

Workshop: “Way to Go! Five Strategies for dealing with conflicts”

Date, Time: Thursday, 30.09.2010, 10:00 - 13:00 and 14:30 - 17:15

Trainer: Katrin Lüth, free lance facilitator of learning, trainer for personal and group development, intercultural learning.

Workshop content/theme

Conflict is a reality. It is good to acknowledge this reality, look at own and other's existing strategies of dealing with conflict, to widen the spectrum of personal action in a conflict situation.

Aims

- The participants should experience concrete methods of dealing with conflicts between people and in groups.
- The workshop aims to be interactive, lively, engaging.
- The content should be usable for teachers and students in their everyday lives.

Methods/Approach

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Clarifying framework of work together

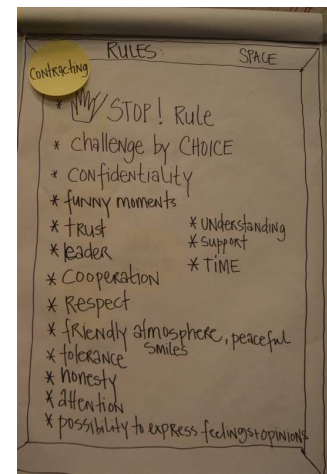
- **Rules for safety and well-being** in the group context:

Stop Rule - Everybody can say stop at any time, if he / she feels unsafe or unwell physically, emotionally, psychologically. A stop will end any activity or discussion immediately and does not have to be explained. All participants will then re-evaluate the situation and decide how to go on.

Challenge-by-choice - Everybody chooses his / her own challenges. Nobody will be forced to participate in an activity, but will always have a role in it, maybe as a time keeper, observer or other function.

Confidentiality - Whatever is said in this circle, stays in this circle.

- **Stop and Go** - Practising the Stop Rule and becoming aware of the group
The group moves in a defined space. Two commands are introduced: “Stop” - stop immediately and “Go” - move. The commands are given by the facilitator, then by anybody in the group, then only with a handsignal, lastly without words, just by stopping or going.
Super-quick reflection comments from the group.
- **Everybody, who ...** - Energizer, getting to know the group
All sit on chairs in a circle. One person is in the middle and wants to sit on a chair. He / she says a sentence, to which, hopefully, many people can say “Yes, this applies to me.”. The people, to whom the sentence applies have to change their seats. It is not allowed to sit back on one's own or the direct neighbours' seat.
Super-quick reflection comments from the group.



- **Name and what I would fight for** – Introduction round
All participants are asked to share their name and one thing, person, ideal they would fight for.

3. Contracting

Clarification of the needs in a group and the formulation of rules give clarity and safety to all the members in the group. A group contract could be signed by all, can be checked in regular intervals, re-negotiated if needed, sanctions for breaking the rules agreed upon.

- **What do you need to feel safe and comfortable in this group?**
All participants collect individually on cards, and then voice their needs. The group is asked to agree if the need does not contradict one of their needs. All participants have the right to a veto if their safety is threatened. The contract is written down on a poster.

4. Getting into the feeling of conflict

- **I say yeah!** - Calling Game
One person calls out the sentence, the others repeat, including the movement. A number of rounds follow in which everybody should try out different emotions like laughter, boredom, crying, anger, ...
I say yeah! (Thumb up)
I say no! (Thumb down)
I say yeah, no, yeah! (Thumb up, down, up)
Carumba! (Both hands forward with a lot of expression)
Cassamba! (Both hands upwards with a lot of expression)
Une pirouette. (Turn once)
Oh yeah! (Thumb up)
- **Scrunching up paper** – Letting out aggression
Newspaper all over the floor. The group is invited to pick up the pieces of paper, to think of something that makes them angry, ball the paper up, throw it behind them, use voice.
- **Come with me!**
Pairs facing each other. One pulls and calls: "Come with me!" The other pulls in the other direction and answers: "No, I don't want to!" Swap.
- **You must!**
Pairs facing each other. One pushes and calls: "You must!" The other pushes against the pressure and answers: "No, I don't want to!" Swap.
- **Safe karate**
Pairs facing each other. Three rounds of Safe Karate are done, 30 seconds each. Body contact is not allowed! Participants are invited to use their voice, in the last round to bow and acknowledge the other fighter.



- **Conflicting Situations**

In pairs, play these situations: Child and parent in supermarket, child wants ice-cream, parent disagrees.

Travelling salesperson and home-owner, salesperson wants to sell goods, person at the door needs nothing.

*Debriefing: What were successful strategies? For your character? For the situation?
Pairs, then groups of four, collect in group.*

5. Five strategies

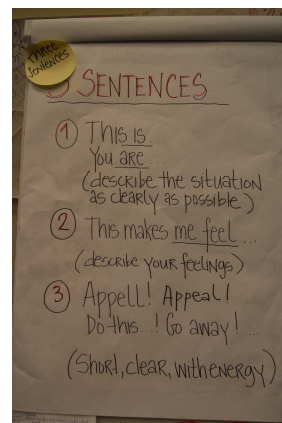
- **Three sentences** – Strategy when facing an aggressor

1) Describe the situation as clearly as possible. e.g. “You are doing this and that.”

2) Verbalise your feelings. e.g. “This is too close and very unpleasant for me.”

3) Appeal! Tell the other person what to do, clearly and directly, no “please”, e.g. “Stop screaming at me immediately!”, “Go away!”

Practice using the “Salesperson and client” situation or a situation you really experienced.



- **Controlled dialogue** – Strategy when in an argument and listening is difficult

Two people sit opposite from each other. A third person - the observer and keeper of rules - sits slightly to the side of the pair, same distance to both.

One person begins with a short statement. Before the other person gives the own statement he / she has to repeat what was said (or make a summary) and only then add the own statement. And so on.

The observer strictly takes care that the rules are kept, the repetition always happens, the statements do not become too long.

Practice using the situation: “Teenager and parent discussing curfew time”.

- **Statue theatre** (after Augusto Boal) – Working on a group or larger conflict

Small groups form statues with their bodies, showing parts of the conflict they are working on. The others watch, briefly discuss and move / change the statues. Now the statues comment and share their new position: What is better? What is worse? Then the next statue is shown.

- **Problem solving pool** – Finding solutions for group problems and conflicts

First the facilitator introduces which conflict will be worked on. He / she asks the question: “How involved are you in this topic?” All persons in the group are asked to find their place in a semi-circle from: “I am directly and strongly involved.” to “I am a little involved.” to “I am not at all involved”.

The group of the “very involved” will be the describers of the situation.

The group of the “semi-involved” will be the finders of a hypothesis.

The group of the “not-involved” will be the finders of solutions.

The conflict/topic is discussed in three rounds, facilitated by one person. In every round one group sits in a circle, the others sit around them in a larger circle. Only the people in the middle are allowed to speak.

Round 1: The “very involved” sit in a circle. They describe the situation from their point of view, their experiences, and their emotions. The facilitator might ask: How do you notice that there is a problem? What is the smallest, the largest part of this problem? Who else notices this problem?

All others sit in a circle around the “very involved”, listen carefully; they have paper and pens and take notes: the “semi-involved” on hypothesis, the “not-involved” on solutions.

Time: approximately 10 minutes, not longer!

Round 2: The “semi-involved” come to the centre of the circle. Each person in this group shares his / her hypothesis for the problem, no discussion: “How does this conflict start and how do the people involved keep the conflict alive?”, “What is there to be gained from this conflict – and for whom?”, “How could this problematic behaviour been seen differently?”

All people in the outside circle listen carefully. The finders of solutions write down solutions.

Time: approximately 10 minutes

Round 3: The “not-involved” come to the central circle. They share their ideas for solutions, without pressure to come to a common conclusion! One person in the outside circle writes down solutions when they are voiced in the inner circle.

Time: approximately 10 minutes.

- **Council**

Council is a non-hierarchical and violence-free form of communication, a practice that builds community, a method to support group processes, to deal with crises and conflicts. Council develops (inter)cultural understanding and inclusion. Council can be used in all fields of life: in school, in families, in companies, in teams, in personal partnerships, in communities, for decision making, to honour achievement, in conflict management, for reflection, in peace and reconciliation work ...

The Ojai Foundation: www.ojaifoundation.org

Video Council in Schools - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5B373l03pw>

European Council Network: www.council-network.eu

Further tips, sources, resource material or links

Reference for methods:

Controlled Dialogue - Kontrollierter Dialog, in: Rabenstein, Reichel, Thanhoffer: Das Methodenset – 5 Bücher für Referenten und Seminarleiterinnen, Band 5 Konflikte, Ökotopia Verlag, 1999 (10. Edition), page 5, C 53.

Problem-Lösungs-Pool – Problem Solving Pool, in: Renoldner, Scala, Rabenstein: Einfach systemisch! - Systemische Grundlagen & Methoden für ihre pädagogische Arbeit, Ökotopia Verlag 2007, page 173.

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