Consequence Cascade

This activity is designed to help your participants understand the concept of flow-on effects. Flow-on effects refer to the series of consequences that result from a change, action, or intervention in one part of a system. These effects spread through the system, influencing other components and their relationships, often in ways that were not initially anticipated.

Materials:
- A stack of sticky notes for each person (each stack should have at least the equivalent of 1-per person)
- Pens to write

Activity steps
1. Provide each participant with a stack of sticky notes and ask them to write down a small everyday action or event (e.g. planting a tree, skipping a meal, missing the bus, or starting a rumour). They should then pass that sticky note to the person to their right.
2. That person takes 15 seconds to brainstorm and write down a possible consequence of that action or event <u>on a new sticky note</u> and sticks that on top of the preceding sticky note. Both notes are passed onto the next person, who can see what the previous participant wrote, but <u>they should NOT look further back up the chain.</u>
3. Repeat this process until each stack of sticky notes gets back to the person who wrote the original action. Each person then starts with their initial action, and reads through the cascading effects from that action. If there less than five participants consider going around the circle more than once to build up a significant enough chain of consequence.

Key points to aid discussion:
- How many common or unique 'starting' actions were there, and why do you think that is the case?
- How 'big' or significant were each of the final consequences? What might be the flow-on effect of those?
- Do you see any relationships or connections that exist (or could exist) across the sticky note stacks?
- What other possible flow on effects could occur after the actions?
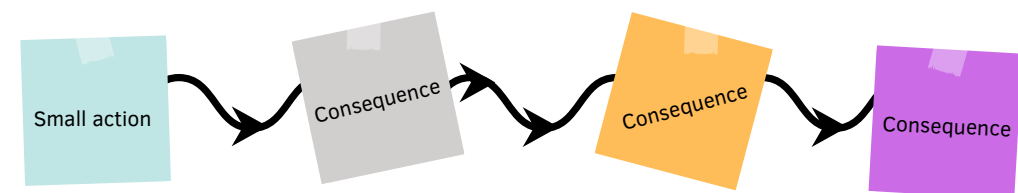
Shape Shifters

This activity is designed to help your participants understand the concept of emergence through collective effort to silently draw something. Emergence in systems thinking refers to the idea that when individual parts of a system interact with each other, they can produce new, unexpected behaviors or properties that are not present in the individual parts themselves.

Materials:
- Small pieces of scrap / note paper
- Two containers
- Butchers paper
- Markers

Activity steps
1. Each person takes some scrap paper. Spend 30 seconds brainstorming as many random everyday objects or things – these can be anything – be creative. Put these into a container.
2. Take two or three more pieces of paper and write a shape on each one. These can be traditional (e.g. square, triangle) or more abstract (curved line, cloud). Place these into another container.
3. With the youngest person going first, draw a piece of paper from the first container – this is what you will have to collectively draw.
4. Each person then randomly draws <u>one piece of paper</u> from the second container. <u>This shape is the only thing you can add to the butchers paper.</u>
5. Collectively, your goal is to draw what was on the first piece of paper. You are not allowed to strategise or share what shape you can contribute. Going around in a circle, each person adds to the drawing until the 'thing' is sufficiently produced.

Key points to aid discussion:
- How often did your collective efforts result in something that 'looked like' what it was supposed to?
- Can your efforts be interpreted to look like something else, for example if the paper is rotated?
- How could the exercise be easier? Try it again with some of those ideas and see if that is true or if something else unexpected emerges.

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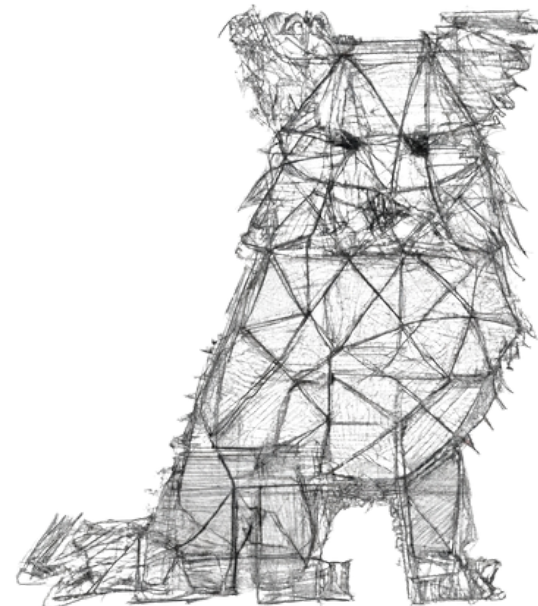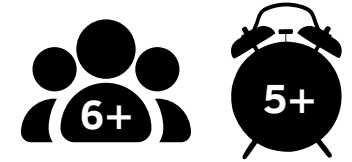
Pause-and-Play

This activity is designed to help your participants develop their understanding of systems concepts like system dynamics, feedback loops and interdependence. The constant shifting of participants, the differing goals that influence behaviour and the reliance on others all help to demonstrate these elements.

Materials:

- Open space
- Yourself
- Furniture (e.g. chairs) that can act as obstacles (optional)

Activity steps

1. Designate one person as the 'influencer'. The remainder are 'components' of the system. If there are more than nine people consider designating multiple influencers.
2. The goal of the influencer(s) is to freeze all the components in place. The goal of the components is for them all to be moving freely.
3. The influencer can 'freeze' other people (the components) in place by tagging them. Frozen components can only be unfrozen by a non-frozen participant.
4. Play the scenario first for 45 seconds or so. Then, in another round, consider inserting obstacles like chairs or tables into your system. These obstacles represent unexpected influences or 'outsider' influences that are uinexpected. Play this exercise for another 45 seconds or so and then reflect.
5. You can also create your own rules - for example, if a component is tagged a second time after being unfrozen they 'turn' into an influencer and their goal changes.

Key points to aid discussion:

- What did you observe or 'feel' while each version of the exercise was playing out?
- What rules or changes might make it easier for influencers to win? What rules or changes might make it harder for components to win?
- Do certain players have different strategies to achieve their goals?

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