

Michele Jarldorn
Cate Hudson *Editors*

Tutorial Ideas for Educators on The Run

Innovative and Engaging Teaching
Activities

 Springer

Michele Jarldorn · Cate Hudson
Editors

Tutorial Ideas for Educators on The Run

Innovative and Engaging Teaching Activities

 Springer

The Community Toolkit: A Hopeful Approach to Community Development



Catherine Kearney and Wendy Coxshall

Abstract The Community Toolkit is a concept that emerged through postgraduate social policy research and holds The Pyramid of Hope at its core. The four strata structure is the focal point for this two-hour workshop which explores each layer, namely universalism, participation, altruism and activism, in turn. The workshop aims to offer a hopeful approach to community work, nurturing reflective practice and focusing on social justice. It is intended to be useful for a wide audience including experienced professionals and social work or human service students.

Keywords Community work · Social justice · Reflective practice

Introduction by Catherine Kearney

I stood at a crossroads during the second year of my MA Social Policy degree. I only wanted to take on the task of a dissertation if it made sense to me and could inform the community work that I loved to do. Although studying social policy was thoroughly enjoyable, I felt it lacked hope. There seemed a gap in the literature. I read a wealth of social policies and their impact on citizens but there was far less which championed the daily work being done effectively in many of the communities I had worked in. As a mature student, I had hope-filled stories of people I had met and worked with in my heart and mind that I continually tried to contextualise within the academic world. I knew plenty of people who had been affected by government and organisational policy or approaches, for good and for ill. I found hope in the communities I worked in, but I couldn't find hope in many of the social policies I reflected on. Thus, my dissertation began and was entitled *Where is the hope in social policy? An exploration of hope theory and community participation in the*

C. Kearney (✉)
The Parenting Centre, London, UK
e-mail: catherine.communitytoolkit@gmail.com

W. Coxshall
Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, England

context of current inequalities. My research concluded with a concept named The Pyramid of Hope which is the key principle of the Community Toolkit. The Pyramid of Hope summarises the key findings of my research in a visual way and is informed by almost 30 years' experience of working in communities, specifically in the fields of mental health, food poverty and children and families. This chapter describes how I use The Pyramid of Hope framework in an education setting.

The Community Toolkit workshop offers a practical format for others to use to consider how these important concepts might underpin their own practice. Having developed training previously for a wide range of audiences, from highly trained professionals to those with little or no formal education, I designed the format to be accessible across a wide range of settings, regardless of levels of education or experience. The Community Toolkit workshop comprises short interactive exercises intended to support anyone working in a community by facilitating discussion and reflection on key aspects of community so that practitioners can feel empowered to take a hopeful approach to their work and have a better understanding of their approach to communities.

The workshop has been delivered in different cross-disciplinary settings. However, the design is intended to be useful to anyone working with communities and could be particularly useful for whole staff teams. If used in this way, the content could form the basis of a team-building or vision day. In fitting with the ethos of The Community Toolkit, it is anticipated that this training will continue to develop in collaboration with practitioners, communities and policy makers.

My experience of working in a range of communities combined with my own research and review of related literature reinforces my belief that community work is the best social work approach. Community work is broad and can protect a community from problems, or at least from their escalation. The Pyramid of Hope embraces the value and diversity of community work.

The Activity

The purpose of the Community Toolkit workshop is to support practitioners to gain a better understanding of the foundational principles of community work as well as encouraging them in the valuable work that they do. The activity is also suitable for students who are not yet working in the field. It will enable students to consider the principles of how such a hopeful approach to community work could inform their own roles in the community. It is intended to provide students with the opportunity to think critically about what they anticipate they will bring to the communities they see themselves working in. The workshop provides the framework for students to consider which area of community work may suit them best as well as what role they may take up. The activity offers a structure to give practitioners the opportunity to discuss their work in an environment where they can contextualise their work, either with practitioners working in a different field or with colleagues. The Community Toolkit enables critical thinking across a diverse range of community work by asking

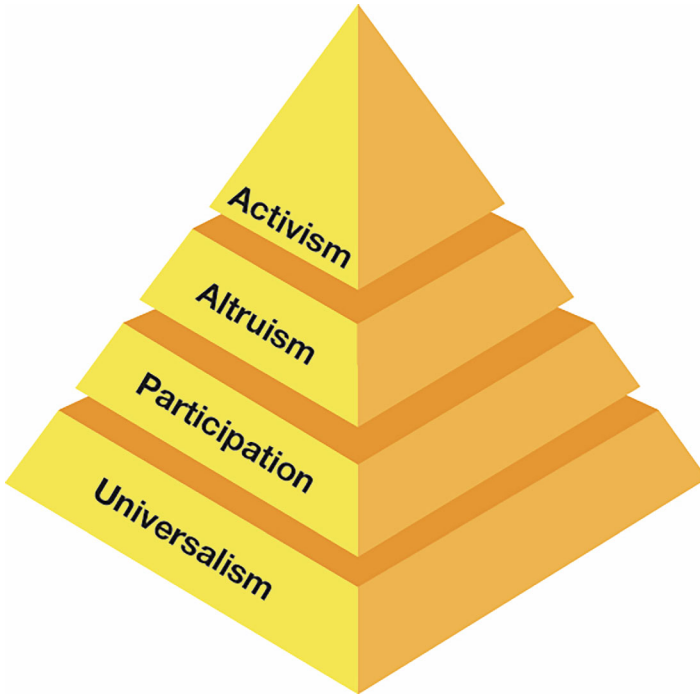


Fig. 1 The Pyramid of Hope (Kearney, 2023), which provides the tool for critical thinking in The Community Toolkit workshop

open questions for discussion and using small group activities. A detailed workshop plan can be found in the chapter Appendix (Fig. 1).

Specifically, The Pyramid of Hope’s four key elements—universalism, participation, altruism and activism—are explored through short interactive exercises that aim to support community workers to reflect, embrace diversity, and recognise the impact of their work, which subsequently may bring justice to an individual, family or community. The workshop’s ethos is to foster values of nurture and care in professionals and volunteers working in communities so that attendees may leave feeling empowered. This may then be reflected in communities where individuals within communities may also feel nurtured and cared for.

Theory

The Community Toolkit takes a hopeful approach to community work, with its fundamental principles rooted in social justice. The key foundation of The Community Toolkit can be found in the “Pyramid of Hope”, a visual tool that forms the focal point of the training and is used to guide practitioners through the four-layered structure

to critically reflect on universalism, participation, altruism and activism. Snyder's Hope Theory (Snyder, 2002) has been reflected on as an antidote to the challenges facing practitioners and is referenced in the training, whilst the focus is on the benefits of universalism to reduce inequalities and Beresford's emphasis on active citizen participation. Whilst pyramid models of participation are acknowledged in other fields (Beresford, 2021; Green, 2005), it is believed that The Pyramid of Hope is unique in nurturing critical thinking within the social justice arena. Snyder's Hope Theory underpins the exploration for practitioners and is aimed at encouraging individuals in the work that they do, enabling them to feel valued and empowered. As Snyder says about hope, "It lifts our spirits and makes us think of what is possible. Hope is the same—a personal rainbow of the mind" (Snyder, 2002, p. 269).

Universalism forms the initial strata of the pyramid and is used as a way of expressing inclusivity in care work, recognising the theory that societies are more likely to thrive with universal rather than means tested services, whilst also identifying the place for proportionate universalism (Beresford, 2011; Marmot, 2010).

Participation, as far as the Pyramid of Hope is concerned, is active. It recognises that there may be times when individuals or communities are not able to fully participate in society, but a more hopeful society is one where citizens actively participate. It considers how well someone participates rather than how much. It recognises the role of community in order to reduce one of the root causes of societal and health inequality— isolation (Putnam, 2001). The call for "better opportunities that allow people to play an active role in improving their own lives, rather than just 'passive' support that does not address underlying causes of poverty" (Gugushvili & Hirsch, 2014, p. 74) seems an important reflection when considering community participation and inequality.

The Pyramid of Hope prompts consideration of sustainable altruism through highlighting compassion and placing value on "a universe of worth outside individual recreation and exchange" (Sacks, 1997, p. 202). Altruism builds on active participation whereby individuals give something of themselves to enable their fellow citizens to flourish.

The role of activism is included and, whilst acknowledging that it is not a necessary endeavour for the whole community, it nevertheless represents a sign of a healthy community, promoting understanding of the political landscape and ensuring it works for the common good (Thrupp & Tomlinson, 2005). Activism is for a few people who can effect wider societal or systemic changes to offer a more hopeful existence for the whole of society.

To maximise the critical thinking of workshop participants, it is useful for them to consider their own learning journey and the importance of learning from others. Small group work provides the opportunity to be part of a community, even if it is temporary. The layers of the pyramid are reflected in the workshop participants themselves and can further highlight the importance of community as follows:

- **Universalism:** All group members are needed. Individuals form a whole group and absences can result in a sense of loss.

- **Participation:** Groups thrive when all members play their part. If individuals remain silent, critical thinking becomes impossible.
- **Altruism:** A group learning experience requires members to give something of themselves and contribute to the learning. This may be a shared thought, story, or reflection as well as the time to listen well to others.
- **Activism:** This may be something that members decide in the workshop, but the nature of reflective learning means that it might happen outside the group. Something that happens in the group may inform the action we take outside of it. In essence, a learning experience in a workshop can change our own practice outside of it.

Therefore, the Community Toolkit Workshop provides a constructively aligned pedagogical structure (Biggs et al., 2022), where the content and format encourage all participants to see the benefit of community-based practices and experience the Pyramid of Hope for themselves.

Before Class Preparation

The most helpful preparation for the tutor is to be familiar with the structure and content of the training. This will enable them to take a flexible approach to manage the discussion and adapt accordingly to the points made by learners. It is important that the tutor is familiar with principles of group work and process to support the group members in their reflective learning experience. Tutors will be best equipped for the interactive elements of the training if they have worked through the activities themselves, as they will have reflected on the key principles and have their own perspective to reflect on. The tutor is facilitating the workshop rather than teaching, as the wisdom gained from the workshop will be the wisdom shared by the participants. No prior reading is required by students but a willingness to contribute thoughts and ideas in the group is essential. Minimal resources are required, namely:

- Visual slides (online and in person)
- Flipchart, post it notes, pens (in person).

If resources are sufficient, it can be helpful to have two tutors delivering the training together. This models partnership working from the outset and moves away from individualism in a visual and practical way.

During the Session

The Community Toolkit activity is designed as a two-hour workshop (see Appendix). The following brief lesson plan outline provides suggested timings (Fig. 2):

0h00	Introductions	15 mins
0h15	What do communities need to feel safe? How do we start?	15 mins
0h30	Setting goals	10 mins
0h40	Pyramid of Hope Overview	10 mins
0h50	Universalism	20 mins
1h10	Participation	20 mins
1h30	Altruism	15 mins
1h45	Activism	10 mins
1h55	Ending	10 mins

Fig. 2 Lesson plan

Timings of the session can be challenging! Any section can take longer than the allocated time, but it's important that group members feel heard. An ideal group size would be 8–12 practitioners. Areas of particular interest will vary from group to group and may affect timings of sections. It is important that each element is included, even if the time allocated for each section varies. The above framework and detailed lesson plan are intended to provide the tutor with sufficient material to generate learning and critical thinking. The material is for use in a discussion-based session delivered by a skilled facilitator. The expertise emerges through the contributions of those in the room.

The Community Toolkit workshop should reflect its approach within the group of learners as follows:

- **Universalism:** including everyone
- **Participation:** everyone having the opportunity to make contributions to the discussion
- **Altruism:** demonstrated by those giving of themselves during the workshop for the benefit of others, thus enriching the discussion
- **Activism:** this may be something that happens after the workshop, evidenced by what practitioners leaving the activity with a desire to put their learning into practice.

For tutors delivering the training online, it is important to encourage participants to have their cameras on and give everyone the opportunity to contribute to discussions,

both of which would constitute a form of altruism. The training works well online or in person. The synchronous setting is important to reflect the community ethos of the workshop with interactive exercises and small group discussions. Asynchronous delivery is therefore not recommended.

Post Session Reflections

Much of the learning about students from delivering this training has been about recognising how rarely community practitioners assemble to reflect on their work and make connections with others in the same or similar field. Group theory, process and safety are paramount. A warm welcome has undoubtedly helped to engage students at an early stage so that they can get the most of what is essentially a short session. Time spent by the tutor thinking about and preparing for the session, including consideration of learners enrolled usually reaps great rewards in terms of the enthusiasm and engagement levels.

Student Comments

- “What was evident was the thread of your ability to hold, see & communicate the hope in adversity. This weaved through & came across strongly giving it life & spirit. This alone has the power to motivate, engage & resurrect the belief of hope. I loved your Pyramid of Hope and how it simplifies a multitude of principles & pulls together underpinning concepts in a memorable way.”
- “I’ve never had such a nice, zoomed meeting. It was great to hear from others working in their community. I was very impressed by the tutor’s inclusive style, involving everyone!”

Each workshop has developed its own community and participants have learned from one another, subsequently forming links as if a developing community themselves. Some agree to meet later as a form of mutual aid and cooperation. Time has been a pressure. Whilst pre-workshop it can be challenging for students and professionals to sign up to the workshop because of heavy workloads, once participants attend it, they have a lot to share. It may be helpful to divide the workshop into smaller sections or use each topic in a tutorial.

The importance of care and nurture in a safe and supportive group where participants feel truly heard cannot be under-estimated for any community workers. The aim is for community workers to feel hopeful and validated in the vital work that they do so that they can then pass on a sense of hope in the communities where they work.

References

- Beresford, P. (Ed.). (2011). *Supporting people: Towards a person-centred approach* (1. publ). Policy Press.
- Beresford, P. (2016). *All our welfare: Towards participatory social policy*. Policy Press.
- Beresford, P. (2021). *Participatory ideology: From exclusion to involvement* (1st ed.). Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1gbrrrw>
- Biggs, J. B., Tang, C. S., & Kennedy, G. (2022). *Teaching for quality learning at university (Fifth edition)*. Open University Press.
- Green, B. C. (2005). Building sport programs to optimize athlete recruitment, retention, and transition: Toward a normative theory of sport development. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19(3), 233–253. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.19.3.233>
- Gugushvili, D., & Hirsch, D. (2014). *Means-Testing or Universalism: What strategies best address poverty? A review contributing to Joseph Rowntree Foundation's development of an anti-poverty strategy*. Loughborough University. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325049542>
- Kearney, C. (2023). *Where is the hope in social policy? An exploration of hope theory and community participation in the context of current inequalities*. (Masters dissertation, Liverpool Hope University). The Parenting Centre. <https://theparentingcentre.org/community-toolkit/>
- Marmot, M. (2010). *Fair society, healthy lives: The Marmot review*. UCL.
- Putnam, R. D. (2001). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community* (1. Touchstone ed.). Simon & Schuster [u.a.].
- Sacks, J. (1997). *The politics of hope*. Jonathan Cape.
- Snyder, C. R. (1995). Conceptualizing, measuring, and nurturing hope. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73(3), 355–360. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1995.tb01764.x>
- Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249–275. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1304_01
- Snyder, C. R., Cheavens, J., & Sympson, S. C. (1997). Hope: An individual motive for social commerce. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 1(2), 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.1.2.107>
- Thrupp, M., & Tomlinson, S. (2005). Introduction: Education policy, social justice and ‘complex hope.’ *British Educational Research Journal*, 31(5), 549–556. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920500240684>

Appendix 3 for Chapter 5

The Community Toolkit: A Hopeful Approach to Community Development
Catherine Kearney and Wendy Coxshall

Appendix includes:

- A detailed workshop plan

General guidelines for delivery

This workshop is intended to offer a flexible framework for delivery in a wide range of settings and time constraints. It can be broken down into smaller sections and used in a tutorial setting. Activities can be given more or less time, depending on the number of students. Consideration of The Pyramid of Hope must be appropriate to the delivery setting and use of other resources such as video clips or newspaper articles to reflect on. Clips of Ken Loach films are a useful place to start when considering social justice issues within a community setting. For students without community work experience, it may be useful for them to think about their own experience of being in a community.

Note: Ken Loach is a UK film-maker, best known for his portrayal of social issues.

RESOURCES: Visual slides with instructions for each section, Pyramid of Hope image and computer

Refer to the chapter for a workshop timing run sheet.

Introductions (15 mins)

Welcome group members and give personal introduction.

Introduce the workshop, highlighting the underlying principles to value individuals and bring social justice. Give a few ideas of how the course material might be used in the future, tying into tutor's own experience of community work (e.g. families, mental health or food poverty). It is hoped that the workshop will be useful to anyone working in community development, as it grew out of community work experience, research and a wide literature review. Through their research, the author

identified key elements which are worth considering when reflecting on any community work. We'll consider each of the four elements later, but first it would be good for everyone to introduce themselves.

Ask participants to introduce themselves by giving their name and their experience of working in/with communities and:

Either: say what community means to them

Or: use a range of images (e.g. holiday scenes, food, people, nature etc) printed on card or on screen and participants choose one that represents community, or an element of community to them.

How do we start? (10 mins)

Ask: What is your experience of working with new people or projects?

What are the issues or barriers that make it challenging or is it easy?

Points to highlight: people don't develop or grow if they don't feel safe (Maslow, 1943). Previous experiences of learning, doing or being can hinder initial engagement. Individuals and communities who have long been victims of neoliberalism, capitalism or social marginalisation often need much restoration before building trust. There is much rethinking to be done. Innovation is required but it is important to think about the long term and sustainability, rather than just short-term input.

Goal Setting (10 mins)

Ask: Do we set goals or targets? If so, how do we do this? Is it problematic?

It may help generate a discussion by asking these rhetorical prompts: How about asking what people want? Asking what they would like to achieve? Reviewing? What do they need to achieve their goal?

Highlight the danger of seeing people as a project, rather than an individual. This is challenging in some community work which is funded for a particular purpose or classed as "targeted".

Recognition of whether practitioners take a strengths-based approach or build on a deficit model can be useful at this stage.

The Pyramid of Hope (10 mins)

*Please refer to the chapter for a diagram of The Pyramid of Hope

- What things make us feel hopeful?
- What do we mean by hope?

Explain that the pyramid of hope grew out of research, looking for hope in the context of current inequalities in the UK. Scrutiny of social policy felt like a hopeless task with little optimism. Point out that hope isn't synonymous with optimism which can sometimes be seen as cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011) where the things people are optimistic about can become an obstacle in their flourishing. The Pyramid of Hope is intended as a tool for practitioners to reflect on their work and identify their approach to community work. The four elements of the pyramid will now be considered in turn.

Universalism (20 mins)

Ask: What do we think about universalism?

What does it mean in practical terms for you in your setting?

This may link back to the earlier “How do we start?” section about the dangers of targeted services and support for vulnerable/disadvantaged people.

The Pyramid of Hope places great importance on universalism as the foundation for bringing hope into challenging situations. It forms the largest section of the pyramid as it ensures that everyone in society is included. Labels and division brought about through targeted support cannot feature in this universalism, yet there is a place for proportionate universalism. It can be helpful to mention the role of *ubuntu* (Murove, 2012) in universalism, where we are all better off (not just economically) when we recognise our humanity is tied up with one another.

Participation (20 mins)

Ask: Why do we think participation made it onto the second layer of the pyramid?

Do we need communities to participate?

Can we think of any good examples?

Highlight that participation is active rather than passive.

If helpful, use the following examples of hopeful participation in communities. You may wish to add your own that may link with the group members.

Food pantries: volunteers participate, as do members. It’s a hand up, not a handout. Economies of food pantries work better as they aim to cover the food costs, yet there is a danger of dependency on volunteers.

Peer-led parenting programs: families who previously struggled to participate due to the alienation and labelling they had experienced. A peer-led model recognises a role which couldn’t be done by professionals and where families can relate to the peer leader.

Youth panel: children and young people’s resilience can be built because they are actively involved in something. They have a voice and feel heard. While it is not possible for every young person to be on the youth board, it is possible to give everyone a voice.

Altruism (15 mins)

Ask: What do we mean by altruism?

How altruistic are we?

Ask participants to measure themselves on a 1–10 scale of how altruistic they are (10 = most altruistic). Chances are most community workers are more likely to be nearer to 10, although there are some poor examples which have created a hierarchy and opposite of what was intended.

Ask: Why do we do it? Outline two suggested motivations: to feel good about ourselves or out of empathy (the latter perhaps sometimes motivated by the deficit in others’ lives, so caution over feeling pity).

Recognise that everyone has something to give, and to refer again to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) where there is a need to feel useful. It is important to recognise that there may be times when even the most well-resourced and capable

people need a break. This emphasises the importance and value of universalism where pressure is shared and there is a sense of cooperation and collectivism.

Activism (10 mins)

Ask: Why do we think activism is at the top of the pyramid?

It's the one part that is not for everyone! It can also be tiring.

Ask: How do we change things?

Policy changing, lobbying can help. Things can change through the work *with* and *in* communities, not *to* communities. Changes are not always noticed immediately. Grass roots organisations do things themselves, under the radar, and are often under resourced. They may not always be seen as activists, but they often change their own landscape. They have agency. Agency and power are key elements which may factor in this part of the discussion.

Ask: As skilled community practitioners, what one thing would you get involved in activism for?

A danger of activism is burnout, so it is important not to try to change everything. You may wish to give the example of craftivism: changing the world one stitch at a time (Corbett, 2019). One small act can change something.

Reflection (5 mins)

Thanks for coming. Ask everyone to say one thing they've learned from today.

Feedback greatly appreciated.