Facilitator’s Guide to Compass Points Activity
From the Cooperative Economic Alliance of NYC - www.gocoopnyc.com

Compass Points Exercise (30-45m)

1. **In Advance:** Write the following on four signs:
   - **North:** Acting – “Let’s do it;” Likes to act, try things, plunge in.
   - **East:** Speculating – likes to look at the big picture and the possibilities before acting.
   - **South:** Caring – likes to know that everyone’s feelings have been taken into consideration and that their voices have been heard before acting.
   - **West:** Paying attention to detail —likes to know the who, what, when, where and why before acting.

2. **Draw everyone’s attention to the four compass points posted around the room.** Ask them to read each one and then select the one that most accurately captures how they work with others on teams. They should stand at that point and remain there throughout the activity. Once everyone has decided, ask participants to observe who has ended up in which group. There may be some a-ha moments.

3. **Ask each group to select individuals for the following roles:**
   - **Recorder** – record responses of the group
   - **Timekeeper** – keeps the group members on task
   - **Spokesperson** — shares out on behalf of the group when time is called

4. **Let the groups know they will have have 5-8 minutes to respond to the following questions:**
   - What are the strengths of your style? (3-4 adjectives)
   - What are the limitations of your style? (3-4 adjectives)
   - What style do you find most difficult to work with and why?
   - What do people from other “directions” or styles need to know about you so you can work together effectively?
   - What’s one thing you value about each of the other three styles?

5. **Ask the spokesperson for each group to share out their responses.** Common responses are:
   - North gets impatient with West’s need for details.
   - West gets frustrated by North’s tendency to act before planning.
   - South group members crave personal connections and get uncomfortable when team members’ emotional needs aren’t met.
   - East group members get bored when West gets mired in details; East gets frustrated when North dives in before agreeing on big goals.

6. **Ask participants to share out key takeaways.** If any of the following don’t come up, be sure to include them as part of the wrap up:
   - This activity increases our awareness of our own and others’ preferences.
   - Increased awareness opens the door to empathy.
   - Our preferences have their strengths and their limitations.
   - A diversity of preferences is what makes for better teamwork and results.