



We are the symbols

Key message/Summary

»We are the symbols« is a powerful simulation, which enables insights and self-reflection based on own involvement in situations that are very similar to real. It can be used in class or role game or simulation. It enables experience, how our unconscious mind reacts, when we need to protect our own symbolic from opposite or different ones. Pupils/students become more aware of hidden power of symbols that reflect in their own unconscious mind and also start to understand how some political forces exploit radical/extremist groups for its geopolitical goals.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early detection• Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• large	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 - 19• 20 - 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hour

Purpose

- become aware how power of symbols is used in the processes of identification through our unconscious mind;
- learn more about hidden manipulation, which is based on human need to belong, being accepted and appreciated;
- understand how some political forces exploit radical/extremist groups for its geopolitical goals;
- experience, how they value, see and behave towards people who share similar symbolic world and how to those who have opposite or different;
- test themselves, what are they willing to do, that their symbolic world survives;
- learn from experience, how to develop a more informed approach in conjunction with the symbols in their lives.

Participants

could be an option: for immigrants, dropouts, students in secondary and third level, young unemployed individuals

Description

Part 1

Step 1: Trainer gives learners lists with 5 symbols. Each learner needs to pick one, which attracts him the most and explain his choice. One symbol should resemble the symbol of one of radical groups, another of extremist group, the third needs to be similar with national ones, fourth religious and the last one one of rock icon.

Step 2: Learners need to search with whom they share the same selections and on that basis form a group. Some groups will have just 1 or 2 members, others 8 or more. When a group is formed, they will get a task to upgrade their state. They need to create a common vision, which will connect them and

justify their existence. This include two documents: group rules and behaviour code. (***This tasks include hidden elements of identification and development of affiliation***).

Step 3: All groups present their visions, behaviour and dress code to each other (***This task include development of further affiliation and separation from other groups***).

Part 2. Secret mission(s): the aim of thi activity is that pupils/students experience, that when our symbolic world is in danger, we are willing to do the unreasonable and unethical things, despite the fact that we value tolerance, honesty, truthfulness. The simulation can also help them see, how external players (global superpower) exploited radical and extremist group to create wars and conflicts.

- Every group get a task to analyze weak points of other groups that will give them a feeling of being more powerful.
- Then they need to find also their strong points to know where they have a potential threat.
- Trainer give all four groups secret mission during their work time while pretending to advise them. They need to develop tactics

Trainer can use this one or invent new one.

- Their symbols and group will become the leading one, if they succeed to ignite conflict in other group, which will distributed the members into two or more sides.

Part 3.Evaluation part:

1. What kind of manipulation your task was including?
2. What kind of manipulation did your group invent to achieve the goal?
3. Why your group decide for that option?
4. Was there any other possibilities, which did not including manipulation and will give you the same results?
5. Who you become in this role? How other see you?
6. Find some links of your group with one of extremist group?

Materials needed

Poster with symbols, list of better quality for writing the rules for behaviour and dressing, poster for planning tactics, figures for visualization tactics, color pens, sheet for analysis, evaluating form.

Methodology

Method of explaining the method of drawing the mental schemes and scenarios, method of demonstration, method of counseling, group evaluation method.

Advice for Trainer

Some of learners may not have a clear answer, why they choose certain symbol, other may be to direct. Trainer task is to lead discussion in the way that learners from first group can find out some link with symbols, while second group need more critical discussion to establish a doubt to some of them beliefs.

The trainer should give clear instructions and must respond, if members in the groups operates

outside the agreed frameworks. Only in this way he can monitor the situation and ensure that the activities will be coordinated with the objectives of the exercise.

Trainer should decided, if it is better that all group have the same task for secret mission or it is better to have diffrent ones. First option is easier to coordinate and control groups, but the other allow more authentic experience and disclose the role and orientation of participants.

The aim of evaluation part is that learners find out, that task are design to force them to chose manipulation, but allow them also other possibilities. The second finding should be directed at identifying, when and why they decided to select the destructive techniques.

Source / Literature

Original material developed for the purpose of the YCARE project.



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