



BLKOUT CREATIVE LTD

Constellations

Facilitation guide
Mapping who holds us

For The Community Pair — Nathan Lewis & Jean-Eric Nkurikiye

June 2026

What this exercise is

A 50-minute facilitated mapping exercise that runs inside a gathering BLKOUT is already holding — a brunch, a social, a picnic. Each man draws his own constellation: the people who hold him, ring by ring, and the connections he wants to build. He keeps the map. BLKOUT keeps only an anonymous summary card.

It is a research instrument that works by being a good afternoon. If the room doesn't enjoy it, the data isn't worth having.

Group size: 8–15 for the full session. **Materials:** A3 map sheets, summary cards, pens, one gold pen per person, a box with a slot. **Room:** tables people can spread paper on, music low.

Before you start — the consent script

Say this plainly, before any paper goes out. Don't improvise past it.

"This next bit is something new — a mapping exercise. It's part of BLKOUT research into how connection actually works for us: who's holding who, and what's missing. Two things to know. First: the map you draw is yours. You keep it. Nobody sees it unless you choose to share. Second: at the end there's a small card — numbers only, no names, not even yours — and handing it in is completely optional. The card is how your map counts without anyone reading your life. If you'd rather just draw and talk and keep the card, that's a full way to take part."

Community agreements apply as ever: what's said here stays here; pass is always available; your body knows things.

Run of show — 50 minutes

1. Arrival into it (5 min)

If the exercise opens a session, run **Name Your Weather** around the tables. If it sits mid-gathering, skip straight to a **Shoulder Drop** — three lifts, three releases — to land people out of social mode.

2. Framing — the nod, made visible (5 min)

Facilitator, in your own words, covering:

- The nod across the street says: I see you, you're not out here alone. This exercise is the nod made visible — an honest look at who's actually in our skies.
- Loneliness isn't a personal failure. It's a position in a web. The web can be redrawn — that's the point of an organisation like ours.
- Then the consent script, word for word.

3. Drawing the constellation (15 min, solo, music on)

Hand out the map sheets — three rings around a centre marked **ME**.

Walk the rings one at a time, with a pause between each. The prompts name *resources*, not feelings:

- **Ring 1 — the 3am people.** "Who could you call at 3am — and it would be okay that you called? Mark each one as a star. Initials, symbols, whatever you like — the sheet is yours."
- **Ring 2 — the regulars.** "Who do you actually see or properly speak to, most months? The brunch people, the gym people, the long phone calls."
- **Ring 3 — the nods.** "Who knows your face and wishes you well? The barber, the neighbour, the men at the function whose names you half know. They count. They're the outer light of the constellation."

Facilitator notes: some men will have a crowded sheet, some a sparse one — say out loud, once, *"there's no good or bad sky; this is a map, not a mark scheme."* Watch for the man staring at an empty ring 1; don't name it publicly, check in at the break.

4. The gold ring (5 min, solo)

Hand out the gold pens last — make it a small moment.

"Now the part that's about what's next, not what's now. In gold: who do you want closer? That could be someone already on your sheet you'd move inward, or an empty space you want filled — 'a workout partner', 'someone who knew me before', 'anyone within 20 minutes of my house'. Draw the star where you want it to be."

The gold ring is creation, not lack. It's also the data BLKOUT most needs — but never say that sentence in the room; the exercise must be worth doing for its own sake.

5. Pair-share, twice (12 min)

Pairs, six minutes per round, **reshuffle between rounds** so no one stays in a clique:

- **Round one:** "Tell your partner about one star on your map — how that person got there."
- **Round two (new pairs):** "Tell your partner about one gold star — what you're building. If you want introductions, say so out loud. That's allowed. That's the point."

Facilitators float. When a man in round two names a wish that someone three seats away could answer — and this will happen — make the introduction before the session ends, not after.

6. The summary card (5 min)

Hand out the cards. Talk it through once:

"Numbers only. Count your stars in each ring and write the three numbers. Tick a life-stage band if you're willing, and the first half of your postcode — SE15, B12 — never the rest. Leave anything blank you like. Then one line, if you want, for your gold ring: what's the connection you're building? No names anywhere — not yours, not theirs. Fold it, drop it in the box, or take it home. Both are fine."

The card asks exactly six things: Ring 1 count · Ring 2 count · Ring 3 count · life stage (under 25 / 25–34 / 35–49 / 50+, optional) · postcode first half only (optional) · one gold-ring wish line (optional).

7. Close (3 min)

Hand on chest if it feels right; three breaths. Then:

"Look at your map before you fold it away. Every star on it is someone who'd probably be glad to know they're there. The homework — if you want homework — is to tell one of them this week."

That last line turns the research instrument into a first gesture. It's the most important sentence in the session.

If this happens...

- **A man's ring 1 is empty and it's landing hard.** Break early if needed; check in privately, not publicly. Know who your safeguarding contact is. The exercise continues; care comes first.
- **Someone treats it as a joke.** Laughter is release or deflection and both are fine. The gold pen usually sobers the room on its own.
- **Someone wants to hand in the whole map.** Don't take it. "The map's yours — the card is the bit we keep." The boundary protects everyone, including BLKOUT.
- **The room is bigger than 15.** Run it as a station instead: maps and gold pens at a manned table, no pair-share, cards in the box. This is the Picnic version — design it after the pilot, not before.

After the room

1. The facilitators photograph **nothing**. Cards travel in the box, physically.
2. Counts and wish lines are typed into a single sheet — still no names, no handwriting retained beyond transcription.
3. Aggregation and clustering happen platform-side; the Community pair present the findings note in their own voice.
4. Every introduction promised in the room gets made within the week. The research is the gathering; the follow-through is the covenant.

Contact

Rob Berkeley

BLKOUT Creative Ltd

rob@blkoutuk.com

07764 935 770
blkoutuk.com

BLKOUT UK is the trading name of BLKOUT Creative Ltd, a Community Benefit Society