11. GENERATING OPTIONS AND CREATING SOLUTIONS

Target group:
Anyone

Group size:
10 - 20 participants

Duration:
90 minutes

Type of activities:
Discussions
Active involvement
Creative thinking

Resources:
white and coloured paper
markers, scissors, tape

Atmosphere needed:
Safe space for sharing

Aim

To understand that each conflict has more than one solution and it is good to be creative in finding them.

Learning Outcomes

- To be creative in proposing solutions to the conflict.
- To learn how to approach each conflict situation from multiple angles.
- To understand how important it is to always identify the underlying needs of parties to the conflict.

Intro to the workshop (5 min)

Welcome participants. Explain the workshop, the aim and brief agenda.

EXERCISE 1. "ONLY THE ONE WHO..." (10 MIN)

Preparation

You will need quite a big room or an open space where participants can safely run. At the back of the room place a line on the floor that separates the bigger part of it from the so-called "safe space". Participants should have a possibility to run into this area. The facilitator will stand between the participants and the line and catch people if they decide to cross the line against the rules of the game.

Instruction

Participants need to cross the line at the back of the room, which is guarded by the facilitator and get to the safe space. To do that, each time they have to fulfil the conditions named by the facilitator. The facilitator says a statement explaining who can cross the line each time. The participants' task is to prove that they meet the expectations and get past the facilitator. Very often obvious solutions will not work so participants need to be creative. In case they cannot fulfil the condition, they might decide to "cheat" and run through the line guarded by the facilitator. However, if the facilitator touches them while crossing "illegally", they lose and have to leave the game.

The point of the game is to understand that there are no rules on how the conditions named by facilitator can be fulfilled. They are often absurd, unrealistic, and impossible to complete. Participants need to use their creativity and imagination to make it to the safe area.

Examples of the tasks:
- Only the ones wearing blue can pass.
- Only the ones behaving like a Jedi can pass.
- Only groups of five people can pass.
- Only cute kittens can pass.
- Only those with four hands can pass.

Participants have experienced a situation where they could come up and use different solutions, not only the obvious ones. They are aware that there is always more than one solution to a problem. Sometimes they just need time to find it.

EXERCISE 2. "PAPER LOVE BATTLE" (15 MIN)

Preparation

The workshop room should be divided into three parts. The parts furthest apart will be used by opposite teams as their headquarters and the space in-between will be their meeting ground.

Instruction

Participants are divided into two groups. Groups take turns in designing love messages to the other team using only a piece of paper and a marker. Each turn, the way they express the love should be different. Teams cannot reuse opponents' techniques.

The initial preparation is 3 minutes. The first turn is decided by rock/paper/scissors game. Representatives of both teams meet in the middle and they show with their hands at the same time rock, paper or scissors. Rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper, and paper beats rock. The winning team starts. Before each turn, the team gets one minute to prepare. The game stops when one of the following conditions is met: (1) time for the exercise is over, (2) one team does not have the next message, (3) one team runs out of paper (however one piece of paper can be used in multiple turns).

Result

Participants understand that even most abstract problems and ideas can be solved – or explained – in many different ways. They are also aware that creative solutions may be found despite limited resources.

Resources

Love/Death scale with the indicator of Romeo and Juliet, sticky notes and signs with minutes left (1 min, 3 min, 5 min, 10 min, 15 min).

Instruction

The goal of the game is to prevent Romeo and Juliet from committing suicide by giving options to the couple, their families and other citizens.

The participants in this activity all work together in one team and represent the inhabitants of beautiful Verona.

Place on the blackboard or the wall a scale with two endings: "Love" and "Death". An indicator of Romeo and Juliet should be placed somewhere in the middle. The aim for the participants is to help Romeo and Juliet get to the "Love" end. Participants lose if the indicator reaches the "Death" end. During the game, participants come up with different options on how to bring Romeo and Juliet closer to the "Love" side. They can give tips and talk with all characters from the story (represented by the facilitator). Every action by the participants brings Romeo and Juliet closer to one side of the scale or the other. Participants can write their proposals on a sticky note and put it on the blackboard/wall with a scale. The facilitator determines the direction in which the indicator will move.

Every five minutes the facilitator gives the participants a "News" card that slightly changes the rules of the game and requires that participants adjust their approach. The role of the facilitator is to guide participants through the process and to generate "News" cards, depending on the participants' options, to steer them away from the direction they are going and to force them to explore alternatives.

Examples of "News":
- *A plague happens in a city (the most active citizens cannot speak for five minutes because they are at a hospital recovering from the plague!).*
- *Montague and Capulet are at war. Citizens can speak only to Romeo or Juliet.*
- *Romeo and Juliet have disappeared. Citizens can speak only to their families.*

Debriefing (10 min)

Ask the group to sit with you in a circle. Ask them about their feelings and the process. Was it difficult to save Romeo and Juliet from their miserable end? How did they do that? What helped them? What were the biggest obstacles they faced? Which solutions turned out to be the most useful? Where they obvious in the beginning or did they need to be creative to come up with them?

Ask the participants to write down tips on how to create options and find solutions based on what they have learned from the workshop. Summarise the outcomes. Encourage participants to ask questions. If you are happy with the result, it might be a good time for a group picture too!