

Activity ideas

Friends and relationships II

Three more discussion ideas on the nature of different types of relationship and the value of friends.

1 Do you stereotype other people?

Aim

To help participants understand how and why stereotyping happens and to discuss whether it is helpful or unhelpful.

You'll need

Small sheets of paper; pens; 45 - 60 minutes.

Process

Introduce the session by explaining to the group that they will be looking at stereotyping. Make sure that everyone understands that stereotyping is when we expect someone in certain circumstances to behave in a predictable fashion or look a predictable way.

Split the participants up into same sex groups so all the males are in one group and the females in another. Give each group a sheet of paper and some pens.

Ask the participants to write a list of characteristics that they think are appropriate for the perfect boy/girl friend. These should include how they expect the person to look and behave. Everybody's view should be listed regardless of whether there is agreement or not.

Back in the large group ask each small group to describe their ideal person. They should start with looks and go on to their characteristics and personality.

In discussion, explore: What do the males think about the way they have been described? What do the females think about the way they have been described? Do such people ever actually exist?

Encourage participants to discuss whether this type of stereotyping is helpful or unhelpful. Could it be harmful or does it give everyone an ideal to aim for?

Variations

Rather than having the same gender groups they could be mixed.

Instead of describing the ideal male or female, the groups could design a poster showing what the person looks like while also listing their characteristics.

2 Working at relationships

Aim

To help participants become more aware of the factors that help and hinder people in their relationships.

You'll need

Large sheets of paper/flipchart; small sheets of paper; felt tip pens; pens; a short phrase, relevant to the group, for use in Chinese Whispers (see below); 30 - 45 minutes

Process

Introduce the session by explaining to the group that they will be looking at some things that can affect the relationships they have with other people.

Ask the participants to sit in a large circle on the floor. Make sure everyone understands the rules for 'Chinese Whispers'.

Chinese whispers

The Rules

When all the participants are sitting in a circle, the phrase to be whispered is shown to the first person. This person then whispers it once to the person on their right. The whisper is continued around until it comes to the last person in the circle. This person then says it out loud. Is the phrase the same one that was started with?

Pick someone to start and show them the phrase to use. When the whisper has been all the way around, ask the group to compare the starting phrase with the finishing one. Was it the same as when it started out? Try it again using a different statement. Was it the same this time?

Now ask the participants to resume their seats and pose the following questions:

- Why do they think phrases became distorted?
- Is this what happens when people gossip about each other?

Discussion

Split the participants into small groups and give them each a small piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write THINGS THAT MAKE A RELATIONSHIP at the top of the page and make two columns with the following headings: WORK and NOT WORK (see below).

The participants should now think of things, besides gossip, that can make their relationships with others work or not work, (see below for examples). After 10 minutes bring the group back together again and record their answers on the large sheets of paper/flipchart.

Examples

Things that make a relationship:

Work

Talking together
Being together
Being apart
Telling the truth
Sharing feelings openly
Being supportive

Not work

Saying things behind a friend's back that you wouldn't say to their face
Lies
Being together all the time
Secrets

3 Teaming up with others

Aim

To help the participants to think about what kind of actions help and hinder teams working well together.

You'll need

Large sheets of paper/flipchart; felt tip pens; a piece of tape approx. 6m long; two ropes approx. 2m long; blu-tac; sellotape; elastic bands; a box; a bucket; soft medium-sized toy; 60 minutes

Process

Introduce the session by explaining to the participants that they will be using a group task to find out how well they can work as a team.

Place the large length of rope in a circle on the floor with the box in the centre. Place the soft toy on the box. Now put all the other items just outside the circle. Explain that the soft toy is on an island that is rapidly getting covered by water. The only equipment available to them is what you have laid out. The participants have to rescue the soft toy without dropping it into the water.

Split the participants into small groups of 3 or 4. Each group has 5 minutes to rescue the soft toy using any or all of the equipment provided. Obviously, they cannot step inside the circle.

Review the process with the group. The important thing is not whether the participants managed to rescue the toy but how they worked as a team.

List the following questions on a large sheet of paper/flipchart and give the small groups time to think about the answers so they can give feedback to the large group.

- How well did you feel your team worked together?
- Did one person seem to be in charge?
- Did you discuss what should be done first or did you just muddle through?
- Did anyone stand back and watch rather than taking part?
- Was there enough listening or did everyone talk at once?
- What worked well for your team and what could you have improved on to be more effective?

Ask each group in turn to give feedback to the large group. On a large sheet of paper/flipchart record words that they highlight which indicates effective team work actions and those which are likely to hinder a team working well together.

The activities are taken and adapted from a book in UK Youth's *Mind Matters* series: *Relationships*, by Marilyn Harvey, available from the UK Youth storefront.

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/ukyouth>