



GROUP IDENTITY

We Are the Activity

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS



When an Activity Becomes Part of Who You Are

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEMSELVES?

They do not always say: "I play golf." They often say: "**I'm a golfer.**"

They do not always say: "I go dancing." They often say: "**I'm a dancer.**"

They do not always say: "I play music." They often say: "**I'm a musician.**"

Something important happens when an activity shifts from being something we do to becoming part of who we are. At first, we try it. Then we learn it. Then we return to it.

Then we begin recognizing familiar faces. People learn our name. We share experiences, challenges, successes, and laughter. Before long, we stop participating in the activity and begin feeling part of the activity. The group becomes part of our story. The activity becomes part of our identity.

This shift can happen at any age. A child joining a sports team can experience it. A teenager learning an instrument can experience it. An adult joining a walking group can experience it. Someone beginning a new activity after retirement can experience it.



When an Activity Becomes Part of Who You Are

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEMSELVES?

Group vibe is not something created by one person. It is something we co-create. Some days we contribute energy. Other days we contribute calm. Some days we support others through encouragement. Other days we simply contribute our presence.

One participant in our InterActive for Life research shared an important insight:



It's not what you retire from. It's what you retire to.



His comment reminds us that movement can become a beginning rather than an ending. A new activity. A new community. A new role. A new identity.

Another participant described her experience of joining a cardio drumming class:



When we first started doing the trash can drumming, people would come running to the door and ask, 'What are you doing?' We would yell back, 'We're having fun!'



At first, they were simply residents attending a cardio drumming class. Over time, they returned week after week and year after year. Friendships formed. Favourite songs emerged. People developed routines. Some participants had attended for more than fourteen years. Regular members helped set up equipment. People knew where others liked to sit. Absences were noticed. Successes were celebrated. The activity had become part of daily life. They were no longer simply attending a class. They were a drumming community. And in moments when the rhythm, energy, laughter, movement, and attention merged together, something even deeper happened. The participants were no longer thinking about drumming. They were drumming. The activity stopped being something they were doing. They became the activity. This is one of the most powerful experiences movement can offer.

When an Activity Becomes Part of Who You Are

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEMSELVES?

The boundaries between: me, you, and the activity begin to soften.

The group becomes more than a collection of individuals.

A shared identity emerges.

A shared energy emerges.

A shared experience emerges.

Sometimes this feels joyful.

Sometimes meaningful.

Sometimes deeply personal.

For some people it even feels spiritual.

Movement becomes more than exercise.

More than recreation.

More than something to do.

It becomes a place where we belong.

A place where we contribute.

A place where we become.

InterActive for Life Reflection

Group identity develops when people move from saying:

"I attend this activity."

to

"This is my group."

and eventually:

"This is part of who I am."

And sometimes, in special moments:

"We are the activity."



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

1 Look for Signs of “We”

Observe your group.

Notice:

- Do participants know one another?
- Do they encourage one another?
- Do they celebrate together?
- Do they refer to the group as "we"?
- Do participants seem proud of the group?

Reflection

What evidence suggests participants feel part of a community?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

2 Build Traditions

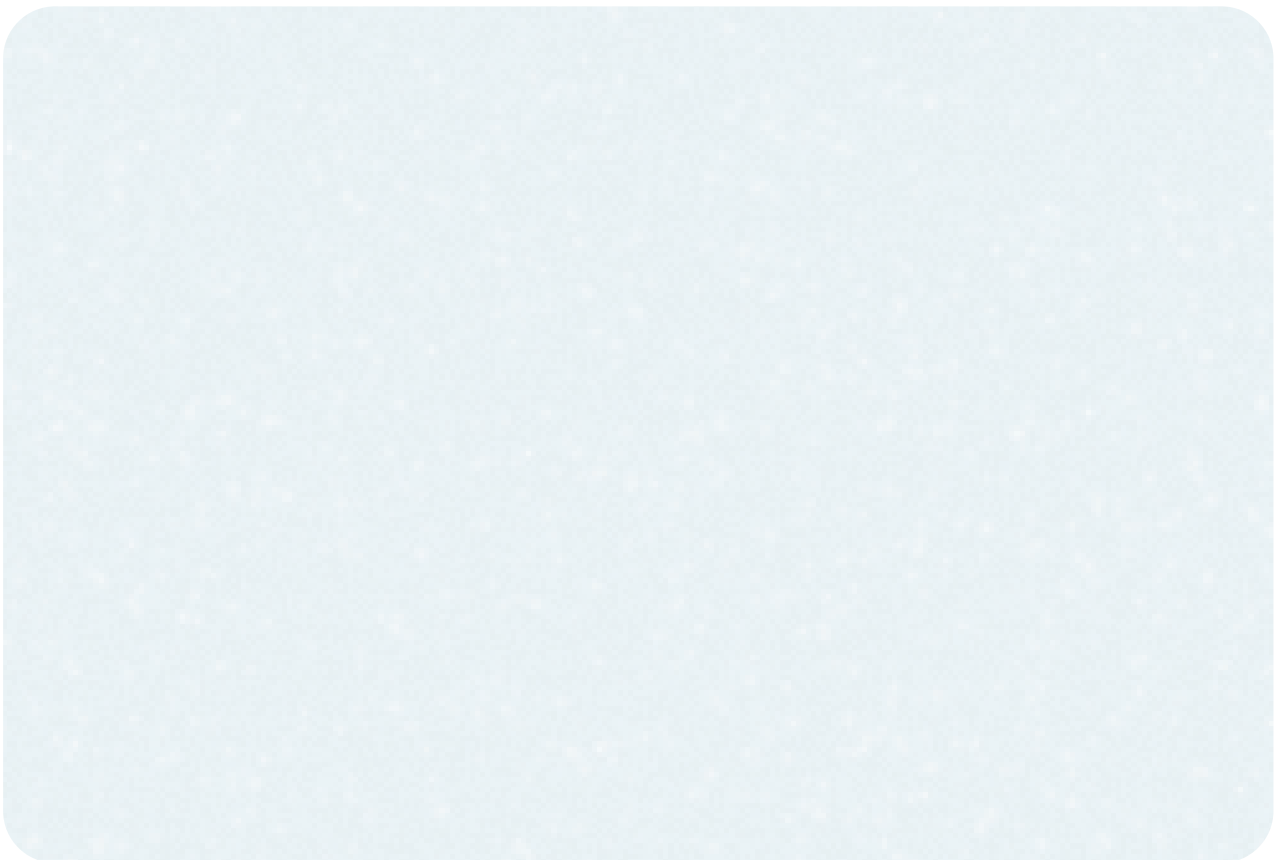
Traditions help groups develop identity.

Examples:

- opening rituals
- appreciation circles
- group cheers
- welcome routines
- celebrations

Reflection

What tradition could strengthen belonging and group pride?



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

3 Share Group Stories

Help participants remember meaningful moments.

Examples:

- successes
- milestones
- funny experiences
- acts of kindness
- moments of collective effort

Reflection

What stories are helping participants see themselves as part of something bigger?



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

4

Celebrate Participation

Identity grows when people feel valued.

Recognize:

- attendance
- consistency
- support
- contribution
- encouragement

Reflection

How did participants help create today's experience?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

5 Support Identity, Not Just Attendance

People often join because of an activity.

They stay because of:

- belonging
- relationships
- purpose
- meaning
- shared experiences

Reflection

Are participants acting like:

- ☐ Visitors
- ☐ Members
- ☐ Contributors
- ☐ Owners of the community

What evidence supports your answer?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

6 Introduce New Members into the Story

Strong identities continue growing by welcoming newcomers.

Help new participants:

- learn names
- understand traditions
- contribute quickly
- feel included

Reflection

What helped new participants feel they belonged today?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

7

Create Shared Goals

People feel connected when working toward something together.

Examples:

- participation goals
- group challenges
- team achievements
- community events

Reflection

What shared goals are helping transform "me" into "we"?



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

8 Look for Group Flow

Observe your next session.

Notice:

- When do people seem fully immersed?
- When does energy build naturally?
- When does effort appear joyful?
- When are participants responding to one another rather than simply following instructions?
- When does the group seem to move as one?

Reflection

When did the group seem most alive today?

What conditions helped create that experience?

What could I do to support more moments like this?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE GROUP IDENTITY

9 Identity Audit

Ask:

- What makes this group unique?
- What keeps people returning?
- What traditions exist?
- What values are visible?
- When do people seem most connected?

Reflection

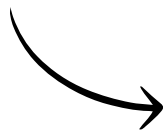
What strengthens this group's identity?

**Shared movement → Shared joy → Shared identity → Group flow →
Becoming the activity**



Curious for more?

- [Quick tips for physical activity participants](#)
- [Complete the InterActive for Life Inventory](#)



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Created from the InterActive4Life and the International Council on Active Aging
Research Project in partnership with the project's advisory committee

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