

Power of Participation

Session III: Breaking Through the Barriers

Facilitator Guide

Breaking Through the Barriers

Snapshot



Session Purpose:

To build participants' awareness of the different efforts to prevent people from voting, why certain constituencies are targeted, and why these efforts are so effective.



Session Goals:

- To help participants become aware of all the different ways certain constituencies are discouraged or prevented from exercising their right to vote
- To better understand what barriers 9to5's base and their families and friends face most often
- To build awareness of the historical factors and changing demographics that are contributing to the increasing barriers to voting that are surfacing
- To interest awareness that the outcome of elections matter, and there are important differences even among less than ideal candidates
- To increase motivation and long-term resolve for voting
- To deepen the sense of connection among the participants, and from the participants to 9to5

Prep & Set-Up

Materials/handouts needed:

Timeline slides from Session I posted on wall

- 1787: No Federal Voting standard
 - 1790: Naturalization Law for whites only
 - 1848: Limits on voting rights for Mexicans in US territories
 - 1868: 14th Amendment
 - 1870: 15th Amendment and states limit voting rights for AA
 - 1876: Indigenous People cannot vote
 - 1965: Voting Rights Act Passed
 - 2000: residents of US colonies cannot vote
- Pre-prepared, covered headings for wall: what keeps us from voting
- Psychological barriers
 - Rules/laws (structural)
 - Cultural barriers
 - Physical/logistical barriers
 - Political barriers

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- Handouts used for the session:
 - Did you Know?
 - In Their Own Words: Ossoff/Handel
 - Quick view: voting in GA
- Evaluation forms

Equipment/supplies needs:

- Easels
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Sticky notes (lots)
- Fine tip Sharpie pens for participants

Room Set-up:

- Easel(s) with flip chart paper easily accessible for facilitator
- Chairs in a circle
- Work tables outside the chair circle
- Timeline slides posted on wall (uncovered)
- Covered headings on wall: what keeps us from voting (see above)
- Guiding questions (covered)
 - Activity I: What's ever prevented you, and friends and family members, from voting? Write down anything you can think of.
 - Activity III:
 - How does the information we've talked about today make *you* feel?
 - What will you say to friends and family about whether or not voting matters?
 - Do you have any ideas of things to say to encourage them to vote?



Section I—Introductory Activities

20 mins

Key Components:





2 mins	Welcome
2 mins	Intro to 9to5
9 mins	Participant intros and icebreaker
5 mins	Series and session overview: What the next 1 ½ hours will look like Review of key punchlines from Sessions I & 2 Quick reflections on Sessions I & 2 from participants
2 mins	Revisit group agreements and answer any new questions

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Section II—Core Activity

55 mins

Key Components:

 2 mins	Overview
 23 mins	Activity I—Pulse of the room
 20 mins	Activity II—Small group work
 10 mins	Activity III— Individual reflection and pair sharing

Overview (2 mins)

- We're going to spend the next 55 minutes or so looking at why exercising our right to vote isn't always easy and straightforward.
- We're going to look at ways people are prevented or discouraged from voting, and whether those efforts are effective.
- We'll look at the big picture nationally, and also more closely at what's going on here in GA

Activity I—Pulse of the room (23 mins)

What's stopping people from voting (individuals) (5 mins)

- Everyone take a bunch of sticky notes and sharpie marker.
- Sit for a moment and think about anything that's ever stopped you or anyone you know—friends, family members—from voting in an election.
- Write everything you can think of on the sticky notes. Use a separate sticky note for each thing you've thought of that has prevented voting
- Make sure to put only one item on each piece of paper because we're going to post them on the wall and we want to be able to see all the separate things that stop us from voting.

Reveal the pre-posted headings and explain what we mean by each one:

- Psychological barriers—things like thinking voting doesn't matter, or voting is intimidating...
- Rules/laws (structural)—needing an ID to vote...
- Cultural barriers—people you're close to think voting is a waste of time...
- Physical/logistical barriers—can't get to the polling location, closing DMV offices...
- Political barriers—candidates don't reflect your interests...

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Visually seeing what's reflected by the group (8 mins)

- Ask everyone to put each of their sticky notes under the heading that makes the most sense to them.
- Ask people to batch notes together if they seem to be about the same thing.
- Have everyone look at what's up there and talk about anything that stands out.

Spectrum exercise: how participants have been affected by different types of voter suppression (10 mins)

- Ask everyone to stand up
- Indicate that one end of the room is where to go if your answer to the question is MOST OF THE TIME; the other end of the room is where to stand if the answer is NOT SO MUCH; and then if it varies find a place in the middle that seems right



How This Works

- Ask a question and have people position themselves in the room to indicate their answer
- When people are in place, summarize what seems to be the pulse of the room in response to the question
- Ask 2-3 people to briefly talk about why they're where they are on the spectrum



Spectrum Questions

- How often do you choose not to, or have you been prevented from voting?
- Have you ever been unable to vote because you're not registered, or don't have a photo ID?
- Have you ever been unable to vote because you couldn't get to the polling location on election day and or didn't have childcare?
- Have you chosen not to vote because you don't like the candidates?
- Have you ever chosen not to vote because friends or family don't think it matters?
- How frequently do you vote in elections?



Facilitator Punchlines

This will need to reflect whatever happened in the spectrum exercise.

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Activity II—Small group work (20 mins)

Break room up into small groups of 3 to 5 (depending on # of total participants).

Explain the process for each of these discussions, which is:

- Spend about 5 minutes discussing each of the handouts
- Answer the guiding question for each of the handouts



Guiding Questions

- What are the 2-4 most important points each of the handouts is making?

 8 mins

 Distribute Did you know?

 7 mins

 Distribute GA Voting Quick View and In Their Own Words.

 5 mins

Informal report back key points from small groups to full group (Have people very briefly identify some of the things they discussed.)



Facilitator Punchlines:

- There's been a significant increase in efforts to make it difficult to impossible for people in certain constituencies to vote, particularly:
 - People of color
 - People with low incomes
 - People with histories of incarceration
- These efforts operate on many interconnecting levels and are often highly effective.
- Voter suppression tactics are on the rise as the non-white population of the US is increasing.

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Activity III—Individual reflection and pair sharing (10 mins)

 5 mins

Bring everyone back together in a circle.

Reveal the Guiding Questions you've written on flip chart paper.



Guiding Questions:

- How does the information we've talked about today make you feel?
- What will you say to friends and family about whether or not voting matters?
- Do you have any ideas of things to say to encourage them to vote?

Ask everyone to think to themselves for a minute about everything we've talked about today.

- How does this information make you feel?

Next think about someone you know who you suspect isn't voting regularly.

Jot down some notes.

- After the session today what would you say to this person about whether or not voting matters?
- Do you have any ideas of things to say to encourage them to vote?

 5 mins

Pair sharing: Turn to the person sitting next to you on the left and and briefly discuss the Guiding Questions together.

Section III—Discussion & Punchlines

15 mins

 7 mins

Informal report back key points from pair sharing to full group (Have people **very briefly** identify some of the things they discussed.)

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 3 mins

Pulse of room

Show of hands or spectrum (depending on energy of room)

- How likely are you to vote in future?
- Do you think you'll talk to friends and family to encourage them to vote?

 5 mins



Facilitator Punchlines

- There are a lot of people in positions of power, and especially white men, who both don't want us to vote and who want us to feel that voting doesn't matter.
- Even when we're not excited by our choices in candidates, there are often very important differences in their positions that affect how they'll work for or against issues we care about.
- If the constituencies we represent, people of color, women, younger voters, were to turn out regularly in high numbers our votes would change the outcomes of many elections and we'd have far better candidates, policies, and laws.





Facilitator Closing Comment:

There's a reason there are so many different efforts to make it difficult for us to vote, and also to convince us our votes don't matter! If we want to work for change, and to resist the direction our country is going in, voting is critical.

Section IV—Reflections & Evaluation

10 mins

Key Components:

 5 mins	Reflections/feedback from participants
 5 mins	Fill out evaluation forms