Exchanging seats

Key message

One of the main aspects of radicalisation is the use of violence as a mean to attain objectives and solve conflicts. It is imperative for children and youngsters to know tools for solving conflicts in a peaceful and non violent way and to be able to put themselves in someone's position and to see things in the other's eyes.

Key words: conflict solving, active listening, mental flexibility

Summary

Beyond their negative aspect, conflicts are part of our life and they can turn into a productive experience. One of the first steps is to be able to identify our own interests and to acknowledge and understand those of the others. The objectives of this role playing with young people debating with opposed positions is to strengthen the capacity of analysis of a situation from different points of view and looking for common points. It also enforces self-examination capacity and develops empathy by standing in the place of the other person.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
• Early detection • Prevention	• small • medium	• 16 - 19 • 20 - 24	• 30 min • 45 min • 1 hour

Purpose

- Develop the ability to elaborate, expose and exchange arguments in a debate.
- Identify and develop counter-arguments to foster the analysis from different positions.
- Put into practice the skill of standing in the place of the other person and develop ideas flexibility.

Description

Step 1: Present the activity and tell the group that they are going to hold a debate in which it is not a matter of trying to find a solution or convince anyone, but to put themselves in the shoes of others and challenge themselves to exchange opposing opinions with respect.

Divide the group into three sub-groups: A, B, C. Then place the seats of group A and B facing each other and those of group C as observers.

Step 2: Introduce a subject of discussion and ask to group A and B to take opposite positions in the debate (e.g. A- in favour, B- against). Group C (observer) has to listen arguments of both groups and to intervene at the end by showing common points and bringing their positions closer.

It is recommended that the group propose the topics to be debated. Some examples to guide them can be: *"It is enriching that people comes from other countries, but if customs clash, they have to adapt";*

"violence is necessary to protect oneself"; "The cultural majority is not doing anything to adapt to minorities".

Step 3: Group A and C change places: Group A as observer, group C in favour of the subject in the debate. Then it is the turn of group B to be observer-conciliator while A and C are debating. It is recomended to follow with the same subject of discussion to observe the ability of pupils to switch to diferent positions.

Step 4: At the end, all participants have a reflection on how they felt like (do they felt attacked, ignored, etc.), do they changed some of their arguments and what kind of difficulties did they met to defend their counter-arguments.

Methodology

Roleplaying.

Advice for Trainer

- Adapt the discussion thematic to the special situation of the group (age, internal conflicts, etc.).
- Based on this dynamics, the teacher/trainer/educator can address several themes such as: coexistence, violence as a tool or the effort of adaptation from the majority, among other issues.
- This activity can be driven in a more dynamic way, by establishing "short-times" to create argumentation and by changing physical seats quickly for example.

Source / Literature

F.S.G. (2007). Retos en los contextos multiculturales. Competencias interculturales y resolución de conflictos. *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*. Madrid.

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