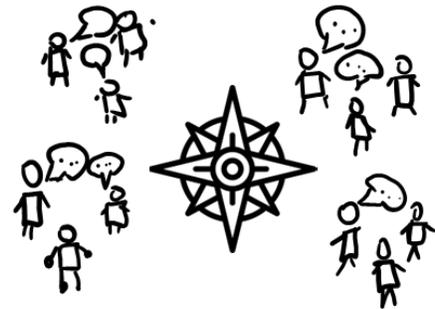


# Compass Points

## Facilitator's Guide

### What

*Compass Points* is a Design Warm-up activity in which categories are assigned to different corners of a space and participants are asked to choose a category and physically move to that space. Once they arrive they are tasked to have a quick conversation with the other people who are in that corner. Categories and discussion questions can be tailored to the theme or topic of the work to follow as desired.



Duration: 10-30 minutes

### When

This warm-up works well when you need to scaffold any of the following behaviours or concepts:

- Finding common ground between participants
- Understanding the diversity of strengths/skills/interests in a group
- Taking a break for movement and conversations in an otherwise stationary session
- Creating small breakout groups with either common or different strengths
- Minimizing hierarchy and giving every participant a chance to speak
- Initial discussion about specific concepts for work to follow

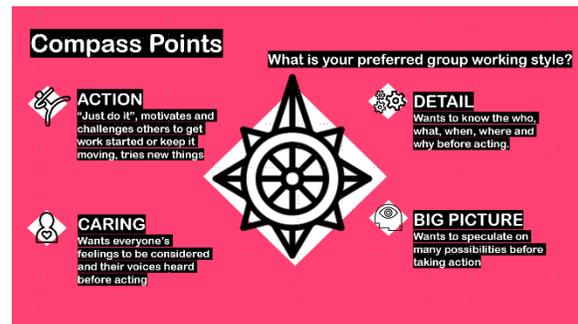
### How

*Supplies required by facilitator:*

- Per facilitator: a slide or piece of flipchart paper pre-set with what the compass points are; blank whiteboard or flipchart paper for recording. Slides aren't absolutely necessary but they do tend to help participants greatly in the moment.

Step 1: Set up the compass in advance

- On a slide or piece of flipchart paper create a 2 x 2 grid
- Develop a thematic question and assign one "answer" to each of the four quadrants on the grid.
- Think about what you want the participants to have top of mind after the warm-up...
- For example, do you want them to be curious and open? Try:
  - o What are you most curious about?  
Space / The Deep Sea / Human Behaviour / Spirituality
- Do you want them to think about your City and how they like to move in it?
  - o What is your favourite way to get around downtown?  
Public Transit / Bicycle / E-Scooter / Walking



This tool presented at MIC2019 by Erin Dumenko, City of Calgary.

For more information on this tool and how it is used, please contact [civinnovationyyc@calgary.ca](mailto:civinnovationyyc@calgary.ca)

## Step 2: Show the compass and find your direction

- Introduce the activity and instructions to move to the corner that they most identify with
- Pull up the slide or flipchart paper that has the compass points on it
- Assign the four categories to the 4 corners of the room
- Ask participants to go to the corner of the room that resonates most with them
- Once there, ask participants to pair up or create a group of three to chat briefly (2-3 minutes) about why they picked that corner. You can also provide a different/more specific discussion question if you would like to.
- Depending on how well the group knows each other, you may have to go to certain corners to team people up with others.
- Repeat activity with different compass points 2-3 times depending on how long you have

## Modifications:

- This activity can work really well as a way to create diverse breakout groups. For this we typically assign corners based on group working styles (action oriented, big picture, caring, and detail oriented) and then number off groups so that they include someone from each corner. As a discussion question for this one, we like, “Which other corner do you really value having on a team to support you?” to start generating some appreciation and recognition for the skills that others bring to our teams.
- The sky is the limit in terms of categories to choose as compass points. Think carefully about the types of conversations you want your participants to have before the work that you are warming up for. Try to mix some light easy ones with more intense personal ones to keep it from being too intense (unless intensity is what you are going for, of course)

## Why

- Once complete, have the group reflect on the behaviours they demonstrated and benefits they gained as a group from that exercise. Document on a whiteboard or flipchart.
- Guide the discussion as required to have group identify things like:
  - o Getting to know each other
  - o Good listening
  - o Finding common ground
  - o Everyone having a voice and sharing
  - o Understanding diversity of a group
  - o Creating diverse work groups
- Sample questions to ask to guide the conversation:
  - o Where would you find parallels between how you had to work in this activity and your day-to-day work?
  - o What surprised you about this activity?
  - o What was the most challenging part of the activity?
  - o What were you most comfortable with? Least comfortable?

