

TOOL KIT



ROLE PLAYING

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PURPOSE

GOAL

A role playing game is an activity which can be used for many purposes, some of which are: to energise, to introduce topics which are difficult to discuss if they are approached personally from the participants, to create engagement with elements of games.

DESCRIPTION

INSTRUCTION

Participants who take part in role playing games are not limited by their personal experiences, but are encouraged to enter the shoes of another. This gives many advantages, such as freedom of expression, viewing difficult situations from a mental distance, and of course it increases empathy, or at least behaviours that lead towards more empathy towards people who might not belong in our group. Role playing games are a popular way of engaging participants more, and introducing them to topics and situations that might not be possible for them in real life. From this exit of the comfort zone, it is very common that people have revelations that help them see the world from a more wide lens.

EXAMPLE



King of the jungle (~15 minutes):

Strong energizer with role playing game elements, which is universally enjoyed, people collaborate, enhancing team work and nonverbal communication

Instructions: Participants sit in a circle in chairs, and two extra empty chairs are also put in the circle. The instructor poses as the lion, and gives the following instructions: “I leave the room and you have 5 minutes to come up with a strategy so that when I return to the room, I will not be able to sit in any of the chairs. You cannot block my path, and you cannot move the chairs. When I return to the room, you are not allowed to speak anymore.”

Tip: It’s nice to have an introduction to excite the participants, such as “Let’s move to a different place, a jungle where there are no rules”.

You can put the song “The lion sleeps tonight” on a speaker while you try to find an empty chair.



Castles and Princesses (15 minutes):

Role playing energizer before a long presentation, to wake the participants up. No need for equipment – Good role playing energizer – Lots of energy

Description: You divide people in groups of three

a) Castles: Two people by standing and connecting their hands should form “a castle”

b) Princesses: One person is trapped in the castle by standing on his/her knees

People should be in multiples of 3 (6,9,12 etc). The facilitator is without a role. When the facilitator says the word “Castles”, all those who have the role of the castle should change roles between them. The facilitator is taking the place of one person, and this person is in the middle now. Another choice is to say the word “Princesses” all the participants who have the role should change roles. In the end when someone says the word “earthquake” then everybody should change roles and find a new pairs of 3.



Trolls/Giants/Witches (15 minutes):

Easy to organize role playing game, lots of energy and connection is created among the team members.

Description: There are three categories in this game: Trolls, Giants, Witches.

Giants are afraid of trolls (Because they attack them)

Trolls are afraid of Witches (because they cook them)

Witches are afraid of Giants (because they eat them)

We organize our game in the following manner:

- a) We divide our group in two sub-groups.
- b) We create a line in the middle of our space that divides those two groups
- c) We create a safe space for each of the group

We ask the two groups to stand in front of each other, choose a group and act (not speak) like the group they chose. Depending on what they choose they will understand if they should chase the other team, or if they will get chased. The aim of the game is to catch members of the opposite team, until nobody remains there.



Nuclear shelter (20 minutes):

A role-playing activity to encourage discussion among values and decision making under pressure.

Description: The participants are divided in groups of 5-6. Then, they are each given a piece of paper with a role that each are supposed to play. You give them 5 minutes to read their role, and introduce themselves to the other group members.

The proposed roles to choose from are the following (but you can change):

1. Forty, 38y survival show star, who is reclusive and has been suspect but found not guilty of murder
2. Rita, 19y old mother and her baby (they occupy one place), student of art
3. Bob, 20y old husband of mother, unemployed
4. Agatha, 59y old former astronaut and scientist
5. Cornelius, 48y old historian, expert on history and languages
6. Joan, 68y old nurse, retired, likes to play with her dog
7. Mary, 25y old, just got out of prison for dealing marijuana



When they do, you tell them a story about nuclear bombs that are about to fall to earth, and that there is a nuclear shelter in front of them which fits everyone in the group except one person. You give them 10 minutes to discuss which one will not survive.

Then, you have a discussion: who survived? Why? Was it easy to make the decision? What are the moral consequences?

PROS



- Energizing the group
- Engaging by encouraging exiting comfort zone
- Emotional and mental distance from difficult situations
- Freedom of expression
- Playful interaction encourages engagement and retention of information

CONS



- Facilitator needs to be careful of triggering people, for example it would not be wise to create a role playing situation of war in a group of participants with a refugee background, or situations of sexual harassment to sex trafficking survivors. The synthesis of the group needs to be evaluated carefully before creating a role playing game.

TIPS



- These kind of activities require careful planning, both in time and content
- Knowing the “vibe” of the participant group can help choose the activities that are more appropriate to them.
- Don't be afraid to put participants out of their comfort zone.

PARTNERS



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