

# 10 TIPS For Fun, Meaningful Gatherings That Cultivate Connection

Here are **10 tips to inspire you** to plan a meaningful gathering for the [Recipes for Connection](#) campaign during Well-Being Week in Law 2025.

## 1.

### Ensure Inclusivity in the Essentials

*Start with inclusivity* in the essentials to ensure as many people as possible can fully participate.

INCLUSIVITY CHECKLIST		
	<b>Food &amp; Drinks</b>	Offer a variety of options to accommodate dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, halal, kosher, allergen-free) and include culturally diverse dishes when possible. Clearly label food and provide plenty of non-alcoholic beverage choices.
	<b>Scheduling</b>	Think about timing. Avoid major religious and cultural holidays and consider caregiving responsibilities by choosing a variety of time slots.
	<b>Venue &amp; Accessibility</b>	Choose a space that is physically accessible (ramps, elevators, microphones, visual aids). Consider sensory needs by offering quiet areas for those who may need a break from noise or crowds.
	<b>Prevent Feelings of Exclusion</b>	Larger organizations (like law firms) might organize multiple gatherings hosted by different people during Well-Being Week in Law. This has the potential to create hard feelings if someone doesn't receive an invite to a favored event or is left out entirely. Consider how to avoid these issues by, for example, having a sign up list for anyone who wants to host a party and a first-come-first-serve list for anyone who wants to attend.
	<b>Provide Structure To Ease Social Anxiety</b>	Chronically lonely people, people who are newer to the organization, and those who feel like outsiders may experience social anxiety that can hinder quality connections. Ensuring that all feel welcome, know what to expect, and are engaged in structured activities that facilitate connection can help.

## 2.

### Create Opportunities for Meaningful Conversations

*Skip the small talk.* Incorporate structured but casual prompts to help people connect on a deeper level.



#### Examples

- Put conversation starters on tables like “What’s the best meal you’ve ever had?” or “What’s a surprising skill you have?”

## 3.

### Use “Social Bridge” Activities

*People bond best over shared activities.* Instead of just standing around, offer a **low-stakes group activity**.



#### Examples

- **Cooking/Preparing together** (e.g., collaborative charcuterie board).
- **A team challenge** (e.g., mini trivia, shared playlist).
- **“Teach and Share” experiences** (e.g., demoing a favorite dish or fun skill).

## 4.

### Give People “Excuses” to Mingle

*Help people break out of their usual circles.*



#### Examples

- Use a **“Connector” System**—everyone gets a card with a fun fact and must find someone with a matching fact.
- Host **“Table Talks”** where small groups rotate through different discussion topics.
- Include a few **group-wide icebreakers**. Nick Gray’s [Ultimate Guide for Icebreakers](#) and [How to Encourage Mingling at Your Party](#) offer advice on how to use them effectively. His 36 [Icebreaker Questions](#) for Work blog gives ideas for specific questions.

## 5.

### Encourage Micro-Moments of Recognition

*People feel seen when they're acknowledged.* Build in tiny, structured appreciation moments.



#### Examples

- Have a **“Shoutout Board”** where attendees write something they appreciate about a colleague.
- Try a **“Gratitude Swap”**—pair people up to share one work-related thing they admire about each other.
- Give everyone a **note card to write one takeaway from a conversation they had** and share.

## 6.

### Mix Up Seating and Standing Areas with Purpose

*Social design matters.* Use **intentional movement** to facilitate interaction.



#### Examples

- **Standing cocktail rounds** encourage brief but dynamic exchanges.
- **Assigned “first course” tables** let people meet new faces before moving freely for the rest of the event.
- Create a **“roaming” dessert or coffee station** that gets people circulating.
- **Remove physical barriers** so that furniture [does not block energy flow](#) and actual physical flow.
- Because boundaryless space doesn't feel like a party, **draw a perimeter** when your space doesn't naturally allow for density. For example, if a dance floor is too big, bring out masking tape to mark out a smaller one. For a table at a restaurant, create the perimeter with your bodies by pulling up two chairs at both ends, to close the circle.

# 7.

## Design a “Collective Memory” Moment

*Make the event something people feel part of.*



### Examples

- Have attendees **contribute to a collaborative art piece** (e.g., a community mural, a shared message wall).
- Set up a **photo booth or a group “time capsule” activity** to capture memories.
- Choose a participatory **party theme** that, ideally, invites guests to share something about themselves, which provides conversation topics and points of possible connection. When choosing a party theme, keep in mind your guests’ demographics, interests, and preferences; the gathering’s purpose; and any logistical or cost challenges.

### PARTY THEME IDEAS

	<b>Color Palette</b>	Color themes—asking guests to wear specific colors—are popular and easy to take part in. Examples include black and white, Flying Your Colors (e.g., wear red if you’re an extrovert, green if you like the outdoors, purple if you love dogs, etc.), True Colors (wear a color that represents a personal strength or trait that you like about yourself).
	<b>Team Spirit</b>	Wear your favorite team’s jersey from any sport; invite only Indiana Fever fans wearing fan gear.
	<b>Biggest Fan</b>	Wear something representing a personal favorite from current popular culture—e.g., sports team, movie, band, actor, etc.
	<b>Around the World</b>	Wear something and/or bring a good representing your ancestry.
	<b>Comedy Night</b>	Everyone comes with one good joke to tell.
	<b>Awards Night</b>	Hold an awards ceremony where all attendees are recognized for a special contribution.
	<b>Food Fight</b>	Have a best recipe competition for chili, mac and cheese, cookies, vegan dish, etc. Guests bring their best dish, and everyone gets to vote for their favorite. Give away prizes to the top three vote-getters.
	<b>We’ve Got Talent</b>	Many of our colleagues have hidden talents. Have a dinner party that allows them to show them off.
	<b>Game Night</b>	Pull out some of the classic board games for a fun way to facilitate bonding—e.g., Monopoly, Checkers, Pictionary.
	<b>Nostalgia</b>	Use nostalgia to connect people. For example, ask everyone to bring a favorite childhood snack to share. Or use music or “era” themes (e.g., a ‘90s playlist or favorite TV show food).

8.

## Use “Surprise & Delight” Tactics

*Small, unexpected joys make events feel special.*



### Examples

- A surprise **raffle** or “golden ticket” hidden under random plates.
- A guest **cameo** (video or in person) from a well-known person in the profession.
- Personalized “party favors” like a **quote card** with something inspiring from the event.

9.

## End on a High Note—Together

*How an event ends impacts how people remember it.*



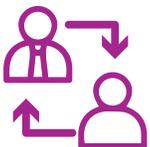
### Examples

- A **group toast** with a fun theme (“To new connections!”).
- A **mini tradition** like a group photo or “last song” that always closes events.

10.

## Follow Up & Keep the Connection Going

*The event should spark ongoing relationships.*



### Examples

- A simple **follow-up email** with attendee highlights and shoutouts.
- A **group thread** to share photos and favorite moments.
- Plan a “**callback**” moment—a future lunch or Zoom follow-up to build on new connections.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Tara received her J.D. and undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and was a tax lawyer in Arnold & Porter's Washington, DC office. She holds a master's degree in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. Tara did her leadership and performance coaching training at Brown University. She is the Chair of the DC Bar Lawyer Well-being Committee, the Director of Programming for the Institute for Well-being in Law, and a co-chair of Well-Being Week in Law.

**Dr. Anne M. Brafford, JD, MAPP, PhD**, is the owner of Aspire, an education and consulting firm for the legal profession ([www.aspire.legal](http://www.aspire.legal)). She is a co-founder of the Institute for Well-Being in Law, the creator of the annual Well-Being Week in Law (WWIL), and co-chair of WWIL. Previously an equity partner at one of the nation's largest law firms, Anne now focuses on individual and workplace thriving, especially the intersection of inclusion, engagement, well-being, and performance excellence. Her book, *Positive Professionals*, provides science-based guidance for increasing engagement in law firms. Anne has earned a PhD in positive organizational psychology from Claremont Graduate University and a Masters of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) from University of Pennsylvania. Anne can be reached at [abrafford@aspire.legal](mailto:abrafford@aspire.legal).