

PLA

Exercise 3

Gender-Focused Ice Breaker

Introduction

This activity will create a friendly and trusting atmosphere by encouraging people to get to know each other. Participants will also begin to explore the concept of gender by sharing their experiences as a woman or man. This activity is good to do before any intense gender activity because it puts participants at ease, helps to create a safe and trusting space for group discussion and sharing, and starts to get people thinking about gender.

Objective

- Participants will get to know each other through personal stories.

Timeframe: 40 minutes

Materials needed: prepared flip chart paper with the two questions needed for step 2

Ideal workspace: any space that is private and allows the participants to pair off in separate areas

Number of participants: up to 20-25

STEP 1

Introduce the activity, its purpose, and how it will work.

Remind participants that this is a group learning exercise, and that it is not necessary for everyone to agree on everything. However, everyone in the group deserves respect. Participants should refrain from judging, interrupting or ridiculing others, and should respect the privacy of others by maintaining confidentiality.

STEP 2

Ask participants to pair up with someone they don't know. Each person in the pair has two minutes to tell the other person about themselves (as the facilitator, time the exchange and tell people when they need to switch). Each person will start off by asking the other person basic 'get to know you' questions (i.e. name, where they are from, etc.). After this, each person will ask her or his partner to: "Name one thing you do not like about being a woman/man or that you do not like to do as a woman/man, and why"; or "Tell me about something you had to do when you were young because you were a girl/boy and that you didn't like doing."

To hone listening skills, encourage participants not to use a pen to note what they hear, but to listen and to remember what the other person says.

STEP 3

Gather everyone together in a group. Ask each person to introduce his or her partner and relate the stories or issues that he or she talked about. After each pair is done, the larger group can ask the pair questions. It is important to ask each participant for their permission to share their story with the group.

There are no guiding questions or discussion points for the group discussion; just follow the flow of the group conversation. As the facilitator, moderate the exchanges by making sure that everyone is respectful, feels welcome and that everyone has a chance to contribute.



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