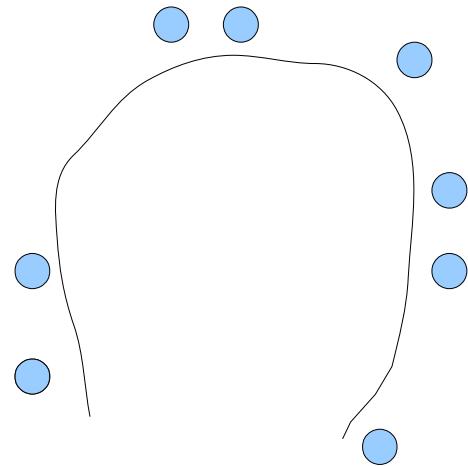# Horseshoe

- is a scaling exercise. Participants show their position on an issue by where they place themselves on a curved spectrum.

- helps people to clarify their views when talking with someone close to their own position (a 'friendly neighbour').

- accelerates the start of a discussion by making everyone's point of view visible.

Why would I use Horseshoe?

✔ for everyone to *quickly* discover the range and shades of opinion on an issue.

✔ to encourage everyone to *clarify* their thoughts before they speak to the group.

✔ to improve *the range and quality of contributions* in group discussion.

✔ to create a platform for group discussion in which *participants naturally show an interest in each other's chosen positions*.

✔ to bring *rarely heard voices* into group discussion. These voices are often the more reflective ones - producing greater learning for all.

What do I need for setting up Horseshoe?

A rope is useful for marking out the horseshoe shape. Make the rope about 25% longer than would be needed for the group to stand side by side on it.

Alternatively use well-spaced chairs to mark out the horseshoe shape. The space behind a circle or horseshoe of chairs can work well if there is room enough for people to move freely.

How to facilitate Horseshoe

1. Ask a question that can be answered on a scale: "*On a scale of 0 - 10, how much can you influence global warming? 0 = nothing I do will make a difference. 10 = I can make a difference.*"
2. Everyone stands in position on a curved spectrum. To prevent people following each other rather than thinking for

themselves, you can first ask everyone to write down a number and the reason for choosing it.
3. Ask neighbours to discuss (in 2s or 3s) why they have chosen their position.
4. Ask if anyone wants to move in either direction as a result of their discussion and let them do so.
5. Bring attention to the overall pattern of distribution and invite comments.
6. Ask everyone to notice where individuals are standing and ask, "*Any surprises? Any comments? Any questions?*"
7. Encourage participants to move as and when their views change and invite them to explain why they are moving. Also ask stationary participants why they are not moving.
8. Facilitate discussion for as long as it is productive.

Things to watch out for

Discussion focusing on the extremes
Solution: ensure that attention is also paid to other views such as by asking for a view from the middle. Emphasise that the purpose is to try to understand the views of others and to see *and* hear what others have to say.

People getting tired or restless while standing
A 'dynamic' beginning can become static and tiring if conversation is sustained in one position. Solution: ask a series of related questions that can be answered on a spectrum. Be prepared: have a list of related questions from which to choose. Also be ready to improvise new questions as related issues emerge.

Horseshoe: Sample Questions

Horseshoe is a large curved spectrum on which people show 'where they stand' on an issue.

ONE END < - > THE OTHER END		NOTES

For reviewing **shared group experiences**

1. It was the best **decision** <- - - - - - - --> We could have made we could have made. a much better **decision**		*Use any paired statements about group performance.*
2. I am impressed with how we work together as a **team**	I am *not* impressed with how we work together as a **team**	*Ask all zones to discuss how they could be more impressed.*
3. We do not deserve full marks for the **task**	We deserve full marks for **task** achievement	*The spectrum spans from the lowest to highest scores given.*
4. We should have paid more attention to the **task**	We should have paid more attention to the **team**	*Explore how different demands can be balanced.*

For providing **feedback to an individual**

5. Our **leader** did a great job	Our **leader** did not do so well	*Ask all zones to discuss what the leader did well and how the leader could improve.*
6. Our **facilitator** should help us more	Our **facilitator** should help us less	*Middle position = facilitator helps the right amount*

For evaluating the **learning process**

7. The **pace** of this event is too fast	The **pace** of this event is too slow	*Listen carefully and use the spectrum to test for consensus on different aspects of pace, choice and responsibility.*
8. We should have less **choice** and **responsibility**	We should have more **choice** and **responsibility**	

For exploring **issues out there** (as opposed to reviewing shared experiences)

9. Individual choices affect **climate change**	Individual choices have no effect on **climate change**	*Substitute any issue on which people may feel powerless.*
10. The best solution is **education**	The best solution is **punishment**	*Applies to many topical issues. So does carrot vs stick.*

For discussing (and assisting) **learning transfer**

11. Our learning from this event will help us make a **real difference** in our organisation.	Our learning from this event will **not result in much change** in our organisation.	*These topics can be set up as an 'optimists vs pessimists' debate using 'Turntable'. After the role-play of Turntable use Horseshoe to allow people to see each other's true position.*
12. Our **team action plan** is unlikely to succeed.	Our **team action plan** will work if we really want it to	

TIP: Self-assessment questions work much better with the 'Spokes' (bullseye) method.