

# Connections Protocol

Originally developed by Gene Thompson-Grove

## THE CONNECTIONS PROTOCOL:

### **Step 1: Prepare for Connections**

- Organise the space and configure chairs into a circle. All participants must be physically visible to all and must be in the circle (not behind someone).

### **Step 2: Introduce the Protocol (2 minutes)**

- The facilitator will read the following instructions:
  - o "Welcome to Connections. Connections is an opportunity for us to openly reflect on what we have done over the last few weeks. If you feel an impulse to speak, then speak; if you do not wish to speak, do not speak – you are not required to speak. You may only speak once and cannot respond to something that someone else has said. You may reflect on a personal learning experience, a struggle, something significant that occurred, a fun memory, etc. I will not call on you, just begin speaking when you feel the impulse to speak. There will be periods of silence; this is ok. Once silence has become prolonged, I will say "Connections will end in 1 minute" as a warning. If no one speaks within that minute I will say "Connections has now closed."

### **Step 3: Connections (10-60 minutes, depending on group size)**

- When you are ready, say "connections has begun."

**At the end, thank the participants for their contributions and for their participation – it is important to acknowledge everyone's effort and their contributions.**

## TIPS FOR FACILITATION:

- **Be confident and keep the group focused on the protocol.**
  - o If participants begin to speak more than once or respond to another person, gently remind the group of the rules.
- **Do not identify people – aloud and by name - who have not spoken.**
  - o Some participants will not speak in this protocol; this is entirely acceptable. Do not pressure someone into speaking. The subtle hint of saying "Connections will end in 1 minute" serves as a sufficient warning.