RESULT 5 · ACTIVITIES FOR SENIOR & INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

Repair Café Relay

A pop-up repair café becomes a relay race. Teams rotate around skill stations, learn from the experts in the room, collect stamps in a skill passport and save a basket of "broken" things from the bin.



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ACTIVITY 05 · HANDS-ON · SKILL SWAP · INTERGENERATIONAL

05



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FORMAT	TIME	GROUP
Hands-on · skill swap · intergenerational	75–90 min	8–30 · mixed-age teams of 3–4
LETTERS	**YOU NEED**	
G · O	Repair station cards and skill passports (Printable D), simple hand tools, needles and thread, spare buttons, old socks and T-shirts, glue, a "broken basket" per team	

THE ACTIVITY IN PLAIN WORDS

The room turns into a small repair café with four to six skill stations: sewing on a button, darning or patching, a no-sew bag from an old T-shirt, tightening and gluing, and more. At each station, a "station master" (usually an older participant who already has the skill) teaches a five-minute fix. Teams rotate on a whistle, like a relay. At each station they complete one repair from their team's "broken basket" and earn a stamp in their skill passports. The fastest team does not automatically win: points go for good repairs, for teaching, and for the item that is "most saved from the bin". The session ends with everyone choosing one thing at home to repair.

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You will need

- Repair station cards and skill passports (Printable D): one station card per station, one passport per person
- A "broken basket" per team (a box or bag) with one item for each station: a shirt with a missing button, a sock with a hole, an old T-shirt, a wobbly chair or stool, a loose pan handle, a torn book cover
- Station kits: needles (large-eye needles help), thread and darning wool, spare buttons, a darning mushroom or a smooth jar, scissors, safety pins, fabric patches, iron-on patches (optional), screwdrivers, a small spanner, wood glue, book-repair tape
- A stamp, stickers or coloured pens for the passports
- A whistle or bell, a timer and a scoreboard
- Good light at each station, plus magnifying glasses if possible

Before the session

- Find your station masters. Ask participants in advance: "Who can sew on a button, darn a sock, fix a chair, patch a bag?" Most groups have several experts. Give each a station card a week before so they can practise their five-minute fix.
- Collect broken items. Ask the group to bring safe, simple items that need small repairs. Check them: nothing electrical, nothing sharp or rusty.
- Set up four to six stations around the room with a table, chairs, good light and the kit.
- Prepare a "broken basket" per team with one task for each station.
- Read the handbook chapter on waste, repair and recycling.

OPENING LINES · READ ALOUD

"Welcome to the Repair Café Relay. In this room are people who can mend almost anything, and people who have never threaded a needle. By the end of this session, those two groups will have met. Each team has a basket of things on their way to the bin. Your job is to rescue them, one station at a time. Our station masters are your coaches. Listen to them, ask questions, and collect your stamps. The winner is not the fastest team. It is the team that saves the most and learns the most."

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How to run it

1 **Meet the masters** 5 min

Each station master stands up, names their skill and says in one sentence where they learnt it. ("My grandmother taught me to darn by candlelight.") Teams receive their broken basket and skill passports.

2 **The relay** 40–50 min

Teams start at different stations. Each round lasts 8 minutes. In the first 3 minutes the station master demonstrates the fix. In the next 5 minutes the team repairs the matching item from its basket, with every member doing at least one part. On the whistle, the master stamps each passport and gives the team 1 to 3 points for the quality of the repair. Teams move clockwise to the next station.

3 **The rescue check** 10 min

Teams lay out their repaired items. Each team chooses one "best rescue" and explains in 30 seconds what was broken, what they did, and how much longer they think it will last. The whole room votes for "most saved from the bin" (3 points).

4 **Teach it back** 5 min

Each team chooses one younger and one older member. The younger one must explain one skill they learnt today to the whole room in 30 seconds; the older one must name one thing they learnt from someone younger (perhaps a quick knot, a phone light for threading needles, or a video tip). Each successful teach-back earns 1 point.

5 **Name it, debrief and own it** 10 min

Read the key idea, run the debrief and ask everyone to write their repair promise on the back of their skill passport.

EXAMPLE

At a community centre in Pärnu, the "Nõel ja Niit" team includes Tiiu (76), her neighbour Aino (68) and two students from the local vocational school, Mihkel and Laura. At the darning station, Aino shows how to weave wool across a hole over a smooth jar. Mihkel's first attempt is lumpy; Laura's is neat. They get 2 points. At the chair station, Mihkel takes over: he finds the loose screw and tightens it in seconds, and Tiiu glues the wobbly joint while he holds it. In the teach-back, Laura explains the darning weave. Tiiu says she learnt from Mihkel to use her phone's torch to see the eye of a needle. The team's best rescue, a coat with three new buttons, wins "most saved from the bin". Their total: 19 points.

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KEY IDEA

Repair is near the top of the waste ladder: it keeps a product in use, saves money and saves the materials and energy needed for a new one. EU law is moving the same way. The "right to repair" directive had to be applied in national law by 31 July 2026. For certain products, such as washing machines and mobile phones, manufacturers must offer repair at a reasonable price after the legal guarantee ends, and must make spare parts available. If you choose repair instead of a replacement while the item is under the legal guarantee, the guarantee is extended by 12 months. Details depend on the product and your country. Source: European Commission, Directive (EU) 2024/1799 on common rules promoting the repair of goods.

Debrief

1

What happened?

Which station did you enjoy most? Which repair surprised you by being easier, or harder, than you expected?

2

So what?

Why did so many of these skills almost disappear? What would happen if every household could make these five small repairs? Who in your family or street has a repair skill nobody uses?

3

Now what?

Which item at home is waiting for a repair? Is there a repair café near you, and could the people in this room start one?

Make it work for your group

- **Limited mobility, sight or hearing:** Instead of teams walking between stations, station masters move between tables. Provide large-eye needles, needle threaders, thick wool, bright task lights and magnifiers. Choose repairs that need little hand strength, such as gluing or patching with safety pins, for people with arthritis.
- **Intergenerational version:** Young people are "repair assistants": they hold, pass tools, read station cards aloud and record the repair with a photo (with permission). Older people are station masters and team captains. In the teach-back, young people must teach a skill back to an older person to earn the point.
- **No-device version:** This activity needs no device.
- **Online or hybrid version:** Each participant brings one item and a small kit to their screen. A station master demonstrates on camera; everyone repairs at home at the same time. Show the results to the camera at the end and vote by chat.
- **Short version (20 min):** One station only: buttons. Everyone sews on one button with a partner of a different age, then makes their repair promise.

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WATCH OUT

Never repair anything electrical, anything plugged in, or anything with gas. Check broken items before the session and remove anything sharp, rusty or unsafe. Count needles and scissors back in at the end of each round. Use blunt-tipped scissors for children. Keep glue in a ventilated space and away from skin. A worn appliance cable is a safety risk: stop using the appliance and take it to a qualified repairer.

OWN IT

"By the end of the month I will mend the jacket with the broken zip instead of buying a new one." Or: "I will offer to teach button-sewing at the next repair café in my town." Or, for a younger participant: "This weekend I will ask my grandfather to show me how to fix my bike brakes."

Related: Waste, repair and recycling · G-PRO cards: KR-02 A Repair Skill You Have, KR-08 The EU Right to Repair, KR-12 The Repair Café, KS-20 Repair or Replace?, KR-16 The Thing That Still Works

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