

RUNNING AN INFORMAL GATHERING

Running informal gatherings is an effective way to build authentic relationships through physical connections. It helps us get to know visitors better, facilitates building of relationships among members and visitors and creates a sense of belonging. Here is a 3 step guide to running your own informal gatherings!

1. PLAN

Activities are important to intentionally facilitate connection between one another. Decide on a programme, which can include ice breakers, food, a main activity - whatever you feel is exciting for the group. Set a location, time, and duration to ensure that the programme doesn't overrun, and so people will know what to expect.

It would be good to have some background music to set a lively atmosphere and avoid awkwardness! Before the activity, assign one member to accompany one visitor if possible, so that no visitor gets left out. You can also prepare conversational topics to keep everyone engaged and allow them to better know one another!

2. EXECUTION

We want visitors to feel welcomed! A simple habit we can instill in our members is coming early, before new people start streaming in. Half an hour early would be good, so that there's ample time to prepare the place.

Appoint an emcee to give direction throughout the activity. This is to make sure everyone is clear of what is happening, and transitions would be smooth.

3. POST- GATHERING

Follow up is as important as executing the event. Send thank you messages to the members who have helped run this gathering. Of course, thank the visitors for joining in too, and ask them if they enjoyed the event! You don't have to do it by yourself, but ask the member assigned to the visitor to do so. Strike conversations with the visitors from time to time to build the relationship!

A successful informal gathering is where everyone is able to enjoy themselves and make meaningful connections. So don't get too caught up with the running of the event, but delegate simple tasks such as preparation of food and setting up the location to others. Intentionally creating involvement for everyone would allow members to have a sense of ownership to the informal gathering.