

THE LEMONS



Aim:

This is an icebreaker, an exercise of knowledge, which introduces the idea of individual differences. It can be used at the beginning of the work session for encouraging people in reflecting about stereotyping, differences and equality of opportunities.

Resources needed:

Enough lemons or other kinds of fruits (apples, oranges...) for everybody

A plastic bag or a big basket

Group size: Free

Time required: 30 minutes

Detailed description:

1. Give a fruit to each person.
2. Ask everyone to look closely at their fruit, examine the distinctive marks and feel the skin.
3. Encourage people to personalize their lemon by giving it a name. (This should be very funny...)
4. Allow five minutes to do this and then collect the lemons in a plastic bag or in the basket. Shake to mix the fruits.
5. Sprinkle the lemon in front of the group.
6. In turn, ask each student to collect his lemon.
7. If there are any disputes over ownership of lemons, put them to one side as "unidentified." Incredible to say, you'll discover that most people will be able to recognize their fruit.

Reflection and evaluation:

At the end of the game you can moderate a discussion:

On what elements you are sure to have chosen the right fruit? Encourage them to make a parallel between fruits and people.

Examine the stereotypes: are all fruits the same color? Or are all the same shape?

Compare this to the stereotypes that exist between people of different cultures, races and genders. What does this mean for the group?

BREAKING THE CODE



Objectives:

This exercise is directed to a small number of participants and needs that a member of each group carefully observes the behavior of others. It aims to examine body language, to develop observation skills and to explore the effect of group behavior.

Resources needed:

None

Group size:

Variable

Time required:

25 minutes

Detailed description:

1. Divide participants into groups of four or five. One person from each group leaves the room. Others think of a posture of the body or a gesture or some other activity that everybody does, when the people who left the room come back (3 minutes).
2. The participants who were out go back into the room and observe carefully their group, who are following the agreed strategy. When they think they have cracked the code, they can start to use it and interact with the group. If they are correct, the group will accept it; but if they are wrong, the group will continue to ignore it and they will continue to observe until they get the correct code. (5 minutes)
3. It's the turn of another member of the group. As the operation is repeated, the group may choose a more difficult code. (10 minutes)

Reflection and evaluation:

How did the people who left the room feel?

What did they feel in trying to crack the code?

How did the group feel during this exercise?

How is this process related to what happens in everyday interaction?

The participants have to do observations or comments on body language in general (7 minutes)

Additional tips:

This exercise should be used to explore the use of verbal codes in a closed group and the exclusive use of a language.

An example of a verbal code might be: all sentences must begin with the letter "A".

The group could combine a verbal code with a physical code.

An example of a physical code might be all group members have to smile to a specific person, before contacting anyone else.

The exercise can take into account other aspects related to communication and explore other aspects of closed groups:

How are the "gangs" , in terms of language, body expression, behavior, values, fashion and so on?

How do you feel when you become part of a closed group?

What messages do closed groups give to those who are outside?

Why do people need closed groups?

LOST SHOES



Goal: stimulate organization and participation in the achievement of a goal

Materials: a durable bag (heavy cloth, jute, hemp)

What to do:

1. form two groups of pupils
2. ask them to remove their shoes
3. put their shoes in the bag
4. mix shoes
5. ask pupils to find their shoes and wear them

Past the appointed time, assess what the winner group did