

Non-formal games Guide against bullying: - Psychodrama, Sociodrama and Espere Method®

Gender Setting

Summary

Participants have to guess the gender of a member, avoiding prejudices.

Objectives

Verbal communication.

Equal opportunities.

Team-building.

Materials

Pens and paper.

Timing

30 minutes.

Procedure

Form the group into two teams with men and women in each team. Ask one team to choose a group member as the subject, without the other group knowing who the subject is. The task of the second team is to ascertain if the subject is male or female. They can ask any question they like but must ask it of the entire other team which can then give the answer.

Explain to the answering team that they may lie and may refuse to answer a question if they wish. The first team may guess at the gender of the subject once only, but can ask as many questions as they like before they do so.

Discuss how the group reached its decision, whether there is any unequivocal way of making such a determination, what implications this has for equal opportunities, the way the group worked as a team, or whatever is the learning point of the game.

Commentary

This activity requires a mixed gender group. In this case it is necessary for the trainer to be involved in dividing the group so that there are some of each sex in each group. This division, however, should not lead to an excessively competitive attitude between the teams.

Variations

This game can also be played on the basis of distinctions between social class, race or any classification that can be used to divide people into two categories.

It can also be played in pairs or triads (one being an observer feeding into a discussion session) using one of these distinctions with the trainer "floating" between pairs.

Domination

Summary

Participants form a line according to how dominant they feel they are.

Objectives

Assertiveness.

Self-perception.

Motivation and emotions control.

Materials

None.

Timing

15 minutes.

Procedure

Designate one end of the room for **most** and one for **least**.

Ask for three volunteers, put one at each end of the room and one in the middle. Ask the others to line up in equal sized groups behind them.

Explain that they are categorized according to **dominance** and ask them to get themselves into the position they are happy with, by "force" if necessary.

Participants should then discuss their reactions. Bring out the fact that some people fought (that is, were dominant) to secure a **less** dominant position.

Commentary

Some people will use another as a benchmark, some will have oilier ways of deciding where to put themselves, and these can be explored. Variation

A twist can be added with a decision making task for the group (for example, electing a group leader, choosing a name for the group, deciding on a start time for the next day) in which votes are distributed so that those who are least dominant are allocated the most votes (least dominant getting a number of votes equal to the number of group members, most dominant getting one vote, etc.).

Create a Triptych

Summary

A way of systematically solving problems by the geographical location and experiential anchoring of three aspects of problem solving activity.

Objective

Problem solving by separating creative, critical and pragmatic stages of developing a course of action.

Materials

Newsprint and pen.

Timing

20 minutes.

Procedure

Preparation

Pick a neutral location in the room where you feel secure and then label three areas. Visionary, Pragmatist and Critic.

Think of a time when you thought of some new ideas, or found a new way of doing something, or were creative. Step into the Visionary location and relive that experience using all your senses. Step out of Vision area and move back to neutral.

Think on a time when you were specific about how an idea was to look **practically** implemented, a time when you devised a specific plan. Step into the Pragmatist location and relive that experience using all your senses. Step out of Pragmatist and move back to neutral.

Think of a time when you criticized a plan or a proposal. Step into the Critic location and relive that experience using all your senses. Step out of Critic and move back to neutral. Pick an outcome you want to achieve. Step into Visionary, and in your mind and with your eyes closed run a movie of yourself accomplishing this goal. Just let the movie unfold as you watch. Step out and change areas. Go back to neutral if you wish. Step into Pragmatist and check the plan you have dreamed up. Notice what you would need to change to make it more pragmatic. Step out and change areas. Go back to neutral if you wish. Step into Critic and find out if anything is missing or needed. Step out and change state. Go back to neutral if you wish. Step back into Visionary and run a new movie which incorporates the new information from the Pragmatist and the Critic. Repeat through Steps 7, 8 and 9 **until you are satisfied.**

Commentary

This can be used for all participants at once or as a non-verbal exercise for those not taking an active part. Participants can do it individually and then discuss their feelings and result.

Variation

This game can be effectively played in the open air.

Be positive and decide wright

Summary

A group decision- making activity.

Objectives

Team-building.

Assertiveness.

Decision-making on pressure

Materials

Checklists (see below).

Pens.

Timing

One hour.

Procedure

Hand out the checklist and ask participants to rank their ten most important qualities in descending order of importance. When they have done this, ask them to remove the five lowest. Ask the group to come to a consensus in a 20 minutes period as to which are the most important qualities. Observe them doing so. Discuss with the group how they came to the consensus they reached.

Commentary

The group may well seek further advice on terms of reference, or complain that the task is too hard. The trainer should remain outside the group and not offer directive advice. If the group abandon then this should be allowed and then talked through in the discussion phase.

Variations

If your learning points are about team- building then at Step 2 ask group members to rank each other according to how dominant each other is thought to be. Share these and get each person to work out his/her average rank (the total score he/she has been given by themselves and others divided by number of people in the group). A **low** score means they are perceived as **dominant**. Divide the group into subgroups according to dominance and then go through Step 2.

Checklist Class of Their Own

Summary

Creativity exercise with a set of objects.

Objectives

Creativity.

Leadership.

Team-building

Materials

Instruction sheets for: group members, leaders, observers (optional)

Twenty small objects for each group, packaged in a parcel or put in a box. These should cover a wide variety of sources and material but be fairly common, and the same objects should be given to the two groups. A typical set of 20 would be: sachet of sugar substitute, clothespin, ice cube tray, teabag, coin, button, compact disc, toothbrush, candle, fuse, bicycle pump, can opener, glass ashtray, paper clip, spark plug, thimble, mascara, empty matchbox, elastic band.

Pens and flipchart paper

Separate rooms or working area for each group.

Timing 45 minutes.

To me it is important that another person:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| have a good sense of humor | lx- kind | — | be wise |
| have fun | | | state his/her bottom line |
| lx- understanding | be friendly | be | Ire logical |
| outrageous | be trustworthy | be outgoing | — be accepting |
| take a joke | be honest | be critical | — know a lot |
| be able to understand | my feelings | | — listen |
| be talkative | | | be cynical |
| be able to listen | | | — be generous |
| be creative | | | be confident |
| be stylish | | | — be consistent |
| be spontaneous | | | — be attractive |
| be mature | | | — he can |
| be child-like | | | understand |
| | | | me |
| | | | — be correct |
| | | | — be aggressive |
| | | | — be in control |
| | | | — he doing the best he/she can |
| | | | — lx? lively |
| | | | lx? predictable |

Procedure

I ask participants to form groups of about five to eight people. The number of groups will vary with the number of participants.

I will ask the groups to choose a leader. Allocate the leaders to Type I (flexible) or Type 2 (autocratic), but do not tell the group members at this point what the categories are. Give the leaders instruction sheets. Answer questions from the leaders away from the other group members. Explain that, in addition to their own instruction sheet, the leaders have sheets for each of their team members.

Allow the groups to complete their tasks in their separate rooms and put the resulting flipchart notes up on the board. Show them the different leaders instructions on an overhead transparency. As a group, discuss if there is any significant difference between the types of group and the number of categories that they found. Consider the effects of competition on the working of the groups. Relate this to other situations where groups are asked to be flexible and creative.

Challenge Challenge

Summary

Developing constructive responses to challenges and bullying

Objectives

Assertiveness.

Equal opportunities.

Trainer training (or any other area where challenging skills are being developed).

Materials

Plain paper in as many colors as you have groups.

Discs (10 cm in diameter) of the same colors as the paper.

Pens.

Chairs.

Timing

One hour.

Procedure

Form seven number of groups according to the color of the discs on people's chairs and give each group the paper of the same color. Groups should ideally be of three to five members. Ask group members to write a statement on the card that provokes the kind of challenge that the session is about (for example, racist remarks, training confrontations). These are to be placed face down in the center of the room.

invite groups to pick up one challenge for each member of (lie group They should not choose "their" color. Ask participants to prepare, in groups according to then discs, answers to those challenges. In doing so they should think about: ways to close the topic; ways to ensure that people understand why a statement is being challenged; anticipating any comments that might follow from the original comment and deal with them.

Groups then pair up, one group will give its challenges to the other group, who will deliver them back. The first group will respond according to the strategy they have prepared. They will have a spokesperson who responds with the others "behind the curtain" offering suggestions.

Ensure that the group issuing the challenge gives feedback on what were the most and least effective challenges and why this was the case. Then repeat last two steps with reversed roles.

Commentary

A commonly ineffective challenge is "You must see that...." Confrontational responses tend to provoke further disagreement.

Variation

Where there are about a dozen people in the group then last two steps can be carried out with all participants attending.

Truth Option

Summary

Participants can either admit that they belong to a certain category or not.

Objectives

- Self-disclosure.
- Energizer.
- Action planning.
- Validation.

Materials

A circle of chairs.

Timing

10 minutes.

Procedure

1. Form the participants into a circle with yourself in the center.
2. Explain that the person in the middle is "it" and must request all those in a particular category to stand up (for example, "everyone who is wearing contact lenses stand up"). Participants may lie, either by standing or remaining seated, and no one may question anyone else's right to do so. Having stood up, no one can sit in the seat that he/she vacated. The one without a seat is "it" for the next round.
3. Questions that fail can be reversed (for instance, "Anyone who is happy with this course stand up [no response!... anyone with any concerns about the course stand up"). There is also a "truth supplementary" (that is, "will anyone who lied on the last question stand up"). Questions such as "All who were embarrassed by the last question stand up" can be asked.
4. Demonstrate, ask if clarification is needed, and then proceed with the game.

Commentary

The exercise allows self-disclosure, but also allows participants to lie either positively or negatively. In practice it is very difficult to see who is standing and sitting if you are too, and this also encourages honesty. The questions can become very personal. By ensuring s/he is "it" fairly often, the trainer can extend or model types of question (like reflective, feeling, truth supplementaries). This is good as a feedback exercise to get a feel for the way in which to handle a later session, or where to take the group next. If this is being used as a feedback exercise then the trainer will ensure that s/he is "it" fairly often.

Variation

In a milder form this exercise can be used as an energizer. In this version, keep the sample questions non-intimate

Poetry in Motion

Summary

Relaxation exercise based on T'ai Chi.

Objective

Stress management.

Materials

Sound source and music (ambient or New Age music such as that of Kitaro is suitable).

Timing

Minimum of 20 minutes.

Procedure

- Explain that some relaxation methods aim to help you unwind (fantasies) and others alert you-(Shiatsu). This third kind unites mental calm with physical movement. It is based on a Chinese practice of T'ai Chi, the principle of making physical movement a flowing one.
- Give participants room to move about freely, so ask them to spread out. Explain that you are going to suggest movements, but that they should go at a pace that seems right for them.
- 3- Turn on the background music. Then go through the movements slowly and with pauses:
- Spread your feet about shoulder-width apart and parallel. Feel your breathing.
- Let your knees bend slightly. Allow your pelvis to tip forward. Feel the weight of your stomach come off your diaphragm. Feel your diaphragm and chest relax.
- Feel a weight, a center of balance behind your navel. Feel the heaviness of it holding you in balance.
- Let your head float like a balloon. Roll it round in small circles until you find a comfortable position. Raise your face until you are looking almost level.
- Feel your back gently tighten like the string of a kite between the balloon of your head and the anchor of your abdomen. Feel the rhythm of your breathing.
- Hold your tongue gently against the roof of your mouth.
- Focus on your legs and on the gentle shifting balance from one leg to the other.

Gently straighten the lighter leg. Very slowly make an **empty** step forward, heel First, keeping your weight on the bent

- leg until the straight one is flat on the earth again. Experiment moving forward and backward. Feel the energy moving through your body from one leg to the other, from one ami to the other Feel the energy moving you. That sense of harmonious motion is one that you can have whenever you want.
- Suggest that this is something that participants might wish to practice at home before work.

Commentary

Ensure that you are quite familiar with all the movements before you go through them with a class. When you have decided on a version of the exercise that you can use then the instructions can be turned into a handout.

Variations

Imagery can be used, and the movements made more subtle and complicated.

Pillow Talk

Summary

Meetings game allowing every person to have a say.

Objectives

Listening skills.

Decision making.

Assertiveness.

Materials

Pillow or other soft object.

Chairs (optional).

Timing

30 minutes.

Procedure

Seat participants in a circle. The trainer introduces "the pillow." Participants can only speak when someone has passed them the pillow. They can indicate they want it by raising one finger. The person holding the pillow can pass it to anyone else, hold on to it or put it in the middle where anyone may pick it up.

Demonstrate these possibilities with examples involving other participants. Ask whether clarification is needed.

Give a topic (or refer to one that the group already knows that it has to discuss).

Discuss how the exercise felt.

Commentary

Try to find a topic that is relevant to members of (he group. Although at first this seems to be a long winded way of running a discussion, everyone who speaks knows that he/she is being listened to. Not listening is also indicated in a demonstrative way.

Variations

Participants **must** comment in some way when the pillow is passed to them.

The pillow can also be used to represent the problem, and people are only allowed to speak when they are exercising ownership of it. This is a good way to introduce the concept of problem ownership .

Pickpockets

Summary

Creativity exercise using the contents of people's pockets.

Objectives

Creativity.

Team-building.

Problem solving.

Trainer training.

Materials

Pens.

Paper.

Timing

45 minutes.

Procedure

Define an area in which creativity is going to be assessed (for instance, solving a management problem). Ask one group member or the whole group to empty pockets. Put all the items in a heap. Ask the group to divide into pairs and give them one object. Invite them to devise a solution using that object to inspire them in any way they wish.

Bring the pairs together and discuss what solutions they devised, making the groups progressively larger.

Commentary

Sometimes a pair will have a real mental block, in which case you may allow them to exchange their object. A better way might be to suggest that they think of similes: for example, by listing the qualities of the object and then asking themselves in what way is the problem like or unlike the object. It is important to allow plenty of time for the discussion stage.

Variations

Have a box of objects to hand out (toys, etc.).

Use picture postcards or pictures from magazines.

On the Other Hand

Summary

One person providing the non-verbal support to another's words.

Objectives

Non-verbal communication.

Assertiveness.

Materials

None.

Timing

30 minutes.

Procedure

Introduce the concept of non-verbal communication and the way that the "words" can sometimes contradict the "music." Link this with assertiveness if relevant to the course. Divide the group into pairs labeled A and B. Explain that A will be the speaker on a given topic: B will provide the non-verbal communication. A will stand in front of B and class B around the waist, and B will put his or her arms in front as if they were A's. After ascertaining what clarification is needed, ask pairs what their topics are and allocate topics (suggestions below) if they lack them. After each turn, open a discussion on what alternatives might be appropriate.

Commentary

A couple of rounds may well suffice, in which case it best to ask for volunteers.

Variation

The A's can be placed in pairs facing each other. Most of the examples below can accommodate this.

Suggested topics

a President announcing his resignation.

a store demonstrator selling an electric potato peeler.

scientist announcing a vaccine for AIDS.

person conducting the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

someone flirting at an office Christmas party.

reading a bedtime story to a child.

a reporter on a battlefield.

a politician being interviewed after a major victory.

someone talking about shoes they have recently bought.

a parent explaining the facts of life.

the winner of a long-distance race being interviewed.

Mommie Said

Summary

Cocktail party simulation exploring parental messages.

Objective

Team-building.

Materials

None.

Timing

20 minutes.

Procedure

Invite participants to think about one of their parents (it does not matter if the parent is still alive). Encourage them to think about the voice, manner, and so forth, of that person, and then to imagine that parent thinking about them, im#ie present if that is possible, and to imagine what those thoughts are.

Invite them to mingle and talk to each other about themselves as if they were that parent talking about them.

In a general discussion, ask participants to consider the extent to which they ever felt an internal message saying what they have said about themselves and acted upon it.

Make reference to defense mechanisms (Freud 1936) or transactional analysis (Stewart and Joines 1987), as appropriate.

Variations

Other authority figures or people in the group can be used.

The subject's child, spouse, worst enemy, etc., can be used.

Participants can be given a free choice and others asked to guess whose view of the person is being represented.

Mirrors

Summary

Trust exercise in reflecting the actions of a partner.

Objective

Trust.

Materials

None.

Timing

5 minutes.

Procedure

Form participants into pairs and ask them to face each other with their feet about two feet apart.

Ask them to slowly copy the movements of each other, without moving their feet.

As they build up trust suggest that they lean forward with their hands together as if they are reflections of each other.

In a group discuss how they felt about the experience.

Commentary

This game requires enough trust to have been established for physical intimacy to be established. With all games in this category it is important that participants should not be coerced into taking part.

Variations

Have the whole group formed in a circle facing inward with each person mirroring the person opposite him/her.

Have the whole group formed in a circle with each one facing the back of the person to the right and mirroring him/her.

Listening Limbs

Summary

Communication exercise using parts of the body only.

Objective

Non-verbal communication.

Materials

Prepared cards with parts of the body written or drawn on them (such as arms, pointed finger, fists, hands, eyebrows, eyelashes, lips, feet, buttocks, neck, hair).

Timing

20 minutes.

Procedure

Introduce non-verbal communication and active listening as topics.

Hand out the cards to participants and ask individuals or couples to demonstrate to the rest of the group how to listen with that part of the body. Encourage them to be creative and to think of any way at all in which that part of the anatomy could be used. Allow three minutes to prepare in which you can circulate around the group.

Carry out a round of demonstrations. \

Discuss in the main group what they have learned about non-verbal communication. \

Variations

The demonstrations can be in pairs with the cards then being exchanged.

You can add other non-verbal communication factors such as "distance between people" and "pens."

CHAIRS

SUMMARY

In pairs participants try to persuade each other to get up off a chair.

Objectives

Assertiveness.

Non-verbal communication.

Materials

A hard chair.

Timing

30 minutes.

Procedure

Ask for a volunteer and seat him/her in the chair in the center. Ask for another volunteer. Explain that the task of the second volunteer is to persuade the first to get out of the chair. The participant can dramatize a situation and use that as a starting point (examples below). S/he may not touch the person, but may say anything, and it is up to the person sitting whether she or he vacates the seat.

Invite another pair to try. Lead a discussion. Discover the kinds of arguments people used. Why did they think that argument would work? Were they the type of arguments that they would have liked used on them? Would you let anything work on you? If not, why not? Often a simple "I would feel better if you stood up" works. If they have a dramatized situation then explore other options. Consider whose rights (if anyone's) were in danger of being violated. Consider the nonverbal communication used by the parties.

Variations

Instead of asking for a second volunteer invite the rest of the group to take turns in improvising. This "brainstorm" approach can work well. The first three stages can be done by the whole group in pairs.

Situation examples

Finding someone in your seat at the theater.

Returning to Find your seat occupied on a train.

Finding "your" seat taken in the course room on the second day.

Being a clumsy waiter.

Head waiter trying to close a restaurant.

Operating an electric chair.

Being an office cleaner.

Sitting in an aircraft that is about to crash.

Mother telling her child to come in for dinner.

Deck-chair attendant.

Dentist.

Officer evacuating the Titanic. Nurse getting a patient back into bed.

Chain Mime

Summary

Imitation exercise based on mime.

Objective

Non-verbal communication.

Materials

None.

Timing

5 minutes for each pair in the group.

Procedure

Ask for two volunteers, and ask all other group members to leave the room.

Explain to the two who remain that the objective of the game is to carry out a mime which will be observed and copied by another pair. Ask them to choose a subject. If they are unable to think of one then take one from the list on the following page.

After they have practiced a couple of times, ask a second pair into the room and have them observe the mime. Make it clear that there is to be no talking between the pairs. The first pair then go to the side of the room while the second pair demonstrate the mime to a third pair and so on, until the last pair is reached. This pair then guesses what the mime represents.

Discuss how the mime has changed and why.

Commentary

The mime should be done efficiently and in detail but fairly briskly or the momentum of the game will be lost. If there is an odd number of people in the group then the singleton can be the guesser at the end.

Variation

Allow the other people into the room to copy the mime individually and then send them out again without assembling the whole group until the very end of the game.

Possible mimes

The wedding photographs. Making meringues.

Mending a puncture.

Weeding the garden.

Walking the dog.

Changing a tire.

Dictating a letter.

Changing the sheets. Exchanging birthday presents. Lighting a pipe.

Cashing a check.

Polishing shoes.

Cleaning a bike