



Building empathy +
trust

River of Life

Leadership:	1 Person
Room structure:	Tables for each group to draw
Required resources:	A large piece of paper and crayons/markers/pens for each group
Time needed:	20 to 90 minutes
Group size:	5-20

Copyright Greg Van Kirk 2019

Facilitator's Instructions:

The set up:

- Divide participants into groups of 5 to 20 people. Each group should have a table.
- Provide each group with a large piece of paper and crayons/markers/pens.

The activity:

- Ask groups to think about their own work as a river leading to current moment: "What different streams and other rivers helped you get here—working on this issue and involved in this movement? Think about the fast-moving times in your life and the challenges or rocks that you moved through. Draw these as a river.
- Use the the metaphor to its fullest—maybe there are offshoots, rapids, waterfalls, or still times in ponds, etc."
- Give people at least 8 minutes to draw. If you give people more time, then they will need to spend more time sharing.
- Possible adaptation: The facilitator can draw the end of a river flowing into the ocean and explain "This represents our goal." Then ask groups to draw backwards from their vision of the goal to what would help them reach it.

The reflection:

- After people draw, give the groups some time to share their drawings. Ask them to describe what they drew and why.
- Highlight comparisons/common themes between groups and also differences. Have most people experienced the same journey to get to where we are today?
- What were the major challenges faced along the way? What were the solutions? Where are they now?
- While creating the drawing did you learn anything new about your teammates' work?