

# Body Mapping Exercise

This is a great tool for inner reflection and community building early on in a course – through creative solo reflection and group storytelling. The exercise is highly adaptable and accessible while offering a depth of reflection, so it is simple to apply in different contexts. The purpose is for participants to reflect on why they came to the course – thoughts, feelings, passion, experience and more – while they are creating a drawing of their own bodies.

This is one version of how to facilitate the activity:

1. Invite participants to reflect on what has brought them to this workshop/course. All the various thoughts, feelings and experiences that they bring with them in this moment.
2. Then, on the spot, draw an outline of a body on a flipchart (the rougher the drawing the more permission and invitation of all styles and skill of artistry read: any way you draw is perfect for this activity and creativity is a birth right. This is the beginning of deconstructing ideas if what it means to be an "artist" or "ability to be artful").
3. Then draw various representation on the body map related to various aspects of the reflection:
  - Head: What thoughts or ideas are you coming with? What questions or concepts have you been thinking about that relate to the course content?
  - Heart: How are you feeling? What emotions are you arriving with?
  - Hands: (Right) What skills or experiences do you have that relate to the course? (Left) What workshops or learning have you received that relate to the course?
  - Gut: What is that passion or fire that brings you here?
  - Feet: (Right) What is your story or journey that led you to be here now? (Left) What is your vision or where is journey headed on the other side of this course?
  - Heel: Ask if someone knows the story of Achilles. Usually someone does and shares. Then summarize: he was half god-half human and his mother held him by the heel and dipped him in gold to protect him. Yet an arrow hit him in the heel, in the very place where his mother held him, and that led to his demise. So, some may call this weakness yet the invitation is to think of: What is your learning curve or growing edge? What skill, knowledge or attitude are you expanding upon?
4. Then invite participants to get a piece of paper or flipchart (the more space the more fun) and invite them to draw their body however they like and using word, drawing and collage, reflect on these questions and fill in their body diagrams.
5. Include as wide a variety of art supplies to maximize creativity: markers, pastels, coloured paper, old magazines, felt, glitter, buttons, anything! Leave at least 20 minutes for reflection and art-making.
6. Once complete, participants can find a partner and share any aspects and details of their drawing (that they feel comfortable with).

7. In plenary, invite participant to share a key insight or surprise from their reflection with the group. Or have participants introduce their partner based on what they heard. Or have everyone put up their drawing, do a gallery walk and ask participants to share what similarities, differences and curiosities they see. There are many debrief options here, depending on time provide participants with some way of introducing themselves to the whole group.

8. In some courses, these body maps were full-body outlines and stayed on the wall for the duration of the course and participants continued to fill them in and use them as a place to gather on-going reflections and learning.

9. Play around and adapt as you like!

