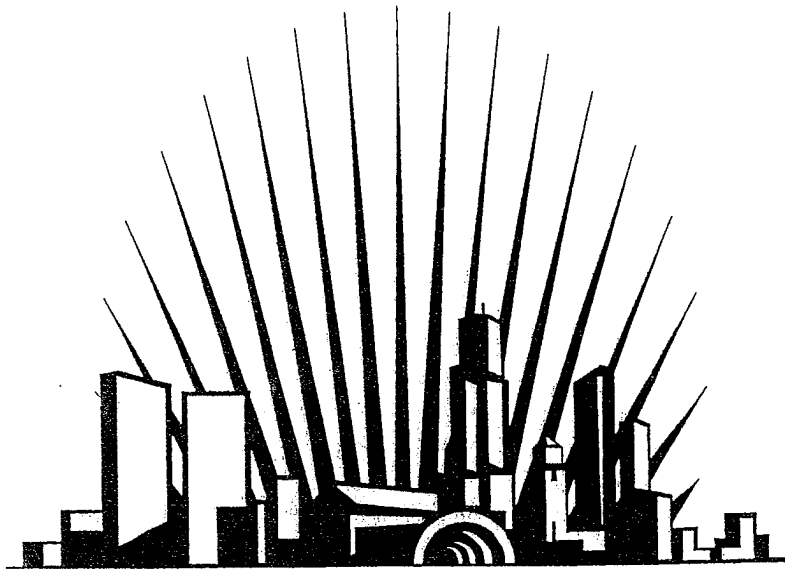
- 1 Neutral Facilitator
- 1 Chief of Police/Sheriff
- 4-6 Police Officers/Deputies
- 1-2 Housing Authority Officials

A complete description of roles may be found in the next section of this booklet. 📖



*Sometimes, I feel  
discriminated  
against, but it does  
not make me angry.  
It merely astonishes  
me. How can any-  
one deny themselves  
the pleasure of  
my company?*

**Lora Neale Hurston**






# Conducting a Community Build! Session

The rectangle should be broken into four sections of varying sizes. The largest area, roughly 50% of the overall rectangle, will be the construction area for "chocolate" participants. Another 30% of the overall rectangle, will be the construction area for "mint chocolate chip" participants and the remaining 20% of the overall rectangle, will be divided in half and used as construction areas for "vanilla" and "strawberry" participants. The large rectangular area should be large enough to accommodate all participants.

A table should be placed roughly 20 feet in front of the rectangle closest to the largest (chocolate) section. The table will serve as the location of the Housing Authority. At the back of the room, preferably near a corner, a smaller square area is created using masking tape. This area will serve as the Community Jail. Signs are placed within the jail area and on the front of the housing authority table.



*L'homme, toujours,  
audras des  
prophètes pour  
l'expliquer de ses  
insuffisances.*

*translation:  
people will always  
want prophets to  
solve them of  
their shortcomings.*

**Cheik Hamidou  
Kane  
L'aventure  
ambigüe**



**NOW THAT  
EVERYTHING IS  
READY FOR A  
COMMUNITY**

**BUILD! SESSION, YOUR TASK  
IS TO IMPLEMENT THE PRO-  
GRAM. THIS SECTION WILL  
ADDRESS THE PROCESS AS-  
SOCIATED WITH THE SIMU-  
LATION EXPERIENCE.**

## Upon Arrival at the Session Site

### Arrange the Room

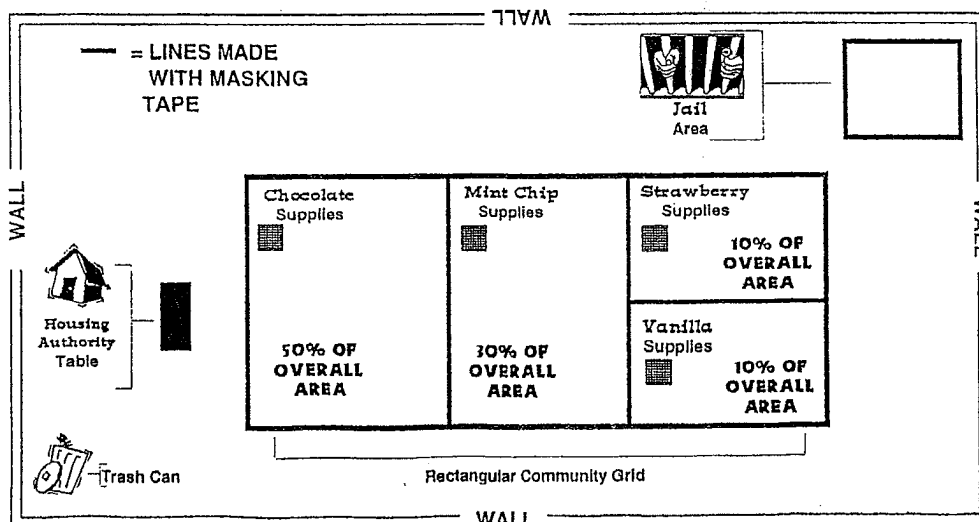
Diagram 1 illustrates the layout of the space for a Community Build! exercise. Gymnasia or any other open space is best for this activity. Masking tape is placed on the floor to outline the rectangular community grid and the jail area (heavy black lines).

## Distribute/Arrange Starting Materials

Each community receives starting materials. Starting materials are the supplies used by each community in order to build or create their communities as well as the items required for facilitators to serve in their roles. You will need to collect a number of items for use.

Once materials are assembled a certain amount of materials are placed within each section of the rectangular community grid. These materials will be used by participants throughout the game. Each section within the grid has the following items:

- Masking Tape
- Adhesive Tape
- Scissors
- Markers or Crayons



**DIAGRAM 1 - ROOM SET UP**

- Assorted Paper or Newspaper
- Boxes
- Play Money
- Reference Sheets (1 for each participant)

Each section *does not* receive the same amount of starting materials. You must take the total amount of each supply item (except scissors and reference sheets) and divide it up in unequal proportions for each section or community. Place the starting materials within each section based on the following proportions:

- The Chocolate Community/section receives 50% of the total of each supply item
- The Mint Chocolate Chip Community/section receives 30% of the total of each supply item
- The Strawberry Community/section receives 10% of the total of each supply item
- The Vanilla Community section receives 10% of the total of each supply item

A reserve supply of all supply items are held as extras to be sold or traded by the Housing Authority throughout the duration of the exercise.

### The Role of Facilitators

Simulation facilitators are listed on page 9. This section contains a description of the responsibilities of each facilitator.

#### Neutral Facilitator(s)

The Neutral Facilitator is responsible for the flow of the simulation experience. The Neutral Facilitator is the "head" facilitator who ensure that the simulation is executed appropriately and also serves as the lead facilitator during the debriefing or discussion phase of the experience. The Neutral Facilitator introduced the exercise and acts in a neutral fashion throughout the game, giving only clarification to rules and procedures. The Neutral Facilitator must also observe simulation participants in order to facilitate discussion points and to attend to any disinterested or over-zealous participants. The Neutral Facilitator also keeps

track of simulation and discussion time. Throughout the exercise, the Neutral Facilitator gives participants updates as to how much time remains.

#### Housing Authority Official(s)

Housing Authority officials approve building permits in a discriminating and disparate manner (more information regarding this techniques is discussed). Housing Authority officials re-establish prices for building permits and also place restrictions on certain permits. They encourage certain types of buildings and refuse requests on other building as they deem appropriate. On occasion, officials will inspect permits and buildings in order to determine whether they are authentic and up to building standards or codes. Housing Authority officials also assist in the judging of communities at the end of the building period. During the debriefing and discussion phase of the exercise, officials are encouraged to share their experiences and observations.

#### Sheriff/Chief and Police

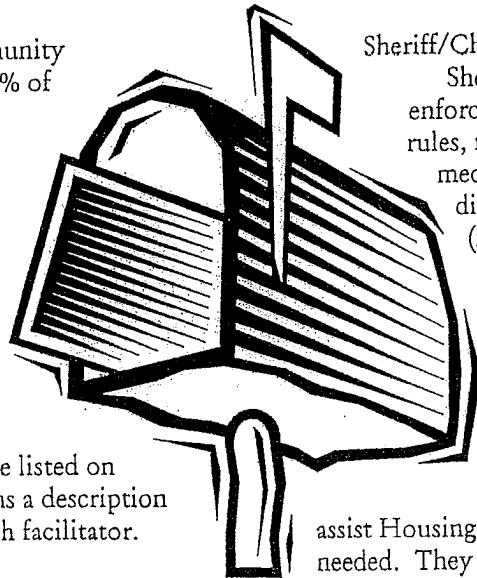
Sheriff/Chief and Police enforce and further establish rules, maintain order, and mediate disputes in a discriminating manner (more information regarding this techniques is discussed). Police authorize community representatives to leave their communities in order to purchase building permits and

assist Housing Authority officials as needed. They also use the jail area as a last resort in order to maintain

order within communities. At the end of the building period Sheriff/Chief and Police assist in judging communities. During the de-briefing and discussion phase of the exercise, Police are encouraged to share their experiences and observations.

### Stereotypical Description of Communities

Reference has been made to the fact that facilitators must treat certain participants in a discriminating manner. The key to this game is that all participants begin with the same goal, however, some will face obstacles



*Most Americans have never seen the ignorance, degradation, hunger, sickness, and futility in which other Americans live... They won't become involved in economic or political change until something brings the seriousness of the situation home to them.*

*Shirley Chisholm*



to reaching that goal while others will receive support in reaching their goal. Therefore it is necessary for facilitators to "create a world" in which some people are enhanced in their efforts while others are placed in more frustrating situations. The following stereotypical descriptions of each community or set of participants should guide the manner in which facilitators interact or role play with each set of participants.

### Chocolate Community

The Chocolate Community receives no discriminatory treatment during the exercise. In general, they receive lots of support and encouragement from Police and Housing Authority officials. Members of the Chocolate Community always receive discount prices for any building permits they desire and rarely are they given any restrictions on permits. Members of the Chocolate Community are always served first whenever they go to the Housing Authority (even if it means someone else is "put on hold" in order to serve a Chocolate member). The Housing Authority always issues the very first permit of the exercise to the Chocolate Community. Housing Authority officials also always encourage Chocolate members to build buildings larger than their intended purpose and specifications.

It is a good idea to think of the Chocolate Community as a group of people who are always compliant with Police and Housing Authority requests. Police *never* place a member of the Chocolate Community in jail. Housing Authority officials and Police know that they are paid through resources of the Chocolate Community and are in fact members of the Chocolate Community themselves. The Chocolate Community is dedicated to the education of their citizens. Most Chocolate members have attended college or will attend college. They are a hard-working community with a number of resources. The Chocolate Community is the standard by which all others measure themselves.

### Mint Chocolate Chip Community

The Mint Chocolate Chip Community must "play it straight" during the exercise. In general, they receive no favors or privileges nor any harassment from Police and

Housing Authority officials. Members of the Mint Chocolate Chip Community always pay stated prices for any building permits they desire and are given minor restrictions on permits (just enough restrictions to keep them from appearing more industrious or better than the Chocolate Community). Members of the Mint Chocolate Chip Community always served on a first-come-first-serve basis whenever they go to the Housing Authority (they stand on line for services unless a member of the Chocolate Community is present).

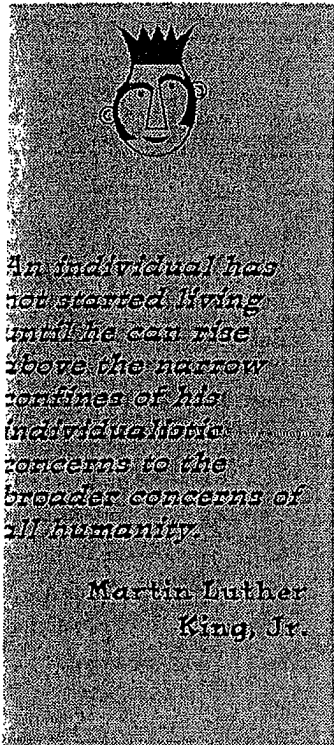
It is a good idea to think of the Mint Chocolate Chip Community as a group of people who are generally compliant with Police and Housing Authority requests. Police *rarely* place a member of the Mint Chocolate Chip Community in jail unless they are blatantly violating the law. The Mint Chocolate Chip Community aspires to the standards set by the Chocolate Community. Some Mint Chocolate Chip members have attended college or will attend college.

They are a modest, hard-working community with just enough resources to sustain themselves.

### Vanilla and Strawberry Communities

The Vanilla and Strawberry Communities are indistinguishable from each other. They are treated as one large group without any positive characteristics. In general, they receive no favors or privileges from Police and Housing Authority officials. Throughout the exercise members of the Vanilla and Strawberry Communities receive severe discriminatory treatment. The Police spend a lot of time in their areas. Vanilla and Strawberry Communities always pay two to three times the stated prices for any building permits they desire and are given extreme restrictions on permits (enough restrictions to keep them from building exactly what they intend to build). Members of the Vanilla and Strawberry Communities are served on a first-come-first-serve basis whenever they go to the Housing Authority (they actually often stand on line for long periods of time until they are served).

It is a good idea to think of the Vanilla and Strawberry Communities as a group of people who are generally uncooperative with Police and Housing Authority requests. They are boisterous and rowdy people. Police *frequently* place members of the Vanilla and Strawberry Communities in



jail for blatant violating the law. The Vanilla and Strawberry Communities aspire to the standards set by the Chocolate Community however, they always fall short. Very few Vanilla and Strawberry members have attended college or will ever attend college. Due to their lack of education and commitment, they spend a lot of time in jail and have very little vision for their communities. They are a lazy, unresourceful communities with too few resources to sustain themselves.

## Greeting Your Group of Participants

Before beginning the exercise you must prepare your group of participants for the exercise. As part of the preparation, your participants must be (1) place into one of four participant groups/communities, (2) introduced to the exercise and facilitators, (3) given an orientation to the exercise and their roles, and (4) given an explanation of the roles of each facilitator.

## Divide Participants into Communities

Using the prepared Ice Cream Cone Badges, participants are divided into communities based on the flavor of ice cream (chocolate, mint chocolate chip, vanilla, and strawberry) selected. Each participant is asked to place the Badge on his/her chest so that it is visible throughout the exercise. After everyone receives an Ice Cream Cone Badge they are ask to sit, as a group of similar flavors, within the sectioned areas designated for their flavor (see diagram on page 10). During this organizing phase a whistle is used in order to get everyone's attention and to keep them orderly.

## Introductions

After all participants are seated within their sections, facilitators, and any observers are introduced to the group of participants.

## Orientation to the Exercise and Their Roles

The *Community Build!* Reference Sheet (see appendix) is reviewed with the group of

participants. Any questions they may have about participating in the exercise are answered.

## Explain Roles of Personnel

After giving the group a sense of their roles during the exercise the roles played by each facilitator are explained. The group will know how they will interact with Police, Housing Authority officials, the neutral facilitator, and any observers. Each facilitator's role during the exercise is explained. Participants *are not* told about the stereotypical viewpoints and discriminating manner which will guide facilitators' interactions during the building phase of the exercise. Participants will find out about these guidelines after the building phase of the exercise has been completed. Once again, any questions participants may have about their involvement in the exercise are accepted.

## Ending the Exercise

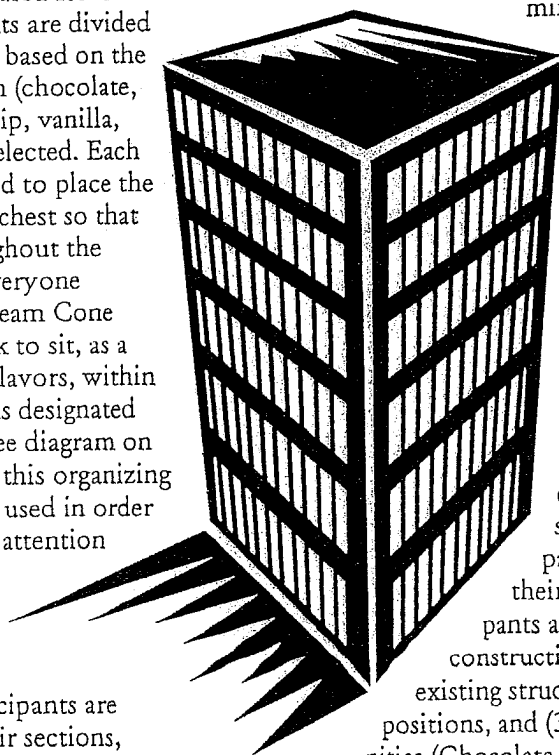
The Neutral Facilitator permits the building phase of the exercise last for 45 to 60

minutes. The exact timing is up to the Neutral Facilitator's perception of the "flow" of the exercise. The following are steps for ending the game and to begin the transition to the discussion phase of the exercise.

## Formation of a Circle

When the Neutral Facilitator determines that the building phase of the exercise is complete, he/she must get all participants to stop constructing their communities. Participants are asked to: (1) stop constructing structures, (2) leave all existing structures intact and in their positions, and (3) stay together as communities (Chocolate, Mint Chocolate Chip, Vanilla, and Strawberry) and form a circle around the outside of the Rectangular Community Grid (see Diagram 2).

## Opportunity for Each Community to Showcase Itself

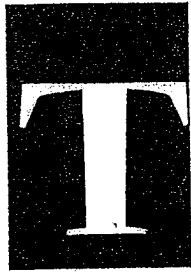


*Prejudices... are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among stones.*

*Charlotte Bronte*



# Facilitating the Discussion



## THE CRUCIAL FACTOR TO THE SUCCESS OF A COMMUNITY

**BUILD! SESSION IS THE FACILITATION OF THE DISCUSSION. THIS SECTION WILL GIVE AN IDEA OF THE FACILITATOR'S PLAN FOR FACILITATING THE ESSENTIAL DISCUSSION ITEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, IT IS NOT A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR GROUP FACILITATION.**

Prior to facilitating the discussion, facilitators and group planners are encouraged to review the section of this booklet on Preparing for a Community Build! session. Reviewing the section will help the facilitator to discover why the session is being conducted and what issues are important for the group to discuss. The game should not proceed until all organizers and facilitators have had a chance to review the first two sections of this booklet.

### Opportunity for Communities to Share Experiences During the Exercise

After each group of participants has had the opportunity to give a tour of their community the next step is to give participants the opportunity to share their thoughts on experiences and circumstances encountered during the exercise. This is the transition point from the building phase to the discussion phase of the exercise. The

Neutral facilitator gives participants the opportunity to now discuss what happened as they tried to build their ideal communities.

### Opportunities to Express Frustration

When asked to discuss what happened as they tried to build their ideal communities, most participants will use the opportunity to give examples of the discriminatory treatment they received from Police and Housing officials. They are usually blunt and very specific with their comments. The facilitator uses the opportunity to give as many people as possible the opportunity to express their frustration with their condition during the building phase of the exercise. Participants are encouraged to vent frustration during this time. It is useful for participants to hear and understand the levels of frustration encountered during the exercise. This venting should help participants to understand the "big picture" of the exercise as well as associated issues.

### Exposing the Big Picture to the Group

After each group of participants has had the opportunity to discuss what happened as they tried to build their ideal communities, facilitators reveal and explain the parameters of the exercise. Not all participants will figure out that not all participants had the same opportunities to construct communities.

### All Participants Forced into Roles

When revealing the overall parameters of the experience, the facilitator notes that all participants were forced into playing roles. The Police and Housing Authority officials are the exercise participants with obvious roles. However, it is important for all other participants to realize that facilitators serving as Police and Housing Authority officials forced them to interact with each other and behave in a pre-determined manner. Their relevant treatment of participants encouraged certain behaviors while discouraging other types of behavior. In general, participants are kept fairly isolated and are forced into competitive modes of interaction. This exercise creates a number of role stereotypical structures that many participants unknowingly support by assuming actual roles.



*Engage yourself in the noblest of human endeavors; the liberation of the human mind and spirit.*

*Maya Angelou*

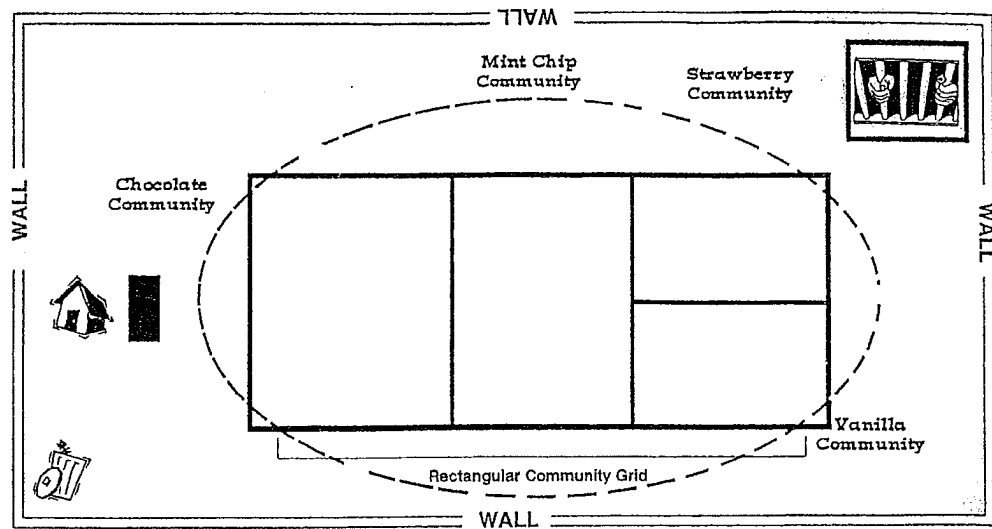


DIAGRAM 2 - DISCUSSION SET-UP

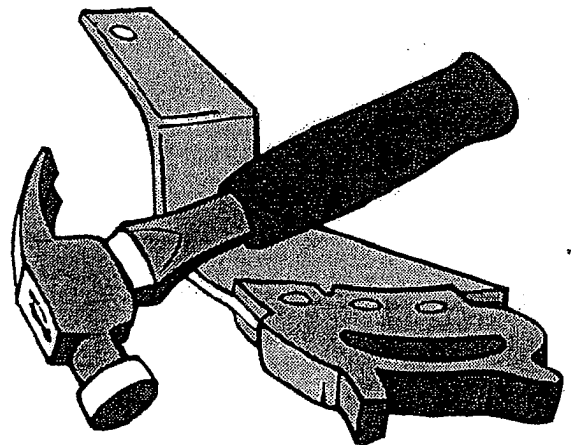
*In the struggle for justice, the only reward is the opportunity to be in the struggle. You can't expect that you're going to have it tomorrow. You just have to keep working on it.*

Frederick Douglass

After making sure all participants are seated and quiet, a representative from each community is given the opportunity to step into his/her space and give a "tour" of their respective community to the other participants. Participants are informed that as part of the tour, the Sheriff, Housing Authority officials, and Neutral Facilitator will be in the process of judging which community is the best. The Neutral Facilitator makes sure participants are describing their physical community and aspects of community present within their community boundaries. At this point, the representative *will not* describe experiences or situations encountered during the building phase of the exercise. The Neutral Facilitator will let participants know that time will be allotted for them to discuss their experiences with the exercise.

### Hand out Award

After each community receives the opportunity to showcase itself, the Neutral Facilitator, Sheriff, and Housing Authority officials visibly caucus. The Neutral Facilitator announces that the award for the best community goes to the Chocolate Community. A representative from the Chocolate Community is asked to come forward and is acknowledged or handed an award.



no bad people


As mentioned, every participant is forced into a pre-determined role. During the point at which participants are asked to discuss what happened during the building phase of the exercise, you may notice that participants direct their comments specifically at one another. In particular, participants will make generalization about each other's traits as a group and how they associated with others during the game (i.e., "The Police are morally corrupt people."). Facilitators reiterate the fact that everyone was "given" a role to play. It must also be noted that inherently, no one is a bad person for playing a role that they were forced to assume. Participants are asked to not make generalizations based on assumed personality traits of other participants or groups of participants. If anything, this exercise is meant to demonstrate some facets of human nature that make larger societal problems difficult to confront and address.

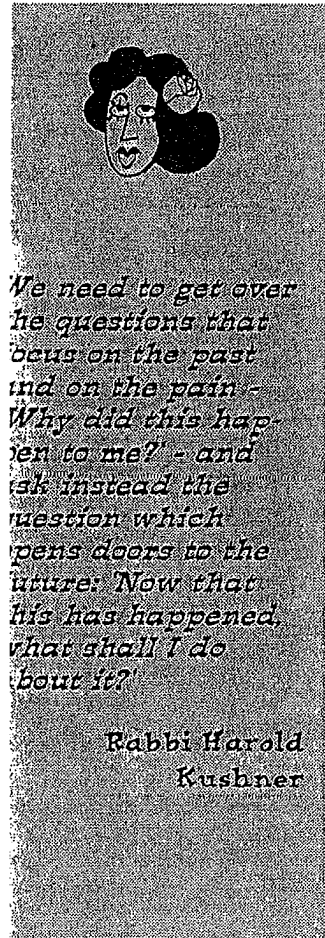
## Discussion of Pertinent Issues

After all of the above items are done in terms of facilitating the discussion, it is time to get the participants focused on a discussion of pertinent issues associated with the exercise. Here is a sample of some of the issues which arise from the exercise:

- Authority
- Community
- Competition
- Discrimination
- Gender Issues/Sexism
- Group Interactions
- Leadership
- Poverty/Disparate Class Resources
- Power
- Race Relations/Racism
- Urban Affairs/Cities

Community Build! was developed as an exercise to facilitate serious discussion about flaws within American society which promote discrimination and stereotyping within our lives and communities, under the auspices of community agencies. It is also meant to facilitate emotional and intellectual responses to issues of discrimination and cultural stereotyping.

Time constraints may require a facilitator to keep your participants focused on a particular issue or set of issues. 





# Community Build!



## COMMUNITY PLANNER'S REFERENCE SHEET

### YOUR GOAL

Create the ideal community for your group

### STAFF ROLES

*Police* enforce rules, mediate disputes, and maintain order.

*Housing Authority* approves and issues permits. Also sets prices for permits and inspects work.

### RULES

1. Police decisions and orders are final.
2. Each community selects one representative to purchase building permits. A new representative may be selected during the exercise, however, there may be only one representative at any time.
3. Community members, other than the designated representative, must stay within the boundaries unless the Police or Housing Authority allow them to approach the Housing Authority area.
4. Designated representatives must remain within their community boundaries unless the Police or Housing Authority allow them to approach the Housing Authority area.
5. Communities must obtain a permit *before* actually building a structure.
6. Use cards, tape, and other supplied materials to build structures.
7. Use markers to label structures.
8. If a community desires to build a structure not noted on the building permit list (at the bottom of this page) the representative may ask the Housing Authority if he/she will sell such a permit.
9. The Police Officers and Housing Authority will choose the best community based upon size, aesthetic appeal, and management of resources.

### BUILDING PERMIT PRICES

Apartment Building or Common Dwelling	100
Hospital	75
School	50
Business Establishment (specify)	50
Entertainment Establishment (specify)	50
Park	50
Place of Worship	25

Other community structures may be built with the approval and purchase of permits from the Housing Authority.

