

Heartbeat

Impact:	Creates non-verbal connection between group members; provides a metaphor for working together and puts members in physical contact with one another
Risk:	Medium
Group Size:	5 to 30
Time Required:	5 to 10 minutes
Materials:	None

Directions:

- Group members hold hands and form a circle. The facilitator sends a pulse of energy in the form of a hand squeeze to the person next to him or her. The pulse moves around the circle until it returns to the first person. Send the pulse around several more times and see how quickly it can travel.

Discussion:

- How quickly did the “heartbeat” travel around the group? Was its speed faster or slower than you expected?
- What parallels do you see between this activity and the process of developing a community (being connected to others in a group, using nonverbal communication)?
- What would happen if someone decided not to pass along the hand squeeze to the next person? In a community, what happens if someone thinks that he or she doesn’t make a difference?

Options:

- Try passing the energy around one way and then switching directions.
- Pass two pulses in opposite directions.
- Pass the pulse with eyes closed—keep adding more pulses without telling anyone!
- Use a stop watch to time how fast a pulse travels around the circle. Have one person say “Go” and “Stop” to mark the start and end of the pulse. Can the group beat its record?
- Instead of using a hand squeeze, pass a whistle, slap, noise, jump, or motion around the group.