

Exercises used 10 January workshop



Exercises – January 10th workshop

Introduction (games)

Denise opened the day and we introduced ourselves briefly. She then got people to mingle in the room and say their name and where they were from to everyone else. This was done by walking around the room. We restricted it to name and where from because we knew people would work with one another throughout the day and find out more.

Denise then did an exercise where we stood in a circle and stepped in if something was true about us. This ranged from 'you travelled more than 20 miles to be here' to 'experience of being in an action' to 'uncertainty about the day'.

The purpose of both of these games was to get a flavour of the group and its experiences and characteristics and to share names. Each person also had a name badge to wear during the day.

Housekeeping (talk to)

Carl then took the group through some practicalities – fire alarm, loos, lunch, car park sheet etc.

Carl then shared the agenda and made some broad comments about it and shared the TTT aims for the day.

Non-violence – a dangerous idea

Aims –

Explore our understandings of what NV and violence are and the complexity of NV

Create an understanding for how the course will run, get people involved

Create ideas and material for people to reflect on later

To get to know each other better

To open up possibilities for changing ourselves

Working agreements (a consensus building exercise)

Carl said that he didn't use Guidelines or Ground Rules, as he preferred that the group came to Working Agreements. He asked people to form groups of three or four and think about workshops they had been in and what working agreements they would like for this group. He gave post it notes to each group and asked them to come up with three potential working agreements.

He then asked each group to give him one at a time. I get one from each group at a time to share the input. If I asked a group for all their ideas at once, they both have to wait some time before speaking again, and may cover things that another group might say. After each group has given one idea, he asks the next group for an idea that is different from what has already been said.

Once they were all on the wall, he asked if anyone wanted anything clarifying. There was some discussion to be clear about what had been meant. Carl then put three headings up – All agree/can accept, but have some doubts/cannot agree. He asked people to come up and put the post its on sheet that reflected the headings – with the guidance that if someone put a post it on the can't accept board it couldn't be moved.

We then talked about the result. One post it was on they can't accept board. It was about using hand signals to come to agreement. A discussion then began and it was clear that people had taken different meaning from the words. As a result the post it was moved to 'can accept, but have some doubts'. We then agreed to move on and discuss the working agreements again at a later time.

Later in the day we had a brief conversation about them and agree to take this discussion to a future workshop. Carl agreed to collate the working agreements and provide some commentary to enable the discussion.

Violence and nonviolence (different pairs exercise)

Denise got people to sit in two concentric circles. People got a number – one or two. The one's formed the inner circle and the two's the outer circle – opposite each other. They then discussed a question for a few minutes each way using a method of listening where you do not bring qualitative points to the discussion, only Qs of clarity. The one's then moved round in a clockwise direction one seat to talk about another Q.

Denise then got some feedback in **plenary**. (Plenary meaning all together for a discussion).

Spectrum exercise

Present a continuum – agree to disagree. Pose a Q or statement and ask people to stand along the spectrum according to how they respond to that Q or statement. Ask people along the spectrum to say why they are standing where they are standing. You can ask people to move once they have heard others. You should also summarise or reflect what you've heard occasionally to reinforce the understanding of the different perspectives. And you could link

what is said together to a new Q. Or use it for participants to make an inquiry of where people stand on an issue.

This is a mini-version of Forum style working (see Augusto Boal 'Theatre of the Oppressed', or Roberto Freire's SOMA, Arnie Mindell's 'Worldwork Forum' and other dramatized/role type activities)

Defining violence (small group work)

Denise asked people to form into groups of five or six. She gave two groups the word violence to define and put attributes to and two groups did the same with the word non-violence.

There was a plenary at the end to find out what people had said (with mini presentations) and some input – TTT's definitions of active non-violence and Jan Gultang's definition of violence.

Bring and share lunch (get the group together)

Some people shared food upstairs, some people got food in the canteen and ate together. Food and talk – powerful. And then some people cleared up – good to get this agreed in advance.

Consensus game

Carl introduced the paper on floor game. A used sheet of flipchart paper for each four people roughly. Stand on the paper and get people to agree that you are in touch with the paper, but not the carpet (or floorboard, or earth etc). Then invite the group to get up and be in touch with the paper but not the carpet.

Then, running some commentary about diminishing resources, take a sheet away. Repeat and see how the group copes with less and less paper.

While they are doing it observe how they do it, if they listen to each other, who takes the lead, who is omitted, who feels left out, who gets annoyed etc etc. use this as part of a debrief at the end.

There are various outcomes....eg the group could revolt and get the paper taken away back!

Testimony – Utah Philips song

To share others journey's, be inspired, understand applications etc.

How we respond exercise (pairs, groups, different contexts)

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After listening to Utah Philips testimony about 'discovering' and his continuing journey into practicing nonviolence Denise introduced an exercise where people firstly reflected on their own personal experience of a person or experience that has influenced or inspired you or your journey of learning/living nonviolently. This was shared in pairs.

Then in small groups they were asked to talk about how violence manifest and expresses itself in the groups we are in (family, workplace, friends, activist networks etc) and our strategies for interrupting the cycle of violence. And finally applying the same conversation to societal violence.

Purpose of the exercise is to share the range of understandings and connect our personal experiences and manifestations of violence to the global or societal. And to enable more reflection on how violence operates and insinuates itself into our lives and systems.

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How we'll communicate (dramatizing)

Carl asked the group to split into five groups and design a short drama about how they wanted to communicate between sessions.

Purpose – changes the energy of the group (we decided to do it this way at the last moment); uses creative energies; avoids discussion! Ask the audience what they saw before the players. Other things emerge...

Endings

Some input about how the group will work and discussion about an issue on the Car Park.

Then a non-verbal good bye to everyone. Reminds people they have bodies as well as minds! And it isn't sitting down.