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TALKING ABOUT



CONFLICTS

TOOLBOX



Introduction

The Talking About Conflicts toolbox is a resource developed by a group of Youth Workers from five European countries who took part in a training course series held in Romania in October 2024 and Greece in May 2025. Over seven days of intensive learning in each course, they explored a variety of non-formal methods with the support of the trainers Thomas Desset, Alba Lluçia, and Lara Riboni, and the graphic contributions of cartoonist Maxime Jeune. Many of the methods learned during the training have been documented here, making this an open resource for the public.

This toolbox is more than a record of the participants' experience. It is intended to be a practical, accessible guide for youth workers and anyone interested in gaining new tools for non-violent communication and conflict management. Rooted in principles such as non-violence, peace education, respect for diversity, and cooperation, it provides a collection of methodologies and exercises ready to be adapted to different contexts.

The project that inspired this toolbox encouraged participants to reframe conflict as a moment of potential growth. It focused on strategies to constructively address tensions within teams and youth groups, equipping participants with skills to navigate challenging dynamics. The methods compiled here reflect those experiences and offer youth workers concrete approaches to apply in their practice.

Organized around three main objectives, increasing awareness of personal and group dynamics, improving communication practices, and introducing effective conflict management strategies, this toolbox supports broader goals such as intercultural awareness, social learning, and active engagement.

By providing open access to these methods, this resource seeks to make non-formal education on these topics widely available. It invites Youth Workers to thoughtfully approach conflict, offering tools to transform tensions into opportunities for dialogue and cooperation.

The European Commission's support to produce this Toolbox does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Creation of a brave and safer space

Objective: To share common values to create an atmosphere during the training course where everyone feels safe.

Duration: 1h30

No. of Participants: 2 to 30

Target group: Open

Preparation

Material needed: A comfortable room, with group privacy; chairs or cushions; flipcharts, and markers.

Arrange chairs in a circle/ sitting circle.

Prepare yourself to be in a grounded state of being.

Be aware of operating systems in place: capitalism, patriarchy, colonial racism, ableism, neurodiversity...

Description

Form a Circle: Arrange participants in a circle to create an inclusive and open atmosphere where everyone can see and engage with one another.

Establish Guidelines: Explain that when one person speaks, others listen attentively without interrupting. Encourage a culture of respect and active/ deep listening.

Non-Verbal Communication: Introduce a set of non-verbal signals agreed upon by the group to enhance communication, such as gestures for agreement, needing a pause, showing disagreement, and asking for silence.

Guided Questions: Pose questions for participants to share with the group about their group experience and preferences. This can be done either in a sequential manner (one by one) or in a "popcorn style", where individuals share as they feel ready.

Suggested Questions :

- "What brings you joy in a group setting?"
- "What makes you feel uncomfortable in a group?"
- "What do others need to know about you that can be useful for the group?"
- Examples: I need time to wake up in the morning, I might be grumpy, be aware. Please no irony with me, I don't understand it.

This approach promotes a supportive and open environment for sharing and understanding within the group.



Debriefing

Stand in a circle, really look at each other (example: “These are the people you will be co-creating with during this week”), hold hands if comfortable, creating the mindset of we see each other, we hear each other in our differences and essence, voice together if comfortable.

The facilitator can make a short summary of what has been mentioned (for example: “So we have talked about... This...)

Comments/Tips:

- Be aware of group energies throughout the day, and natural day cycles: e.g. morning slow start together (check in/awake body), then energizer for mid-day...
- You can set as a framework a daily morning circle to land in the room together (sing, share, silence - 10/15 min) & co-regulate.
- Instead of a safe space, we call it a safer space because a space can never be completely safe.
- Make a structured introduction of needs, boundaries, personal preferences, and general dynamics you want to establish in a group like consent, guidelines, and values.
- Decide on the decision-making process for the group dynamics (e.g. consent, consensus)
- Create breathing breaks whenever you feel the group needs it.
- You can set a daily moment for individual exploration (5 min) of topics through journaling or thinking, and make guiding questions for that.
- Present the small group sharing (3-5 people, 6-10 min) for a collective debriefing.
- Explain the importance of the talking circle with the whole group: to share the outcomes, find a common understanding of the environment you want to create ,and create awareness about each other.

Song for Connection

Objective:

To bring connection to the topic, to others and to oneself, and to process themes on an emotional and non-verbal level through collective singing.

Duration: 10 minutes

No. of Participants: 4–30

Target group: Open

Preparation

Material needed:

- Papers with the lyrics written out or Flipchart
- Instruments (optional)
- Space for a standing circle (with options for sitting if needed)

Environment setup:

- Arrange participants in a circle, preferably standing if possible
- Ensure accessibility and provide options for those who prefer or need to sit

Facilitator's preparation:

- Be mindful of different comfort levels regarding singing
- Create a supportive, low-pressure environment
- Have the melody ready to sing or play



Description

Gather the group and explain the exercise

Introduce the idea of singing together as a way of connecting

Say: “We are aware that some people are more comfortable and some are less comfortable with singing and singing in groups. You’re invited to find your way of being with this exercise. Follow your needs and boundaries—you’re still part of the group.”

Distribute the song lyrics

Provide the printed lyrics to all participants

Introduce the melody

Sing or play the song once. Allow for clarifications or questions

Collective singing

Invite the group to sing together, either once or in repetition. Allow the group to find a collective rhythm and tone

Return to group presence

After singing, let the vibrations settle. Slowly transition back into the shared space and silence

Invite participants to take a collective breath. Optionally open a space for verbal reflection:

“How did the song make you feel?”

“What did the experience of singing together bring up for you?”

Alternatively, offer the option to write down their impressions

Comments / Tips

Check in regularly to see if participants feel safe and comfortable. Be aware of differing cultural, emotional, and personal relationships to group singing. Facilitate gently, respecting various participation levels. Encourage presence without pressure

Background Information

This is an example of a song inspired by the book “Hospicing Modernity” from Vanessa Andreotti and the Gesturing towards decolonial future collective:

Song lyrics

NEW ROOTS

Repeat each stanza twice

Let's face face face...
face what is happening in this
world
And feel feel feel...
feel our entanglement

Let's grow grow grow into new
ways of being
Let's grow grow grow new roots

Listen [here](#)

Stretching Zone

Objectives: Reflect on personal comfort zones, stretch zones, and panic zones. Recognize that a similar situation can affect people in varying ways: we are all different.

Duration: 15 to 20 minutes

No. of Participants: 5 to 30

Target Group: Adults

Preparation

Material Needed: list of questions; whiteboard; markers.

Prepare background theory in advance. Make a list of questions or situations relevant to the training topic.

Description

1) THEORY

Draw and explain the diagram representing the comfort zone, the stretch/growth/uncomfortable zone and the panic zone. Key Points to Discuss: Stress is a physical and chemical reaction that affects both the mind and body.

Take time to calm down and regulate when moving from the panic zone to the comfort/stretch zone. Learning occurs when tasks/situations are challenging but not overly stressful. Fun can also be found in the comfort zone. It is unhealthy to remain in the panic zone constantly.

2) PRACTICAL

Setup: Ask participants to form a circle facing outward, avoiding eye contact with one another.

Rules: Explain how participants will indicate their feelings during each question.

Stay in place: *Comfort zone*

Take half a step forward: *Growth/stretching zone*

Take a full step forward: *Panic zone*

Participants are free to leave the session if it causes too much discomfort (self-care is prioritized).

Execution:

Begin asking one question or stating a phrase from the prepared list, one at a time. Participants choose the zone they feel corresponds to their personal experience.

After all questions are addressed, participants will turn to face each other for the debriefing.

Invite participants to engage in some body movements to relax.

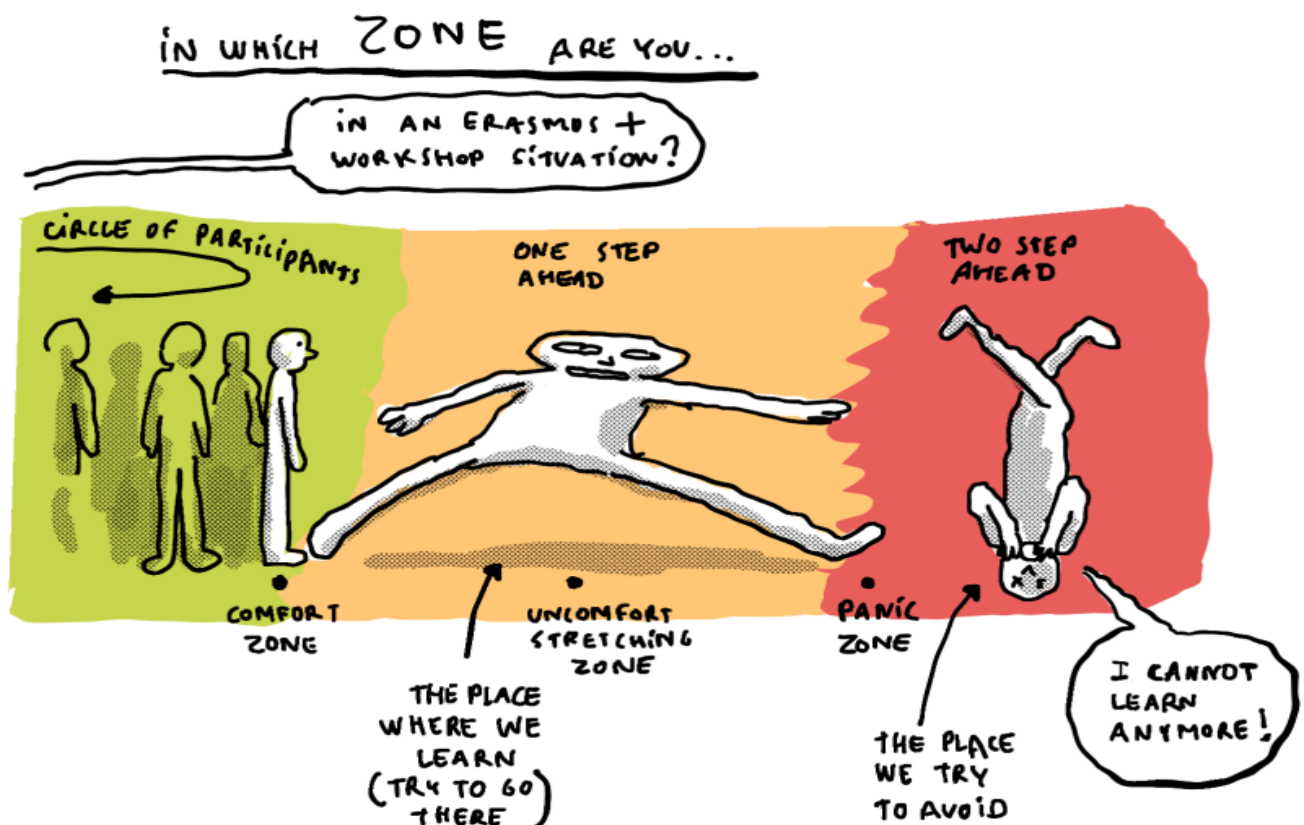
Debriefing

Facilitate a discussion about participants' feelings during the exercise, including any surprises they encountered (e.g., discovering they were often in the panic zone) and the questions they faced. Suggest that participants who feel comfortable share their experiences while offering the alternative to write down their thoughts privately.

Comments/Tips:

Tailor the sentences in the practical part to align with the specific project or topic being addressed. Start with relatable topics, such as:

- Talking in public
- Openly expressing feelings
- Expressing oneself through body movement
- Participating in Erasmus+ projects
- Dealing with internal contradictions
- Receiving compliments
- Receiving negative criticism



Colombian Hypnotizer

Objective:

To support participants in staying focused, becoming physically flexible, and following another's lead through movement and attention.

Duration: 10 minutes

No. of Participants: 6–30

Target group: Open

Preparation

No materials needed.

Environment setup: Big open space, clear of objects or hazards

Facilitator's preparation: Be aware of participants' physical conditions and comfort levels. Clearly model the movements and keep the timing short and dynamic

Description

Form pairs: Ask participants to form pairs. One will be the hypnotizer, the other the hypnotized.

Explain the instructions: The hypnotized person must follow the hand of the hypnotizer closely, moving as it moves, and always keeping their focus on it.

Round one (1 minute): After a short time, switch roles within the pair.

Form trios: Each trio will now have one hypnotizer and two hypnotized participants, one following each hand.

Rotate roles: After a short time (about 1 minute), rotate so that the second person becomes the hypnotizer, and repeat.

Final rotation: Rotate one last time so the third person becomes the hypnotizer.

Return to circle: Come back to the full group and transition to reflection.

Debriefing

Invite sharing in the big group. Suggested questions:

- How did you feel during the exercise?
- What came up for you in the roles of hypnotizer and hypnotized?
- Did any metaphors or meanings arise during the movement?

Encourage participants to reflect on control, trust, and responsiveness

Comments / Tips

Keep the pace light and avoid making the rounds too long. Stay alert to group energy and physical comfort. This activity can be a good warm-up for focus or trust-based work

Background Information

This method is widely used in physical theatre and improvisation contexts to develop awareness, attention, and group connection. It also aligns with methods found in embodiment and somatic practices.



Are you busy Joe?

Objective: Energizer to activate the group physically and to do a mild social commentary in an engaging way.

Duration: 5 minutes

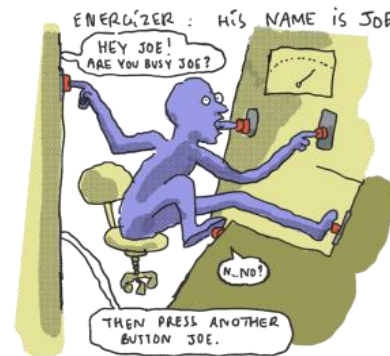
No. of Participants: Open

Target group: Open

Preparation

Material needed: A space big enough for the group.
The facilitator needs to learn some sentences by heart.

Description



The participants are placed in a circle so that everyone can see the facilitator. The facilitator says the following words and the participants repeat each sentence (in a singing mood). After each round, there is a specific movement to make **in addition** to the previous one(s). This movement is shown by the facilitator, and made during each sentence (by the facilitator and the group).

One day / One day

My boss come to me and say / My boss come to me and say

Hey Joe / Hey Joe

Are you busy Joe? / Are you busy Joe?

No! / No!

Then, press (another) button Joe / Then, press then press (another) button Joe

At the end of the first round, you make the movement with one finger, after the second round with the finger of your other hand, then you add a leg, another leg, the head, and you finish with the tongue.

Wizz (the ball of energy)

Objective: To activate the participants physically and mentally during the morning hours, to create a comfortable connection among them and to strengthen their memory and attention skills.

Duration: 15-20 minutes

No. of Participants: Open

Target group: Open

Description

We are magicians practising casting spells together. The group forms a circle, where each participant can see all the others. This includes the monitor(s). First, the monitor forms a ball of energy with his hands. We don't want it to weaken, so it's important to look after it. The monitor will present different spells, each associated with a gesture, as the game progresses (and as the group assimilates the previous spells). The participants should stay attentive in order to react in a fast and appropriate way.



The first formula is “Wizz”, with a movement in the direction of the neighbour (start by defining a direction of movement, for example always to the left), to pass him the ball of energy.

The second movement is “Block”, forming a cross with your arms. Whoever does this does not receive the ball of energy when it is passed to them. It remains in the hands of the thrower. To be introduced at the same time as the second formula, the third is “I throw”, while throwing the ball of energy into the middle of the circle. Anyone can do “I take” and catch the ball of energy.

Then, there are several formulas to add if and when you want, where the thrower keeps the energy ball after throwing it:

- Microwave: everyone spins around with their finger in the air and making a microwave noise.
- Samba: everyone dances and sings while changing places.
- Bowling: The thrower run around the circle to roll a bowling ball under the feet of the participants, who jump to avoid it.
- Boomerang: the thrower sends a spinning boomerang at shoulder height, which turns around the circle. Participants avoid it one by one by leaning back.
- Elevator: Everyone comes down from a floor and crouches. If someone calls the elevator, everybody gets up.



Blind Adventure

Objectives: Stimulate collective consciousness and trust among participants, build team cohesion, work on the ability to make a request.

Duration 30-45 minutes **No. of Participants** Groups of 4-5 **Target Group** Kids or adults

Preparation

Materials Needed: One blindfold (could be a scarf, a shirt).
Identify an open and safe space for the activity.



Description

- Setting boundaries:** Begin by establishing the boundaries, limits, and the safety of the activity space. Encourage participants to express their comfort levels and personal limits.
- Team formation:** Divide participants into teams of 4-5.
- Finding spaces:** Each team should find a designated area within the open space.
- Adventure creation:** While blindfolded, each participant describes the adventure they wish to experience. The remaining team members collaborate to creatively construct this adventure through verbal guidance, ensuring that it is safe and enjoyable. They keep listening to the wishes of the experimenter.

Facilitators should remain vigilant regarding the safety of participants throughout the activity, and about consent.

Debriefing

Facilitate a discussion by asking participants: "What made you feel comfortable? What made you feel uncomfortable?" This reflection allows participants to share their experiences and feelings about the activity.



Find the Gobi

Objectives: Build collective consciousness. Strengthen participants' sense of belonging within the group.

Duration 25-30 minutes **No. of Participants** min. 6 **Target Group** Kids or adults

Preparation

Materials Needed: A large, open space. If possible, blindfold for all the participants. Identify a safe space and set the perimeter for the activity. The monitor doesn't play and ensures safety.



Description

Volunteer role: Ask one participant to volunteer to be the "Gobi."

Context explanation: Explain the context of the activity, emphasizing safety measures.

Blindfolding: Ask all participants to gather together and to close their eyes while the Gobi finds a place within the designated area. Remind the Gobi to remain in a reachable position. The rest of the group will make noise to cover the Gobi's location.

Gobi's role: The Gobi must **always** remain silent and still in their chosen spot.

Searching process: Participants will search for the Gobi with their eyes closed. When they touch someone, they should ask, "Gobi?" If it's another participant, they will respond, "Gobi." If the Gobi is touched, they remain silent.

Finding the Gobi: Once a participant touches the Gobi, they attach to them, become the new Gobi, and can open their eyes while remaining silent.

End of activity: The group wins when all participants have found and become Gobi. The goal is collective success - everyone should reach the Gobi.

Rounds: Play several rounds to allow participants to try again and reinforce integration.

Debriefing

Form a circle with participants and conduct a debrief: "How did it feel? What did you want to do? What strategies did you use to reach your intentions? Bonus: How do you feel within the group?"

Comments/Tips:

For groups larger than 10, at least 2 safety monitors are required. Check-in with participants in a circle to ensure they are comfortable with closing their eyes. Those who feel uneasy can keep their eyes open or raise their hands for additional support. Consider a previous exercise with blindfolds to build comfort.

Lava river

Objectives: Exploring decision-making processes and making group dynamics and the role played by each member visible. Strengthen cooperation within the group by overcoming a challenge together. Then share and reflect together, quietly, on what has been learned from the experience.

Duration: 20-30 min

No. of Participants: 5 - 12

Target group: All ages

Preparation

Material needed: Pieces of paper A4 (1 per participant), a large space (as much as possible, this activity works best outdoors but be mindful of wind conditions), two ropes (or anything else to set two boundaries).

Arrange the space by placing/fixing two ropes at opposite ends of the space to create clear boundaries (before the group arrives in this space).

Description

Setting the Scene: The area between the ropes represents a "lava river" (could also be a river full of piranhas). The group is on one side of the river and has to cross it. Each participant receives a tool, "a piece of indestructible metal", the only safe platforms they can use to cross without "falling in".

Rules:

- Each participant can place their tool in the "lava" and step on it.
- Participants can step on other tools already in place, but cannot move or rearrange any tool except their own.
- The group has a total of three lives. If anyone touches the "lava", the team loses a life and the affected participant loses their tool.

Goal: The **entire** team must reach the opposite side without running out of lives.

Strategy: To win, the team must cooperate and create a strategy that ensures everyone can cross safely.



Arbitration: The monitor ensures that the rules are observed. They don't play and remain as quiet as possible. They can encourage the group to take time to reflect if the strategy doesn't work as expected.

Debriefing

After the activity, guide the group in a reflection on the experience:

- How did they decide on a strategy?
- What roles did individuals take, and how did this impact the group?
- What emotions arose, and how were they handled?

Variations

1. Limited Communication

Silent Mode: Participants must cross the river without speaking. This encourages non-verbal communication and teamwork.

One Communicator: Designate one person as the "*guide*" who is allowed to talk, but can't physically interact with the game or the "*lava*". The others must follow their instructions.

2. Restricted Resources

Fewer Papers: Provide fewer papers than participants, forcing them to work together more closely and share resources effectively.

Shifting Safe Zones: Designate certain papers as "*unstable*" that sink after a set number of uses, so they can only be used for a limited number of crossings.

3. Additional Obstacles and Challenges

Blindfolds: Blindfold some members, and others must guide them across the river using only verbal directions.

Time Limit: Introduce a countdown timer to increase urgency and encourage quick decision-making.

Lava Splashes: Every few minutes, the facilitator removes a paper or announces that one of them is "*melting*", forcing the group to adapt their strategy.

4. Role-Based Variations

Limited Movers: Only certain participants can place or move the papers, adding an element of delegation and planning.

Designated Leader: Appoint one person as the leader, who makes the final decision about where to place each paper. The group must communicate well to convey their suggestions effectively.

5. Physical Constraints

Hand-Holding Requirement: Participants must hold hands or stay connected in pairs, making coordination and balance more critical.

No Stepping Back: Once someone moves forward, they're not allowed to return, pushing the group to think carefully about each step.

6. Objective-Based Tweaks

Treasure Hunt: Place small objects (representing "*treasures*") at various points within the lava. The team must retrieve all treasures to complete the challenge.

Multiple Routes: Set up two parallel "*lava rivers*", each with different obstacles. The group has to split into teams, with each team crossing one river.

7. Life-Loss Penalties

- **Bonus Challenges:** Offer optional challenges along the route (like balancing on one foot or hopping) to earn extra lives.
- **Life Penalty for "*Lava Touch*":** Each time a participant steps in the "*lava*", not only do they lose a life, but they have to complete a task (like answering a question or performing a physical exercise) before rejoining.

Mission Impossible

Objectives: Discover the power of cooperation while having fun in a stressful situation. Enable everyone to take their place in the group and observe the group dynamic. Confirm the skills of each participant.

Duration: 30 minutes **No. of Participants:** Minimum of 5

Target group: Open

Preparation

Material Needed: Depends on the planned tasks (e.g., paper, pens, art supplies, household items, tangram, enigmas, etc.); a relatively large space in which to prepare the activity without being seen; possibly tables and chairs; clock or chronometer.

Develop various tasks that require collaboration, not too easy but not too difficult, depending on the size and the group's maturity. Gather necessary materials and set up the activity space, with defined spaces for each task, written on paper or paperboard.



Description

Introduce the Activity: Explain the rules clearly before starting: no phones, respect for everyone's ideas, and self-management.

Set Tasks: Present the various tasks or missions to the participants like small challenges. Ensure tasks require cooperation and are suitable for the group's size. These could be solving puzzles, riddles, dance challenges, etc. Have all these tasks distributed around in the room.

Game Time: Allow participants in the room and give 20 minutes to complete all the tasks. If needed, encourage them to divide roles and strategize.

Check Results: After the time is up, gather participants to review the completed tasks, one by one, and to present their work.

Debriefing

- Ask participants how they felt during the activity, and what they liked and disliked.
- Discuss what they enjoyed most and how they approached task selection. Did they choose based on interests or strengths?
- Highlight the importance of teamwork and cooperation.



Comments/Tips:

Be **flexible** with task completion to adapt to the group's dynamics, and encourage creativity. **Celebrate** each success. Put a **timer** on the activity to keep it stressful and energetic, or remind yourself of the time remaining out loud. **Clearly explain the rules** for each task on its paper. You are an observer during the activity, and referee only if necessary. You can also leave the group alone to prevent them from asking you for help.

The Architect

Objectives: Build together a stable and 'beautiful' structure to explore different decision-making processes (e.g. roles, consent, autonomy).

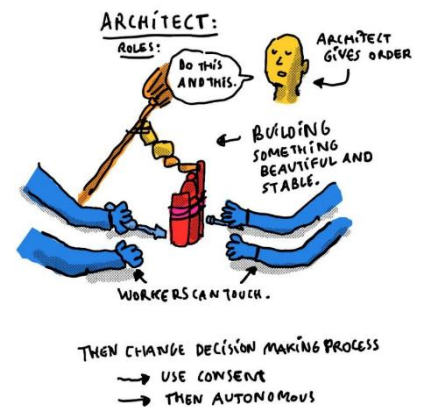
Duration: 10-15 min. **No. of Participants:** Groups of 3 to 6 (max.) **Target group:** Primarily for adults; can also be suitable for teenagers, depending on group dynamics.

Preparation

Material needed: Random objects available in the room, or toy construction blocks.

Description

1. **Introduction:** Each participant selects 2 random objects.
2. **Group Formation:** Divide participants into groups of 3-6.
3. **Activity Steps:**
 - **Round 1: Architect and Workers (3 minutes)**
 - One person acts as the architect, providing instructions.
 - Workers build according to the architect's directions.
 - **Round 2: Consent-Based Building (3 minutes)**
 - All participants cooperate without assigned roles.
 - They must consent on decisions before proceeding, ensuring that no one opposes **any** proposed idea.
 - **Round 3: Autonomous Building (3 minutes)**
 - Participants work independently, choosing their own designs and methods.
4. **Review:** After each round, everyone visits each group's building independently for a few minutes.



Debriefing

- Facilitate a whole group discussion on their experiences during the activity. "How did I feel using this decision-making method? What have I done to support the group? What made me feel safe/insecure?"
- If you have time, each group also makes a 3-minute debriefing after each round.

Comments/Tips:

- Encourage creativity and openness to different ideas.
- Emphasize the importance of communication and cooperation in each round.
- This activity can follow or precede a theoretical contribution to the different decision-making methods and governance models.

Exercises to Boost Confidence in Yourself and Others

Objective: Support the development of self-confidence and confidence in the group, through 3 independent activities. The choice of this sequence of 3 activities is due to the large size of the group. These activities are about realizing yourself. They aim to mark and extend the learning process experienced by the group and each of its members.

Duration: 1h30

No. of Participants: 7- 12 **Target group:** Open

Preparation

Material needed: Whiteboard and whiteboard pens; Room with a ceiling/open space (outdoors with a tree, if possible) ; *Totem* game for Activity 3 ; Table and chairs.

Facilitators should familiarize themselves with the games, and to have experienced them. Choose locations with enough space for each exercise.

Description

You can start with an energizer to define 3 groups of a minimum 7 participants randomly, or prepare them in advance.

Then each group goes to a dedicated place to experience the activity with a facilitator. Each group rotates through the 3 activities, with at least 30 minutes per activity.

Activity 1: Circle Fall

- Form a circle with all group members, with one participant standing in the center.
- Start small by allowing the person in the middle to lean in any direction while the others provide support using hands and bodies.
- Gradually increase the size of the circle and the distance the person falls as they become comfortable. The person in the middle asks if she wants to go lower, faster...
- **Debriefing:** Discuss how it felt to trust others and themselves during the exercise.



Activity 2: The Elevator



- One person lies on the floor and expresses how high they want to go (could be to touch the ceiling, or do it step by step). She's always in control of what she wants to experience. 3 people kneel on either side of this person.

- **Boundaries:** Before starting, the person lying on the floor shares their boundaries about where they prefer, or do not want, to be touched.

- Other participants lift them slowly using

one, two, or three fingers together, emphasizing trust in their combined strength.

- **Debriefing:** Reflect on the increase in confidence in self and others.

Activity 3: Card Game Totem

- Each participant receives three animal cards.
- One person starts by receiving one card from each player, and each player chooses the animal that resonates most with the selected person.
- After everyone has chosen, the person reads the cards aloud and places them on the table in order of resonance, from most to least.
- The person explains why each card resonates with them, and those who chose the card share their reasoning.
- Then it is the turn of the next person.



Debriefing: “How did it feel to see myself through other’s eyes?”

Remark: This is a simple version of the game [Totem](#), where each card highlights the personal qualities of the participant and encourages group reflection and appreciation for one another

Comments/Tips

IMPORTANT: Ensure this exercise is only conducted after day 4 or 5 to allow for team bonding.

Time Management: Designate a timekeeper to ensure that each exercise stays within its allocated time.

Encouragement: Create an environment where participants feel safe and motivated to share their thoughts and feelings during debriefings.

Adaptability: Be prepared to adjust exercises based on group dynamics or individual comfort levels.

Be aware of **troubleshooting Potential Issues** :

Lack of Engagement: If participants seem disengaged during the exercises, consider incorporating icebreaker questions or short discussions to re-energize the group.

Safety Concerns: Monitor physical activities closely to ensure that all participants feel comfortable and safe. Have a safe word or signal in case someone wants to stop at any point.

Group Size Variability: If the group is larger than expected, consider splitting them into smaller teams for certain exercises to maintain engagement and participation.

Treasure Hunting

Objectives: Make the group feel at ease in this area. Discover the area/city/building and its historical or cultural significance. Enable participants to get to know each other through a small-group activity. Develop teamwork and cooperation skills as participants work together to achieve a common goal.

Duration: 1-2 hours **No. of Participants:** Groups of up to 5 people **Target group:** Open

Preparation

Materials Needed: Treasure items (e.g., sweets, small prizes) and something to put it in ; photos of specific locations in the city.

Walk in the area and select key locations/places/buildings around the city that participants will need to find, not too close and not too far, not too easy but not too difficult.

Prepare (at least) 5 photos for each team, each depicting one of the locations (or a detail).

Create a code and write a message with it, which indicates the treasure's location.

Plan the treasure and ensure it's hidden at the final destination.

Description

Team Formation: Divide participants into teams of up to 5 people each.

Photo Distribution: Each team receives 5 photos representing locations they need to find around the city.

Objective: The aim of the treasure hunt is to discover each location, take a group photo at each site, and collect letters to decode a final message.

Treasure Hunt:

Teams must visit the locations depicted in their photos.

They should take selfies at each location to prove they have found it.

Upon completing the visit to a location, teams will receive a letter that is part of the coded message.

Final Challenge: Once all teams have completed the treasure hunt and collected their letters, they will work together to decipher the final message that leads them to the treasure.

Debriefing

- You can invite participants to share something they liked.
- Ask participants what they learned about the area and about working as a team.
- Discuss any challenges they faced and how they overcame them.

Tips

- Send the first photo at the beginning of the hunt; subsequent photos should only be sent once teams provide their selfie from the previous location.
- Ensure the area chosen for the treasure hunt is appropriate for the time available and the participants' abilities. For greater security, you can give each group a card (and create a simplified one if necessary).
- In a “small” area, each team can have the same spots. In that case, take different photos and make sure that each team has its own itinerary.
- A Whatsapp-type communication application will enable you to communicate with each of the groups, by creating several discussions or through a shared discussion. It's also great for keeping all those wonderful selfies!
- Including historical facts or stories about each location can enhance the educational value of the activity.
- Depending on the group, consider having a person stationed at each location to provide additional tests (like enigma, or cooperative challenge) or help if needed. These persons can carry water and a first-aid kit, and could be disguised.
- Depending on the age of the participants, make sure they can easily find an adult referee. A facilitator can wander around the space.

Background Information

Any relevant city guides, historical information, or resources used to select locations and prepare the activity.



Active Listening Exercise

Objectives: Experience and reflect upon different styles of listening and their effects on both the speaker and the listener. Learn about and practice “*active listening*” as a skill and attitude developed by the psychologist Carl Rogers (On Becoming a Person, 1961).

Duration: 1 hour **No. of Participants:** Min. 2 **Target group:** Primarily for adults.

Preparation

Material needed: Space for discussions to talk without interruptions. (e.g., different rooms or areas) ; chronometer; eventually paper and pencils.

Description

This activity takes part in a global pedagogical process about constructive communication, satisfactory and supportive relationships and the development of better cooperative practices. Communication is a vast and complex subject, so the proposal is learning by doing. The group will experiment in pairs 3 ways of listening, with one speaker (person A) and one listener (person B). After each activity, participants switch roles, in order to experience each listening style.

Explain the 3 steps to the group at the beginning, in order to show the process. Depending on the group and the time you have, you can decide to explain the “*active listening*” before the first activity, or after the second.

Carl Rogers gives 6 pillars for practicing active listening :

1. **Give your full attention to the speaker** (reception) and focus on their words.
2. Make a genuine response that ensures **the speaker feels heard**.
3. **Take mental notes** when the speaker pauses to recap and remember key details.
4. **Consider the speaker's emotional connection to the topic** when responding.
5. **Avoid interpreting** and aim to be an echo or true mirror of what the speaker expresses.
6. **Show more interest in the person than the problem** itself. Ask genuine questions.

Set a safe framework for both participants: it is important that the speaker talks about a subject that affects him but is not too sensitive, either for himself or for the listener. Pay attention to the participants' emotional state and offer them support if needed during or after the activity.

EXERCISES:



1. "Summary"

Activity (5 minutes): Person A talks for 3 minutes. Person B listens attentively, without asking questions or interrupting Person A. Afterward, Person B summarizes what they heard as accurately as possible during 2 minutes starting sentences with "I heard..."

Debriefing (5 minutes): Person A shares how they felt during the speaking and summarizing process. Then person B does the same.

2. "Parrot"

Activity (5 minutes): Person A talks, Person B (the "parrot") listens attentively and repeats what Person A said after each sentence or topic (as accurately as possible).

Debriefing (5 minutes): Person A shares their feelings regarding the speaking and listening experience. Then person B does the same.

3. "Active Listening" or "Reformulation"

Activity (5 minutes): Person A talks. Person B listens attentively and reformulates/rephrases what they heard without interrupting Person A.

Debrief (5 minutes): Person A shares how they felt during the speaking and rephrasing process. Then person B does the same.

Debriefing

During the debriefing in pairs, encourage participants to be honest, and to share their emotions and feelings.

Make a final debriefing with the whole group, to reflect on how different listening attitudes affect relationships and the feelings of both the speaker and the listener.

In addition, you can ask these 4 questions to the whole group, which are a complete debriefing :
"What particularly touched me during this activity? What did I learn? What would I like to use/do

again? What do I want to learn more about? “ In order to do that, you can reform pairs, you can ask everyone to answer on a paper, or it could be a talk where not everyone has to answer.

Comments/Tips:

This activity should be preceded by a period of time to allow the participants to get to know each other. The higher the level of trust, the deeper and more instructive the experiment.

The facilitator can take care of the timing and use a bell or any sound to indicate the various stages in the process. Participants can also take care of that and adjust their needs. In any case, it is **essential** to pay attention to the global timing of the activity.

Adjust the exercise duration and complexity based on group needs and time constraints. You can skip the first or second activity. If you don't have time, you can also make the debriefing shorter (2-3 minutes each), or both parts shorter.

Background Information

For more information about active listening, you can read this text from 1987 by Carl Rogers & Richard Farson: [http://wholebeinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/Rogers Farson Active-Listening.pdf](http://wholebeinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/Rogers_Farson_Active-Listening.pdf)

You can also read this essay about Carl Rogers life and theories (2022): <https://aeon.co/essays/the-psychologist-carl-rogers-and-the-art-of-active-listening>

7 Listening Attitudes

(based on Elias Porter)

Objective: To experiment and become aware of the different listening attitudes we can adopt in a conversation, which depend on our intention towards the other person and the position we take in the relationship. To identify and reflect on the effects of these attitudes on the speaker and listener.

Duration: 30 minutes

No. of Participants: 7 to 30

Target group: Primarily for adults

Preparation

Material Needed: Space for discussions (e.g., different rooms or areas); chronometer; diagram for explanation of the theoretical background; 7 pieces of paper with the names of the listening attitudes written on them.

Prepare example phrases or situations for participants to respond to during the activity.

Description

Elias Porter (1914-1987) worked with other psychologists, including Thomas Gordon and Carl Roger, to create a renowned student-centred model of learning, using non-directive techniques in the helping and psychotherapeutic relationship. He distinguished 6 typical listening attitudes for each individual. We've added a seventh, bringing it back to ourselves. The attitude of understanding, and empathy, is the most optimal, both for the speaker and the listener. This activity therefore seeks to encourage this listening attitude and to develop our ability to put it into practice.

1. Introduction:

The facilitator hands out the 7 pieces of paper to the participants, ensuring they do not reveal their drawn attitude out loud.

2. Listening Exercise:

Participants listen to an example phrase or situation spoken by the facilitator, keeping their assigned attitude/intention in mind.

Each participant then responds to the phrase or situation according to the listening attitude they have drawn (the facilitator can also say the sentence 7 times to underline each situation).

3. Rotation:

This exercise can be repeated for several examples, allowing participants to switch their pieces of paper and try different listening attitudes if they wish.

Debriefing

After all participants have replied, the group discusses how the speaker (in this case, the facilitator) may have felt hearing the responses from participants with different listening attitudes. The facilitator can also share their feelings as a speaker according to the answer they received. The **facilitator** then explains the theoretical background of the different listening attitudes using the diagram or visual aids.

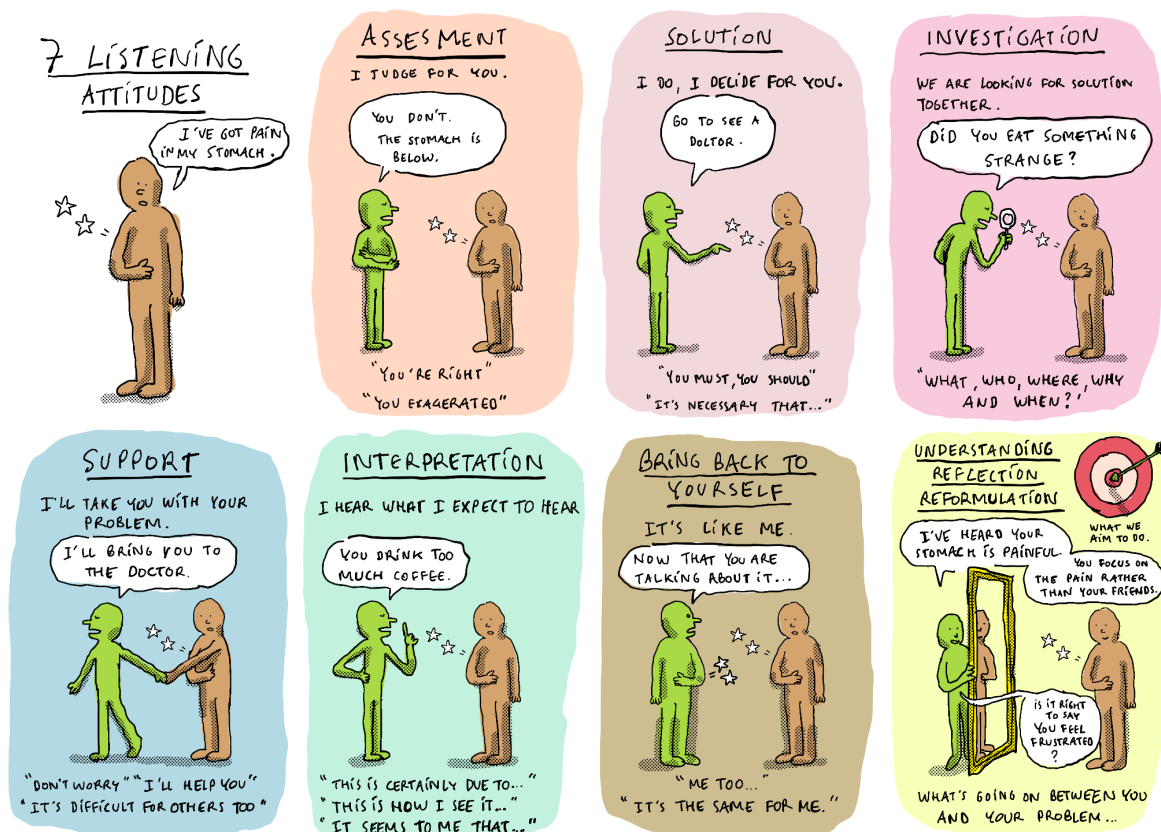
Comments/Tips:

This exercise is beneficial as a preparatory step for Carl Rogers' Active Listening Exercise, as understanding various listening attitudes is essential for practicing active listening skills such as understanding, rephrasing, and reformulating.

You can also work on this exercise in small groups, with a speaker and several listeners, each with a different listening attitude. This allows you to experiment with the emotional state generated by each listening attitude. It can be a bit overwhelming, so make sure that the group is ready and that a framework of trust/security has been established.

Visuals or diagrams illustrating different listening attitudes and their implications can enhance understanding. We created two of them during the training, the illustration below and 7 cards that you can find [here](#).

During years of experimentation and research, Elias Porter built his famous theory about relationship awareness. You can read his book Relationship Awareness Theory, Manual of Administration and Interpretation (1973).



Back-to-Back Drawing

Objective: Encourage participants to communicate effectively by trusting and guiding each other, while exploring the different forms and barriers of communication. Realize the difference between what I think I'm saying, what I'm really saying, and what the other person hears. Show the differences in perception.

Duration: 15-20 min

No. of Participants: Minimum 2

Target group: Open

Preparation

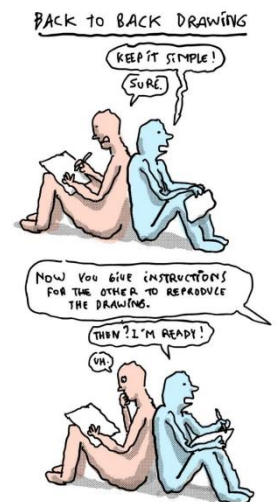
Materials Needed: Pen and paper for each participant. We recommend using half an A4 sheet for each exercise (you can cut or fold them in advance).

Description

Team Formation: Participants pair up and sit back-to-back, ensuring they cannot see each other's drawings.

Activity Instructions:

- One participant (the “artist”) draws a simple image or shape.
- The artist's task is to verbally guide their partner (the “recreator”) in drawing the same image without the recreator seeing the original picture.
- The recreator is not allowed to ask questions or make any verbal contributions; they can only listen to the instructions given by their partner.
- After a set amount of time (e.g., 5-10 minutes), the partners will finish their drawings.
- Once completed, they turn to face each other and compare their drawings.
- Then they swap roles and repeat the activity.



Debriefing

Reflect on how each person's perspective influenced their drawing and understanding of the instructions. Discuss how different perspectives can lead to varied interpretations of the same information during the drawing.

Encourage participants to share their experiences regarding communication during the activity: “What aspects of communication were challenging? What am I learning? “

Highlight the importance of clear instructions and active listening in effective communication and cooperative practices.

Comments/Tips:

Emphasize the importance of trust and patience between partners. It's normal not to be able to make identical drawings. You can do this exercise again and again, and keep improving yourself. There is a lot of literature about communication and effective teamwork. This activity is just one stone in the building; it's a long path!

The 5 Obstacles to Communication

Objectives: Recognize common barriers to communication, increase self-awareness, empathy, and mutual understanding, develop constructive strategies to overcome communication obstacles, and improve fulfilling and satisfying relationships through efficient dialogue.

Duration: 2,5 hours and a short break **No. of Participants:** 10 min. **Target group:** Adults

Preparation

Materials Needed: An explanation of each of the five barriers to communication (one per group) ; prepared questions for group discussions; paper and pens; flipchart and markers.

Think about examples and strategies for overcoming each of the five obstacles to communication (you can use the illustration below).

Prepare written summaries of each obstacle for group distribution.

Description

Introduction: Begin by explaining the purpose and structure of the activity to the whole group, emphasizing that the goal is to gain insights into common communication obstacles and explore ways to address them.

Overview of Obstacles: Present the five communication barriers to the group, briefly describing each and providing practical examples: *Projection, Victimization, Avoidance, Reactivity, and Requirement*.

Group Formation and Obstacle Selection: Divide the participants into five smaller groups and ask each group to select a barrier they most identify with or want to explore further.

Group Discussion (90 minutes): Each group will discuss their chosen barrier, focusing on:

- What does the barrier mean in communication?
- How does it typically manifest in conversations?
- What strategies might help to manage or overcome this barrier?

Break: Allow a 10-minute break to give participants time to refresh.

Group Presentations (30 minutes): After the break, each group presents their findings to the whole group, explaining their obstacle and sharing strategies for overcoming it. Encourage questions and discussion after each presentation. This setup encourages participants to explore and share personal insights while developing strategies for better communication.

Debriefing

Collective discussion (30 minutes): Summarize the discussions and highlight key points from each obstacle. Invite participants to reflect on how they felt during the activity, how they relate to the obstacles discussed, and what improvements they would suggest for this session.

Comments/Tips:

Trigger Warning: Some barriers may be sensitive or provoke strong feelings. Begin the session with a reminder to respect each other's experiences and to be mindful of how the discussions may affect others. Offer your support if needed.

There is no question here of making a demand for an ideal standard of communication: we have all used the different forms of communication described below, and may still do so, either on purpose or for fun. We are all still learning, and we're not always in a position to avoid these pitfalls. It's more a question of:

- becoming increasingly aware, both individually and collectively, of how I express myself / how we express ourselves.
- being able to take responsibility if there is a problem with the other person's understanding/reaction when the words I use or my attitude cause stress or embarrassment.
- to know how to use my power to overcome these obstacles.

Background Information

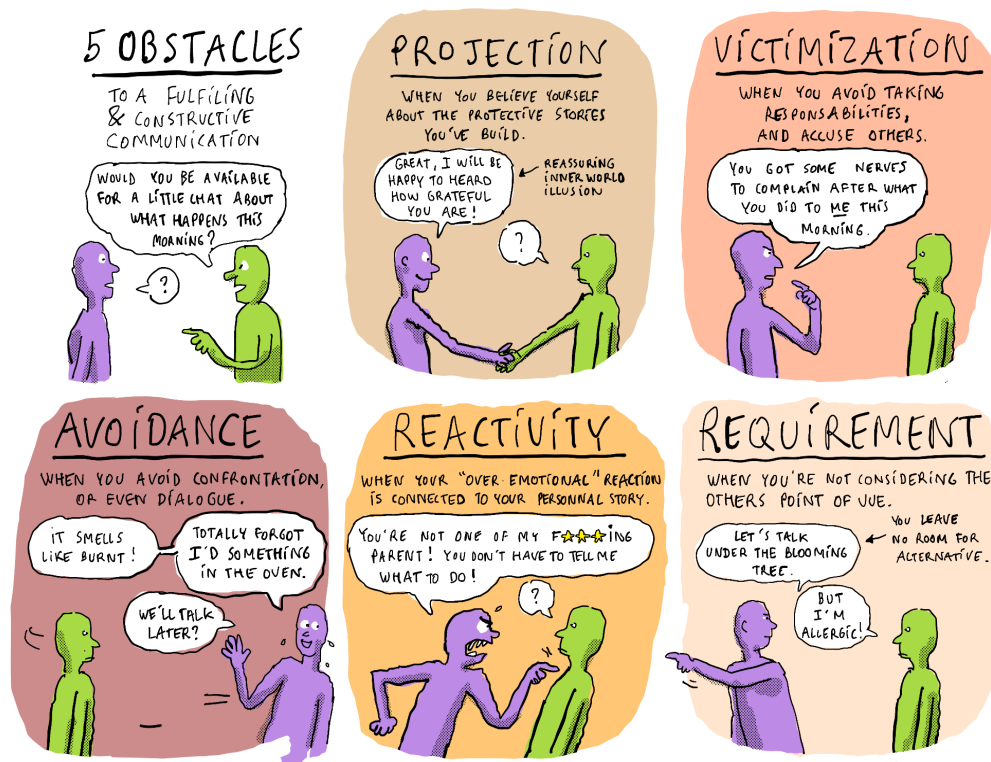
Leader Effectiveness Training: The No-Lose Way to Release the Productive Potential of People (1983) by famous psychologist Thomas Gordon. The Gordon method is a way of resolving conflicts that leads to a solution without losers or winners. He theorized 12 obstacles to communication.

The Wheel of Consent by [Betty Martin](#)

The Empowerment Manual (2011) by [Starhawk](#)

Radical Honesty, the New Revised Edition: How to Transform Your Life by Telling the Truth (2009) by psychologist [Brad Blanton](#)

The Approach of Non-Bullshit Communication from [Joshua Hathaway](#)



THEORY BY JOSHUA HATHAWAY

Non-Violent Communication

Objective: Introduce participants to Non-Violent Communication (NVC) through its four key steps: Observation, Feelings, Needs, and Request.

Duration: 2 hours **No. of Participants:** Min. 4

Target group: Adults and teenagers

Preparation

Material Needed: yellow cards with feelings written on them (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated) ; green cards with needs written on them (e.g., connection, autonomy, safety) ; two large papers on the floor labeled "Giraffe" (observation) and "Jackal" (judgment) ; a chronometer.

Arrange the room with space for group activities and discussions.

Prepare an introduction game setup, ensuring chairs are available for the chair game.

Description

Introduction Game: Chair Game

Arrange chairs in a circle (one less than the No. of Participants).

One person stands in the middle and expresses a need (e.g., "I need connection.").

If anyone in the circle shares that need, they stand up and switch chairs, leaving one person in the middle to express another need.

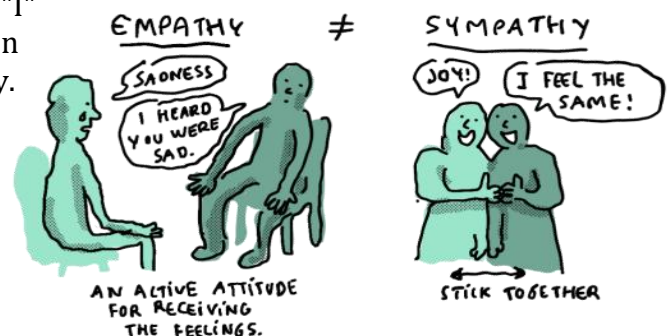
After a few rounds, engage in a sharing discussion about the shared needs, emphasizing that while feelings and emotions may vary, needs are universal.

Objective: Recognize shared needs and distinguish between strategies to fulfill needs versus the needs themselves. Ex: To drink coffee is not a need, it is a strategy to fulfil my need of enough sleep or to be awake.

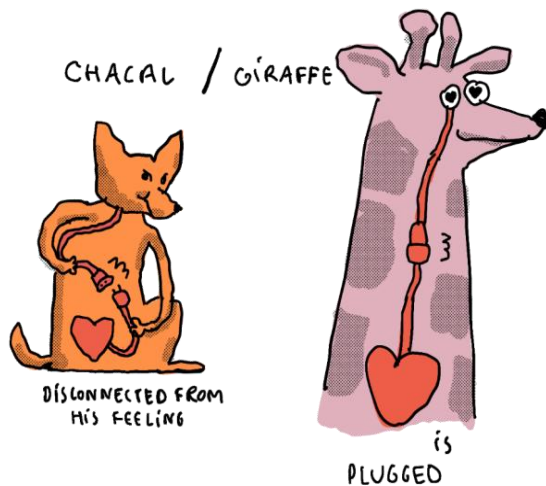
Introduction to Non-Violent Communication (NVC)

Present a brief definition of NVC:

- NVC is not merely about being nice but about being authentic.
- It involves recognizing feelings before needs and taking responsibility for one's emotions.
- It promotes communication from the "I" perspective and fosters compassion through empathy.



Discuss Two Listening Behaviors:



Jackal (Judgment): Represents closed-mindedness, where one does not connect with their own feelings or those of others, often leading to competition or conflict.

Giraffe (Observation): Symbolizes compassion, empathy, and connection, focusing on emotions and intentions without judgment.

NVC Four Steps:

1. OBSERVATION: Teach participants to observe without judgment. Use a simple example to illustrate the difference between a judgmental statement and an observational one (e.g., "The room is dirty" vs. "There are 2 cups and 3 notebooks on the floor").

Exercise: Divide the room into two areas, one represents Giraffe (observation) statements and the other one Jackal (judgment) statements. Give a paper with one sentence to each participant, ideally for any judgment there is an observation, such as in [this example](#). Each participant evaluates if the given sentence corresponds to Giraffe (observation) or Jackal (judgment) and goes to the correspondent area. Participants evaluate shared sentences to categorize them as either Giraffe (observation) or Jackal (judgment). They can discuss with the other participants of their area while everyone locates themselves. In the end, participants from the judgemental area read out loud their sentences, and for each of them, participants from the observation area must find who has the observation version of the same idea.

Examples:

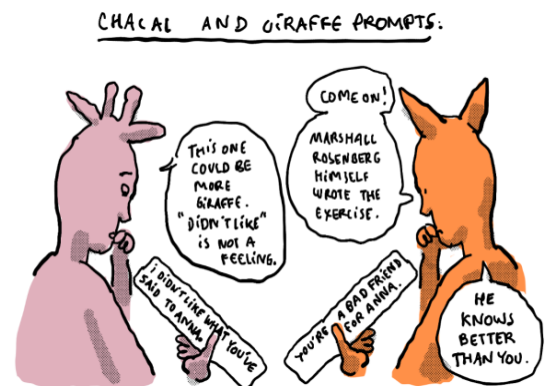
C: "Stop complaining, everything looks bad for you"

G: "You said no to the 3 proposals I made"

C: "You are a bad friend"

G: "I didn't like hearing what you said to Anna"

C: "You spend the day screaming like crazy. Don't you know how to talk to people?"



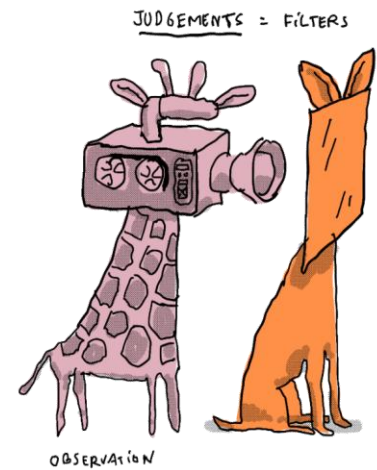
G: "You have raised your voice 2 times this morning"

C: "You are insensitive"

G: "I have known you for 3 years and I have never seen you cry"

C: "I am stupid. It always happens the same to me"

G: "This week, it's the second time that I leave my breakfast at home"



2. FEELINGS:

- Explain the importance of recognizing feelings and how they differ from thoughts. Highlight that projecting feelings onto others can inhibit authentic communication.
- **Exercise:** Participants will refer back to previous examples about assertiveness shared in trios. They will first choose feelings from the yellow cards that reflect their emotions during the situation, followed by selecting needs from the green cards.

3. NEEDS:

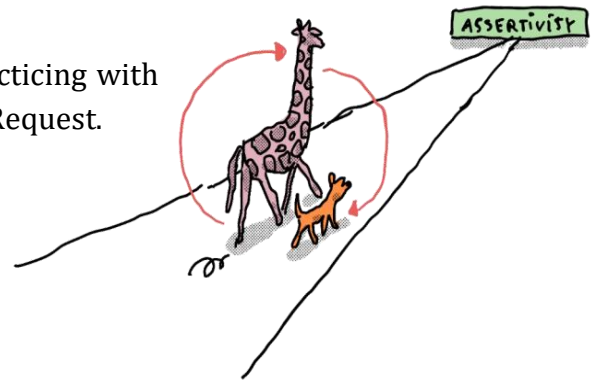
- Discuss the connection between needs and feelings, emphasizing that covered needs lead to positive feelings while unmet needs can cause negative feelings.
- Participants will practice identifying and articulating their needs based on their earlier examples.
- When a need is covered you get positive feelings (e.g. love, joy). When it is not covered, not, you get negative feelings (e.g. fear, anger)
- Be aware when you share your feelings with the difference between feeling and thought. If it starts, "I feel that/like..." it is probably a thought instead of a real feeling. Be aware of projected emotions: "You make me feel sad", "I feel unlistened". You are projecting the responsibility of your emotions onto others, and probably this is hiding some real feelings (sadness, loneliness)..



Exercise:

Leave the feeling cards on one side of the room, and the needs cards on a different one (lying on the floor). The person who shared the example goes first to the feeling cards (yellow) and chooses (with also proposals from the other 2) the emotions that were felt during the example. And then for the needs cards (green).

Sharing in the big group one person the example practicing with the 4 steps: 1 Observation, 2 Feelings, 3 Needs, and 4 Request.



Exercise: Identifying Feelings and Needs with NVC

Materials Needed:

- [cards with feelings \(e.g., happy, sad, frustrated\) & needs](#) (e.g., connection, autonomy, safety). You can use different colors (yellow cards with feelings/. Green cards with needs).
- Space for the cards on the floor.

Objective:

Help participants identify and express feelings and needs using Non-Violent Communication (NVC).

Instructions:

1. Form Trios: Divide participants into groups of three.
2. Selecting Feelings:
 - One participant shares a situation where they felt a particular need.
 - They select yellow feeling cards that resonate with their experience, with input from their trio.
3. Selecting Needs:
 - They then choose green needs cards that relate to their identified feelings.
5. Sharing in the Group:
 - Each participant presents their example to the larger group, practicing the four steps of NVC:
 1. Observation: Describe the situation factually.
 2. Feelings: Share selected feelings.
 3. Needs: Articulate related needs.
 4. Request: Make a clear request based on those needs.

Alternatively: Practice in Pairs. In pairs, participants will practice using the four steps: making an observation, expressing their feelings, identifying their needs, and formulating a request.

6. Group Reflection:

FEELING AND NEED INVESTIGATION:



- Facilitate a discussion on insights gained and how to implement NVC in daily interactions.

Debriefing

Conclude with key takeaways on articulating feelings and needs for better communication.

Debriefing

Gather participants for a group discussion to reflect on the NVC process. Prompt questions like:

- How did it feel to share your observations, feelings, needs, and requests?
- What challenges did you encounter while practicing NVC?
- How might NVC change the way you communicate in daily life?

Encourage participants to share key takeaways and insights gained from the activity.

Comments/Tips:

Emphasize the importance of a safe and supportive environment for open communication.

Be prepared to facilitate discussions if participants struggle with articulating their needs or feelings.

Adjust the timing of activities as needed to ensure a comfortable pace for participants.

Background Information:

Marshall Rosenberg, Non-Violent Communication: A Language of Life.

Additional resources on NVC and its application in various settings can be found on websites dedicated to communication and conflict resolution.

Authentic Expression & Assertiveness

Objectives: To learn about 3 Communication Styles and to reflect on your own Communication style.

Duration: 1h25 **No. of Participants:** Flexible **Target group:** Teenagers and Adults

Preparation

Material needed:

Whiteboard and pens (for brainstorming); posters or moderation cards prepared with key terms of the three communication styles; whiteboard or another medium to write down questions for group work; assertiveness quiz link: [Assertiveness Quiz](#).

Familiarize yourself with the three styles of communication.

Draft questions for the group work segment.

Ensure ample space for groups to discuss quietly.

Instruct participants to bring their smartphones and prepare a laptop for the quiz

Description

1. Brainstorming: What assertiveness means to you? 20 minutes.

Examples include: Strength ; Affirmation ; Certainty ; Decision ; Empathy ; Authenticity ; Care ; Clear needs ; Boundaries ; and Honesty.

An example of definition: Assertiveness is the ability to express oneself clearly and authentically and to assert one's point of view with confidence. This open and constructive communication style enables people to defend their position while taking into account those of others, in a spirit of mutual respect.

2. Participants take a test on their own assertiveness: 20 minutes.

Each participant takes a quiz via the provided link, using their phone.

This is for personal reflection only; results are not to be shared.

Allow time for questions afterward.

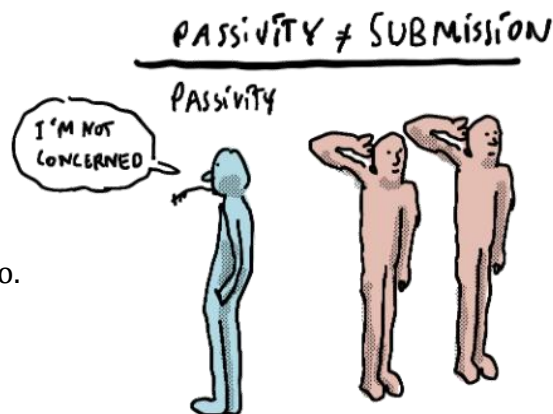


2. Present the 3 communication styles: 15 minutes.

Explain the 3 Communication Styles using moderation cards or a poster, and the main tendencies associated with each of them. It's more a scale than closed categories.

Submission:

- Being too scared to express thoughts.
- Avoiding eye contact.
- Speaking softly or weakly.
- Reducing self-esteem.
- Prioritizing others' needs and struggling to say no.



Assertiveness:

- Expressing oneself clearly and confidently.
- Maintaining eye contact.
- Speaking firmly.
- Valuing self-esteem while considering others' needs.
- Saying no calmly and directly.

Aggressiveness:

- Expressing oneself with aggression or anger.
- Staring judgmentally.
- Speaking loudly or shouting.
- Reducing others' self-esteem.
- Prioritizing one's own needs and reacting aggressively.



4. Group work discussing passive and aggressive situations: 30 minutes.

Form groups of three. Ask participants to reflect on a time when they acted passively or aggressively, and to share in their group.

Then, they answer these questions in groups (only the first if time is short) :

- How would you have handled it assertively?
- What challenges do you face when trying to be assertive, and how can you overcome them?

Debriefing

Gather feedback on the group method; participants often express a desire to be more assertive and appreciate the sharing of personal situations and emotions.

Comments/Tips

Remind the participants of the importance of caring and supporting each other through the group exercise. The aim is not to judge ourselves or point out our difficulties, but rather to collectively understand patterns that are repeated and experienced by other people. Together, we can help each other find ways to get through complex situations more effectively or to avoid behaving in ways that don't suit us.

Also, be mindful of time management to complete the activity.

Analysing a Conflict Situation

Objective: To analyze conflicts by identifying needs and underlying beliefs, while guiding participants through self-reflection and connecting with their internal experiences.

Duration: 20 minutes

No. of Participants: 2–4

Target group: Open

Preparation

Material needed:

- Four A4 papers labeled as:
 1. “Judge Yourself | Self Blame”
 2. “Judge the Other | Blame Them”
 3. “My Needs”
 4. “Their Needs (Hypothesis)”
- Pens and paper for note-taking
- Sufficient open space to form small group circles and place the labeled sheets on the floor in a cross layout

Facilitator's preparation: Be ready to explain the purpose and steps with clarity and care. Hold space for emotional responses. This can be a triggering activity. Ensure the safety of the group by encouraging participants to choose a conflict they are comfortable discussing.

Description

1. Step 1: Create the Setting

Form small groups of 2 to 4 people. Ensure a safe and private atmosphere in each group. Emphasize confidentiality and emotional care

2. Step 2: Prepare the Floor Setup

Place the four labeled sheets of paper on the ground in a cross shape

Explain the meaning of each label and how participants will use them to reflect on their conflict



3. Step 3: Conflict Sharing

One person volunteers to share a real-life conflict situation. Another participant volunteers to facilitate, guiding the sharer through each step of the reflection

4. Step 4: Guided Inner Analysis

The facilitator supports the conflict-sharer in walking through the four reflection points:

What judgments or self-blame arise?

What judgments or blame toward the other person appear?

What are their own unmet needs in the situation?

What might the other person's needs be?
If appropriate, the person may formulate a request to address the other party

Optional Step – Inner Conflict Focus:

If no external conflict is shared, this process can be applied to internal conflicts. The reflection can be on inner voices and unmet personal needs, making it a personal clarity tool.

Debriefing

You may choose one of two debriefing formats:

Option 1: Plenary Debriefing

Regroup everyone in a big circle and open a voluntary sharing space. Guiding questions:

Would anyone like to share something about their experience?

How did it feel to be supported or to support someone?

What challenges came up, and how were they handled?

Option 2: Small Group Reflection

Keep participants in their groups and let them reflect briefly on how they felt in each role and each step of the process.

Comments / Tips

Clarify the metaphor of walking through the papers to support reflection

The facilitator can offer examples to model how to name judgments and needs

Keep time in mind; the process may need to be gently held or shortened depending on the depth participants reach

Be flexible with the format depending on group readiness and energy

If a participant becomes overwhelmed, offer them the option to pause or step out

Background Information

This method is an experimental blend, primarily inspired by *Nonviolent Communication* by Marshall Rosenberg, particularly focusing on identifying unmet needs behind conflict. It combines aspects of embodiment, self-reflection, and active listening.

5 Tricks (Card Game) – Barnga

Objectives: Realize differences between people, cultures, and backgrounds. Recognize that your own rules are not the only ones or the best. Understand the importance of communication in overcoming differences. Practice adapting to a new set of rules and being flexible.

Duration: 60 to 80 min **No. of Participants:** Min. of 9 **Target group:** Teenagers or adults

Preparation

Material Needed: A printed copy of the game rules for each group (linked on the [Padlet](#)) ; and a deck of cards for each table/group. Ensure the necessary materials are ready (rules and card decks). Set up tables or designated areas for the groups.

Description

1. Introduction and Rule Distribution (5-10 minutes):

- Explain that participants will play a card game called "5 Tricks" following certain rules.
- Hand out a copy of the rules to each group and allow them 5 minutes to read and understand them individually.

2. Game Setup (3 minutes):

- Participants sit at their tables and begin the game following their group's rules.
- Once the game starts, nonverbal communication or writing is allowed. Participants may only draw or use gestures to communicate.

3. Game Play (30-45 minutes):

- Begin the game at each table, with participants rotating to different tables at set intervals to introduce new rule sets.
- Ensure participants follow the rule of silence, using non-verbal communication only.

4. Game Conclusion (15-20 minutes):

- After completing the rounds, bring everyone together for a group discussion.



Debriefing

Ask participants how they felt during the game: What emotions or thoughts did they experience when facing different rules? How did they manage to adapt without speaking?

Discuss what participants learned from the activity: What insights did they gain about their own assumptions and adaptability? How did they address misunderstandings or conflicts?

Highlight the importance of flexibility, open-mindedness, and effective communication.

Comments/Tips:

Ensure participants follow the rules, especially the no-talking policy, to maintain the exercise's integrity. Use simple language when explaining the game, and clarify specific terms or concepts at the beginning. Be attentive to group dynamics and intervene if needed to keep the atmosphere constructive and respectful.

One Step Forward

Objective: To promote empathy through role play, raise awareness of unequal distribution of opportunities and systemic barriers and reflect on how social identity, background, and economic conditions affect human rights and opportunities

Duration: 1 hour

No. of Participants: 10–22 **Target group:** Adults

Preparation

Material needed:

- Large room or open space (approx. 18 steps forward and enough width for the whole group to stand side by side)
- Printed and cut-out role cards (one per participant)
- Background music (optional, to create calm atmosphere)
- Pens and paper for free-writing

Facilitator's preparation:

- Create a calm atmosphere for the start of the exercise
- Prepare the space so all participants can stand in one horizontal line
- Be ready to facilitate an emotionally charged debriefing with care

Description

1. Step 1: Preparation

Choose a suitable number of role cards based on the group size

Ensure the physical space is clear and spacious for movement

Place participants in a calm environment (optionally with soft background music)

2. Step 2: Introduction to the Role

Hand out one role card per participant—remind them not to share it with others

Ask them to sit quietly and reflect on their character using questions like: What was your childhood like? Where do you live now? What is your everyday life like? How much money do you have each month? What are you afraid of?

3. Step 3: Implementation

Ask participants to stand shoulder to shoulder in a line. Explain that you will read statements aloud.

If the character they are playing can answer “yes” to the statement, they take one step forward.

Read each statement slowly, giving time to react and observe the movement.

Debriefing

After the last statement, ask participants to stop and observe their positions. Invite them back into a circle (sitting or standing). Ask them not to reveal their roles at first.

Facilitate a reflective conversation using questions like:

- What did it feel like to take a step forward, or not?
- What prevented you from stepping forward?
- When did you notice others falling behind?
- What human rights might not have been guaranteed?

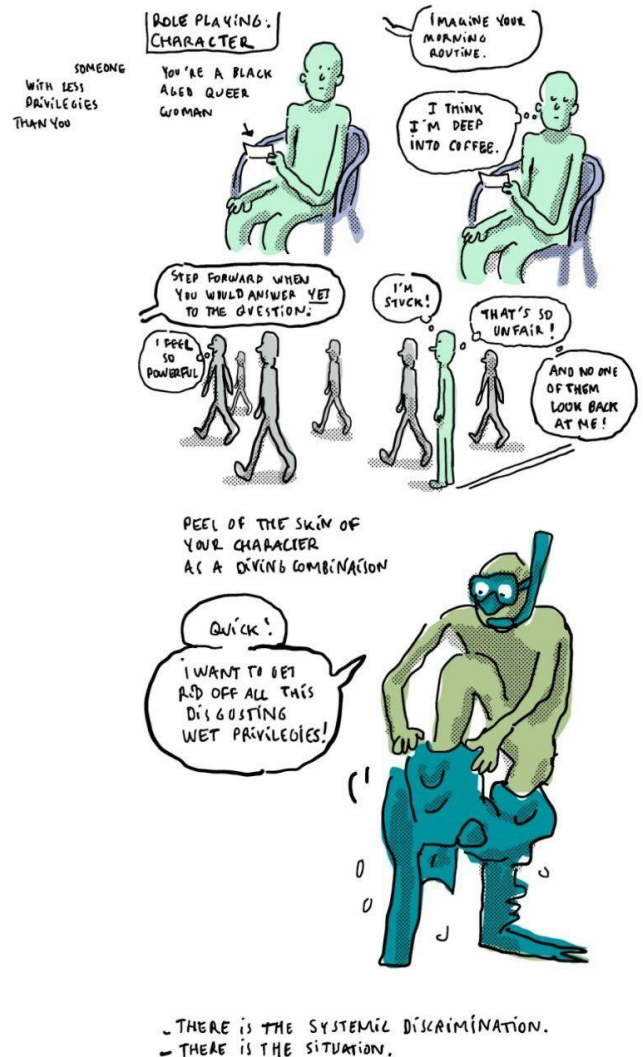
Invite a few people to reveal and read their role cards and continue reflection with questions like:

- How easy or hard was it to play the role?
- Which characters were living a good life, and why?
- Does this reflect reality? What can be done for more justice?

Free Writing

Ask participants to write freely for 5 minutes in response to the prompt: *“When I experience social injustices, I feel...”*

Encourage stream-of-consciousness writing without overthinking



Comments / Tips

Ensure that participants feel safe entering and exiting their roles and give space for them to step out after the activity

Emphasize the importance of the debriefing over the role play itself

Watch for emotional responses and adapt the pace as needed

Include moments of grounding or breathing if the energy is heavy

You may use movement or music to “shake off” the role at the end

Background Information

Adapted from:

Handbook on Human Rights Education for School and Extracurricular Work, Federal Agency for Civic Education

Compass: A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People, Council of Europe Publishing, 2nd Edition, 2003

Statements One Step Forward

Questions:

1. All your basic needs are covered
2. you live in a house or flat with running water, electricity and a toilet.
3. you have never had serious money problems.
4. you feel that you can express your opinion freely and that others take you seriously.
5. you are not afraid of being stopped by the police.
6. you can go on holiday once a year.
7. you can invite friends home for dinner.
8. you are optimistic about the future.
9. you can learn the profession you want.
10. you can go to the cinema or to a party at least once a week.
11. you can openly love whoever you want.
12. you feel that your knowledge and skills are recognised in the society in which you live,
13. you have the possibility to do sports besides school or work.
14. you have never had the feeling of being excluded by others.
15. you can rely on your family.
16. if you are ill, you will receive the necessary medicines and therapies.
17. . you attend school that is appropriate for your abilities.
18. you can communicate with your environment without any problems.
19. . you can move around your neighbourhood/town independently.
20. you know that your family will have enough to eat tomorrow and the day after.
21. you feel that your religion and language are respected in the society in which you live.
22. you can express your political opinion without fear of negative consequences
23. . you know where to turn for advice and help.
24. you are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the street
25. you/your kids have/had all the school and work materials you need (notebooks, pens, books...).
26. you job application have never been rejected because of belonging to a certain group.
27. you have many opportunities to pursue your hobbies

Roles One Step Forward

You are a 37-year-old white unemployed single mother, you have no support from your family as you have no relationship to them since many years.

You are a non binary 25-year-old person of color, you spent all your savings in your journey to reach Europe, you are queer and HIV positive.

You are a 21-year-old man who is in a wheelchair. You have a family that supports you financially and takes care of you. You receive support from the state.

You are a 18-year-old refugee, who recently arrived in Europe. You don't have a support network, you live in a refugee center and you are looking for a job.

You are a middle aged white construction worker who lost an arm at work and can no longer find a job. You tried to report your employer but there have been no compensation so far.

You are a 24-year-old immigrant who live with no regular administrative situation in Europe. You found a job without a regular contract. You have to work 10h a day to maintain yourself and your family back in your country.

You are a 16-year-old blind student you have a lot of friends and you like to go to school, your classmates are nice to you and your family provides you with all the support you need.

You are 25-year old white and trans person. You are the son of the British Ambassador in Indonesia. You can have all what you ask for, your parents will provide, even if they struggle accepting your gender identity.

You are the 12-year-old person of color, you are the daughter of a immigrant who owns a well going fast food restaurant, they expect you to take over the family business.

You are a 91-year-old woman, you have never worked, you have only taken care of your children, but now they live far away from you and you are in a hospice as you are not self-sufficient anymore.

You are an 19-year-old soldier and have been called to go to war. You don't want to go but you would go to prison for that. You left your family house because they would not support your choice and you are homeless at the moment.

You are a 16-year old black girl who is supposed to marry soon someone your parents choose for you. You are secretly in love with a female classmate of yours.

You are a 19-year-old son of a wealthy family. Your father is a succesful investor and your mother a doctor. Your family has been rich since generations. Your parents expect you to study and have a successful career as they had.

You are a young and good-looking black female travel influencer. You are never longer than a week in the same place. You love your work even if you receive very often inappropriate comments online.

You are a 50-year-old white man, father of 3 kids. You have a stable employment at the post office and enjoy spending time with friends at the bar.

You are an 8-year-old black boy, you struggle in school because the lessons are too difficult for you as they are not in your mother tongue. Your family doesn't provide you with the extra support you need.

You are a 16-year-old young white man from a small village. You already work in your family farm. You would like to go live in a bigger city to have more opportunities.

You are a 18-year-old white male person doing a voluntary service with kids abroad. You like what you do and you receive enough money from the volunteering program to support your living.

You are a white young activist. You conduct non-violent actions to protest against social injustices. You have been already several time in jail because of that. You are not financially stable, but you have a lot of friends ready to support you.

You are a neurodivergent and queer artist. You want to make a living out of your art but is not yet possible. You work as a waiter in a bar instead.

You are an 10-year-old white girl who attend a private school. Everyone tells you how smart and pretty you are. You know your parents will provide you with all what you ask for.

You are a 20-year-old black girl who is participating in a 1-year student exchange. The country of your choice is far away from home and you can not read or speak the language and not many people speaks your language or English.

Forum Theater

Objective: To explore and identify oppression through theatrical expression and collectively rehearse transformative responses. This activity aims to empower participants by allowing them to engage as both actors and spectators in scenes based on real experiences.

Duration: 3 hours

No. of Participants: 7–30

Target group: Open

Preparation

Material needed:

- Open space suitable for performance
- Optional props for characters (clothing, simple accessories, etc.)

Environment setup:

- Arrange the space to allow all participants to view the scenes clearly
- Ensure a calm and focused atmosphere

Facilitator's preparation:

- Familiarize yourself with the principles of Theatre of the Oppressed
- Be prepared to hold emotional space and respond to possible triggering situations with care
- Ensure participants understand the emotional boundaries and have the option to step back at any time



Description

Introduction to the method:

Present the Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theater concepts. Show a short example scene.

Forming groups:

Participants divide into small groups, each choosing a form of oppression they wish to explore. Ideally, this is based on personal experience, but not in a way that causes distress. Participants are encouraged to choose something they feel connected to.



Scene creation:

Groups develop a short scene representing a moment of oppression. Facilitators take an observatory role and only support when necessary.

Roles in the scene:

- Oppressor: preferably someone unaware of their oppressive behavior
- Oppressed: protagonist experiencing the oppression
- Optional others: bystanders, allies, neutral characters
- Spect-actors: those who choose not to act but help with creation or later interventions

Tips for participants:

- Base the scene on lived or witnessed experiences, modified for safety and storytelling
- Only portray characters that you physically or personally feel comfortable representing
- Avoid emotional overload; prioritize personal boundaries and self-care
- Avoid physical aggression
- Use fictional names for characters
- Focus on exploring possibilities, not perfect performance

Scene presentation and interventions: Each group performs their scene. The audience reflects on where oppression took place and how the story could change. Spect-actors may enter the scene and replace any character (except the oppressor) to try new responses. The scene is replayed with each intervention to explore alternative outcomes. This process may be repeated several times.



Debriefing

After the presentations, gather in small groups or in plenary to reflect on the experience. Suggested questions:

- How did you feel in your role?
- Do you think the oppression was addressed or transformed?
- What were the different layers of oppression in the scene?

Allow time for personal reflection and group sharing.

Comments / Tips

Everyone is both an actor and a spectator: all participants are spect-actors.

Theater is a universal human language—on stage, we do what we do in real life, but with more awareness.

The human body is central: avoid harm, encourage expression.

Theater is a tool for knowledge and transformation.

Forum Theater is not just about showing problems—it is about rehearsing possible solutions.

It's important to understand that these themes are relevant and real: we use theater to prepare for reality, not to escape it.

Background Information

Augusto Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed

Additional materials on participatory theater, community empowerment, and transformative pedagogy

Rhythm Machine

Objective: Introduce abstract concepts through physical expression. Encourage reflection on how emotions and concepts manifest in the body. Promote awareness of group rhythm and collaboration

Duration: 40 minutes to 1 hour **No. of Participants:** 6–30 **Target group:** Open

Preparation

Material needed:

- Open space where participants can move freely
- Optional: calm background music for grounding or closing the session

Facilitator's preparation:

- Choose or agree with participants on the topic of the machine (e.g. love, sadness, conflict, anger)
- Be aware of participants' comfort with physical movement and body contact

Description

Step 0: Select the Topic

The facilitator proposes a concept (e.g. love, conflict, sadness), or invites the group to choose a keyword together.

Step 1: Make a Circle

Ask participants to form a circle.

Step 2: Introduce the Machine

Explain that participants will build a machine using their bodies and voices.

One by one, each person joins the “machine” by adding a rhythmic movement and sound, integrating with the other components already in motion.

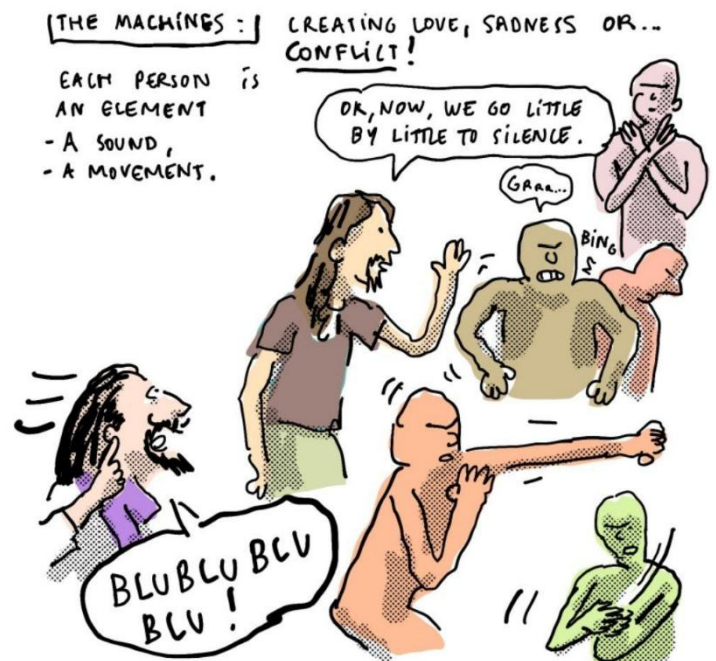
Step 3: Experiment with Rhythm

Once the full machine is functioning, the facilitator invites changes:

- Speeding up
- Slowing down
- Moving without sound
- Sound without movement
- Encourage creative expression and adaptation

Step 4: Stop the Machine

Gradually slow down the machine until it stops completely. Dissolve the formation, return to the



circle. Take a collective deep breath and invite participants to scan their body and observe any sensations or emotions

Step 5: Repeat with a New Concept

Optional: repeat the activity using a new concept

Debriefing and Reflection

In Pairs: Participants pair up and discuss:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What did the machine feel like with each concept?
- What emotions or observations came up?

Each person gets 3 minutes to speak while the other listens actively. The facilitator signals when it's time to switch roles.

In the Big Circle:

- Open sharing in the full group
- Discuss how the machine reflected or distorted the chosen concepts
- Reflect on how emotions, rhythm, and group energy are intertwined
- Step back and co-analyze the meaning behind the embodied experience

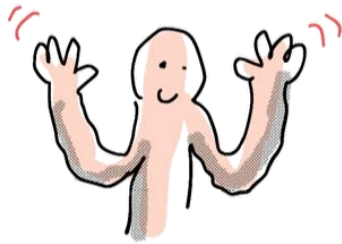
Comments / Tips

- Consider starting with a neutral or light concept to ease participants into the activity
- Allow participants to propose concepts they are comfortable exploring
- Support imagination and playfulness, while keeping an eye on emotional safety
- Offer participants the option to observe or join later if they don't feel ready immediately

Background Information

Augusto Boal, *Teatro del Oprimido: Juegos para actores y no actores*

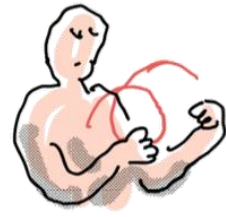
NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION



AGREE
(FEEL CONNECTED)



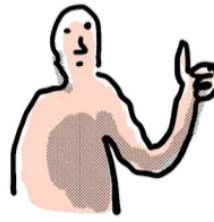
OBJECTION



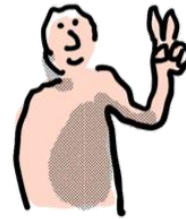
GO AHEAD,
STRAIGHT TO THE
POINT



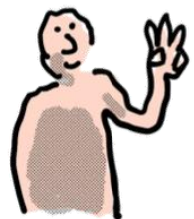
EMERGENCY
INTERUPTION
(SAFE SPACE)



1ST PERSON
TO TALK



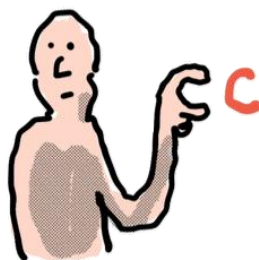
2ND PERSON



3RD



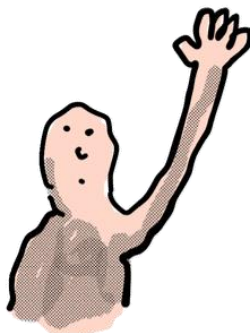
LANGUAGE
ISSUE



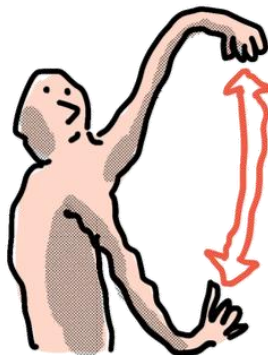
CLARIFICATION



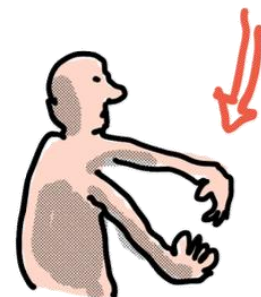
WE'LL
TALK OF THIS
LATER



CLAIM FOR
SILENCE

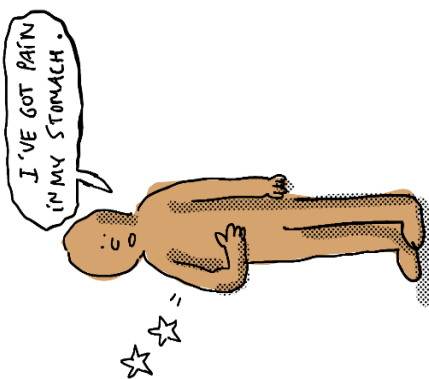


VOLUME UP



VOLUME DOWN

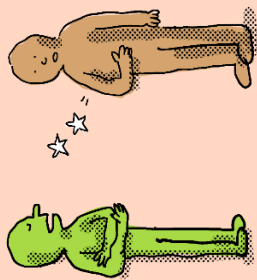
7 LISTENING ATTITUDES



ASSESSMENT

I JUDGE FOR YOU.

YOU DON'T.
THE STOMACH IS
BELOW.

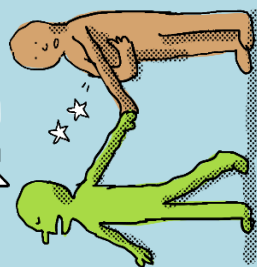


"YOU'RE RIGHT"
"YOU EXAGGERATED"

SUPPORT

I'LL TAKE YOU WITH YOUR PROBLEM.

I'LL BRING YOU TO THE DOCTOR.

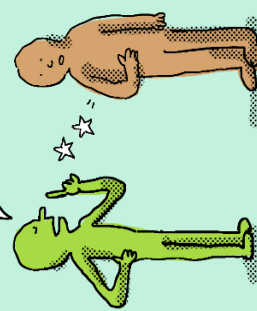


"DON'T WORRY" "I'LL HELP YOU"
"IT'S DIFFICULT FOR OTHERS TOO"

INTERPRETATION

I HEAR WHAT I EXPECT TO HEAR

YOU DRINK TOO MUCH COFFEE.

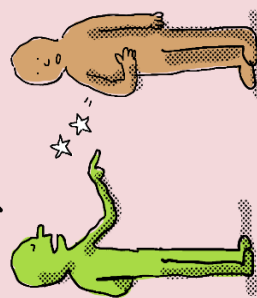


"THIS IS CERTAINLY DUE TO..."
"THIS IS HOW I SEE IT..."
"IT SEEMS TO ME THAT..."

SOLUTION

I DO, I DECIDE FOR YOU.

GO TO SEE A DOCTOR.

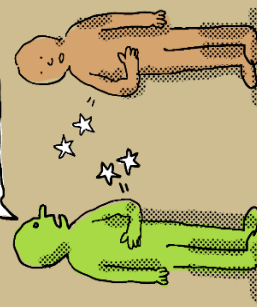


"YOU MUST, YOU SHOULD"
"IT'S NECESSARY THAT..."

BRING BACK TO YOURSELF

IT'S LIKE ME.

NOW THAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT IT...

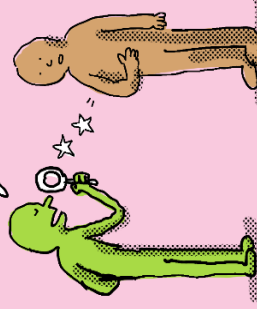


"ME TOO..."
"IT'S THE SAME FOR ME..."

INVESTIGATION

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOLUTION TOGETHER..

DID YOU EAT SOMETHING STRANGE?



"WHAT, WHO, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN?"

UNDERSTANDING REFLECTION REFORMULATION

I'VE HEARD YOUR STOMACH IS PAINFUL.

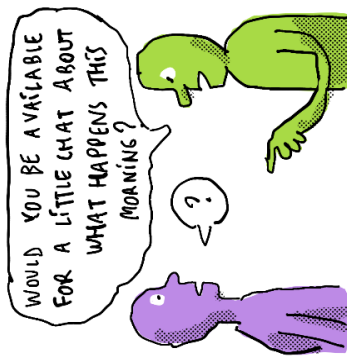
WHAT WE AIM TO DO.
YOU FOCUS ON THE PAIN RATHER THAN YOUR FRIENDS.



WHAT'S GOING ON BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR PROBLEM ...

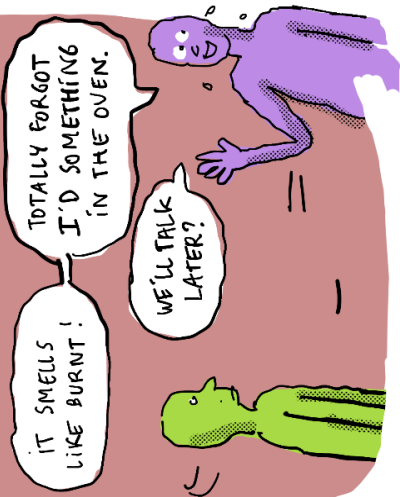
5 OBSTACLES

TO A FULFILLING
& CONSTRUCTIVE
COMMUNICATION



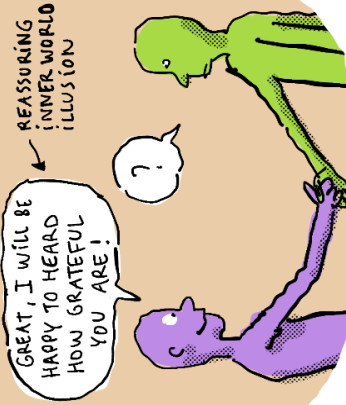
AVOIDANCE

WHEN YOU AVOID CONFRONTATION, OR EVEN DIALOGUE.



PROJECTION

WHEN YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF ABOUT THE PROTECTIVE STORIES YOU'VE BUILT.



REACTIVITY

WHEN YOUR "OVER-EMOTIONAL" REACTION IS CONNECTED TO YOUR PERSONAL STORY.



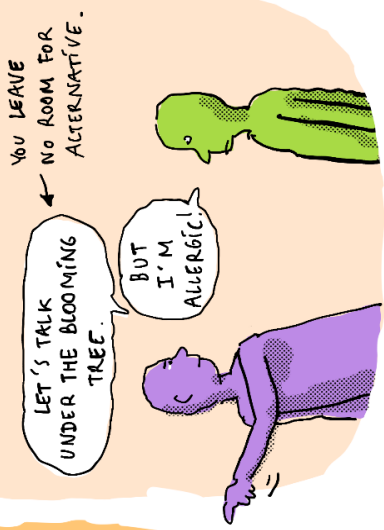
VICTIMIZATION

WHEN YOU AVOID TAKING RESPONSABILITIES, AND ACCUSE OTHERS.



REQUIREMENT

WHEN YOU'RE NOT CONSIDERING THE OTHERS POINT OF VIEW.



THEORY BY JOSHUA HATHAWAY

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