

Spotlight

Summary

This activity can last as long as you want, or it can be repeated at the start of multiple group gatherings. It creates a student-guided opportunity to learn new things about their peers, while practicing their question-asking skills and channeling their curiosity. One student is in the “spotlight” at a time, during which other students can ask them questions, at random. The student in the “spotlight” answers each question, but can always “pass” – or decline to answer – without explaining why.

Outcomes

- Participants will practice their question-asking skills
- Participants will practice being curious about others
- Participants will have the chance to share about themselves

Details

For Who?	Any age, any experience level with constructive dialogue
How Long?	2-3 minutes per spotlight. Instructors can choose to do one spotlight per day until everyone in the group has experienced the spotlight, or group several in one day depending on the size of the group.
Supplies Needed	Timer

Activity Purpose

Trust-building activities are an important foundation for any type of group work. This activity can be used when a group is still getting to know each other, as a way to eventually build a sense of trust as they prepare for more difficult conversations to come.

Detailed Agenda

1. Think of Questions

- a. Start by asking for a volunteer to take the spotlight first.
- b. Instruct students to take 1 minute to think of questions they might want to ask others. The questions can be what-if's, hypotheticals, silly and random, or more deep or probing if the group wants.

2. Keep time

- a. One person can keep time, and might choose to give a 10-second warning when time is almost up.

3. Facilitate Each Spotlight

- a. Instruct the student in the spotlight to answer questions as quickly as they can so the group has the chance to ask as many questions as they can – and therefore learn as much as they can. The timebound nature of this activity should create some good urgency.

4. Suggested Language

- a. *“To play Spotlight, one person at a time is in the spotlight, while everyone else takes turns asking that person questions. No need to raise hands – just ask your questions popcorn style.”*

Instructor Considerations

- It is important to remember that the person in the spotlight can always “pass” and not explain why.
- Spotlights should last the exact same amount of time per person. Instructors of more hesitant or avoidant groups should choose 1-minute spotlights to start, and encourage participants to choose light-hearted questions (Level 1 examples below). Once everyone has been in the spotlight, instructors might consider introducing a more personal spotlight round, using deeper questions (Level 2 examples below), and longer spotlights (2-3 minutes each).
- You can choose to have the person in the spotlight come to the front of the room, stand or sit down, or stay in their seat, depending on comfort level.
- Instructors can choose to split larger groups into Spotlight subgroups and run multiple spotlights at the same time.

Spotlight Question Examples

Level 1

- What is your favorite weekend activity?
- What is your dream vacation?
- How do you eat an Oreo?
- Favorite song/album right now?
- If you had a pet, what animal would you get, and what would their name be?
- If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be and why?
- What's a concert you'd love to go to?
- Favorite book/movie/TV show?
- What makes you laugh the most?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you want to be?

Spotlight Question Examples

Level 2

- What do you think is your best quality?
- What do you look for in a friend?
- What's something you want to be known for?
- What do you think people get wrong about you?
- What is something you're proud of?
- What is a cause or value you really care about/believe in?
- Who is someone in your life that you look up to?
- What is something that frustrates you?
- What's something you'd like to get better at?
- What is a topic or skill you could teach someone else?

Tip: To focus this activity on course curriculum, have the audience ask the student in the spotlight questions about how they think/feel/react to a key text or classroom assignment. This can be a powerful way to help students make text-to-self connections!

Wrap-Up

Debrief Questions

- What lingering questions do you have? Feel free to ask that person after our session is over. Channeling curiosity is a big part of dialogue.
- What questions can you think of for other people in your lives? Have you asked them? Why or why not?