

## ARTISTS THRIVE ACTIVITIES: FOUR CORNERS CONVERSATIONS

**WHAT:** A way to facilitate in-depth conversations with a larger group of artists about some of the key concepts from the Artists Thrive tools.

**WHO:** 4-5 facilitators plus 20-50 artist attendees

**WHERE:** Select a convenient, neutral venue with minimal distractions and enough room and seating for the expected number of attendees.

**TIME:** 1.5-2 hours (depending on number of rounds of breakout groups)

### SUPPLIES:

- Print four copies of the 4 Corners Facilitator Guides (attached)
- Print one copy of the 4 stages of the Artists Thrive spectrum (attached)
- Flipchart, whiteboard, screen/projector or handout of the row(s) selected in step #1 (available to print here: [insert links]) (optional)
- Artists Thrive fliers (optional, can request quantity needed for free here: [Insert link])
- Pens/pencils for participants
- Post it notes or index cards (at least 2 for each participant)
- Nametags
- Markers for nametags (and flipchart/whiteboard if using)
- Refreshments or invite potluck

### HOW:

1. *Prep:* Before the gathering, review the survey tools and select up to 4 rows (just rows, not categories) that you would like to focus on. For example, you might select the first row under the “Artistic Life” category about creating time for your art practice:

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2. *Orient Facilitators:* Identify your four facilitators and give each a copy of the 4 Corners Facilitator Guide sheet of instructions attached here.
3. *Gather:* Greet people personally as they arrive and make them welcome. Offer refreshments or invite a potluck. Invite each participate to make a name tag.
4. *Share about Artists Thrive (5 min):* Explain why you decided to host this gathering and respond to any preliminary questions about Artists Thrive. Pass out Artists Thrive fliers (if desired).
5. *First round: Divide into groups (5 min):*
  - a. Use the 4 corners of the room to represent the 4 stages of the Artists Thrive spectrum (i.e. Artists Silenced, Artists Struggle, Artists Survive, Artists Thrive). Assign a facilitator for each of the 4 levels.
  - b. Ask the artists gathered to listen as you read the 1<sup>st</sup> row you selected for discussion and, if they identify with the language or spirit of any of the four statements, to go to that corner of the room. Read the row aloud (you could also have it projected on a screen, written on a whiteboard or flipchart, or on a handout if you prefer).
  - c. Encourage the participants to make an impromptu decision. They don't have to worry too much about which corner they select—just whatever they respond to in the moment.
6. *First round: Small group discussions (20-25 min):* In the 4 groups, each facilitator will lead a brief conversation following the prompts on the 4 Corners Facilitators Guide:
  - a. Re-read the descriptor for your group
  - b. Pass out post-it notes and have each participant write on their post-it why they identified with this phrase.
  - c. Invite volunteers to share what they wrote. Strive to include the full group, but don't push anyone who doesn't want to share.
  - d. Ask if others relate. Why or why not?
  - e. As people are sharing, prompt them with action-oriented questions such as “how is this awareness going to lead you to a specific action?” or “how could this help you prioritize your goals?”
  - f. Encourage the group to share ideas and resources with each other. Do others in the group have examples of things they have tried or hope to try that could spur movement?
7. *Regroup and debrief (10-15 min):* Gather the full group back together. Take a few minutes before moving on to the next row to debrief on what the groups heard from each other. Were there any themes they noticed? Common challenges? Opportunities for collaboration?

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8. *Second round: Divide into new groups* (5 min): Repeat the same process for splitting into 4 groups as before with a new row.
9. *Second round: Small group discussions* (20-25 min): Repeat the same process for facilitating a small group conversation with the new row.
10. *Regroup and debrief* (10-15 min): Gather the full group back together. Take a few minutes to debrief on what the groups heard from each other. What themes did they notice? Common strengths? Common challenges? Opportunities for collaboration? How did this conversation differ from the previous one?
11. *Third round*: If time, you could repeat the same process with a third row.
12. [Optional] *Commitments* (10 min): Now that you've identified common challenges and opportunities, invite participants to make any commitments they might like to share for what actions they plan to take as a result of this conversation. Encourage people to be specific and timely.
  - a. Write down any group commitments on a flipchart or whiteboard if possible.
13. *Gratitude & closing* (10 min): Thank the artists for being vulnerable with each other and fostering a spirit of support. Go around in a circle and ask each attendee to share one word that captures how they are feeling after the session. Share any anticipated next steps or follow-up.

## TIPS:

1. Recruit at least four volunteers to act as the facilitator for each of the four conversations. It can be helpful to have a scribe as well who can jot down takeaways from the conversation.
2. You don't need an expert facilitator to have a great conversation. Check out our handy tips on how to be your best facilitator self on the attached facilitator guide.
3. This concept could be modified for smaller groups by dividing up into pairs/trios and self-facilitating the small group conversations.

## **FOUR CORNERS FACILITATORS GUIDE**

### **TIPS FOR FACILITATORS:**

- Remain neutral and LISTEN actively
- Be comfortable with silence
- Be mindful of power and privilege imbalances
- All do not have to speak, but everyone should be given the chance
- Probe to clarify insights and learn more
- Encourage alternate viewpoints
- Be spontaneous and follow where the conversation goes
- Be prepared to hear (and value!) the unexpected
- Keep questions succinct, relevant, and open-ended
- Don't stay in the negative
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ask permission before you share another person's story

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Re-read the descriptor for your group
- Pass out post-it notes and have each participant write on their post-it why they identified with this phrase.
- Invite volunteers to share what they wrote. Strive to include the full group, but don't push anyone who doesn't want to share.
- Ask if others relate. Why or why not?
- As people are sharing, prompt them with action-oriented questions such as "how is this awareness going to lead you to a specific action?" or "how could this help you prioritize your goals?"
- Encourage the group to share ideas and resources with each other. Do others in the group have examples of things they have tried or hope to try that could spur movement?

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[www.artiststhrive.org](http://www.artiststhrive.org)

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# **ARTISTS STRUGGLE**

[www.artiststhive.org](http://www.artiststhive.org)

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