

SETTING BOUNDARIES

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Main objectives:

- Learn to recognize and set the boundaries

During the workshops participants will (specific objectives):

- Get to know and feel their bodies better.
- Start to feel more confident in listening and working with their bodies.
- Recognize their limits.
- Learn how to say “no” and set their boundaries.
- Recognize that “I don’t know” also means “no”.
- Discuss different ways of expressing their agreement or disagreement.

Time:

1h

Place:

indoor or outdoor

Materials:

Stationary: flipchart/board if you decide to write down conclusions



Course:

1. Introduction

Tell participants that during this workshop we will work quite a lot with our bodies and propose a few warm-up exercises which will help them to connect to their bodies and feel more secure in working with them also in presence of other people.

Examples of warm up exercises:

a) Walking in the space

Invite participants to walk in the space freely, in any direction. Then give them different instructions to follow:

- Notice the space around you, feel the floor under your feet, notice the walls, ceiling, objects in the space.
- Notice people around you, be aware of every person you cross by.
- Look at the eyes of people you meet, see them clearly.
- Imagine that your current walking speed is 5. I will give you the numbers from 1 to 10: 1 is the slowest, 10 is the fastest. Adjust your speed to the given number, being careful for other people (give a few different numbers).
- Following the speed instruction, change speed according to the number but be aware of space at the same time. If you see a gap somewhere, fill it, so people are distributed equally across the room.
- Following the speed instruction, change speed according to the given number but be aware and notice people at the same time, look at their eyes.
- Stop for a minute and try to feel the rhythm of your heart. Once you have it, start to walk with the speed reflecting your heart beating. With time, notice the speed of other people. If you lose your rhythm, stay still for a few seconds and reconnect to your heart beat. You can do it by placing your fingers on your neck or wrist.
- Find the way to come together in the circle.



Discuss the experience with participants.

b) Exercises in couples

There are various body exercises in couples you can propose. With every new exercise change also the couples, so participants have a chance to work with different people.

- Marionette

Decide who is the person A and who the person B. Person A is a marionette with imaginary strings coming from her hands and legs. Person B can pull the imaginary strings and give marionetter direction. After 1-2 minutes change the roles. At the end give 2 minutes to the couples to discuss their experience.

- Mirrors

Person A is a mirror which repeats everything person B does. After 1-2 minutes - change the roles. At the end give 2 minutes to the couples to discuss their experience.

- Sound

People in couples decide one sound. Ask each couple to present their sound to make sure that sounds of different couples are not too similar to each other. Person A closes her eyes. Person B is leading person A just with the sound they decided. Person A is slowly following. Person B is responsible for her security. At the beginning the sound should be very close to the person, once the person starts to feel more secure, person B can start to distant a bit. After 2 minutes change the roles. At the end give 2 minutes to the couples to discuss their experience.



c) Exercises in groups

You can follow with group exercises if participants are ready for it.

- Group massage

In the group of 5 people one is lying down on her belly on the mattress. Ask the person to declare which parts of her body she doesn't want others to touch. Then invite the other 4 members of the group to massage the person for a few minutes. The person who receives a massage can express her wishes and stop the things she doesn't like, setting her boundaries. Put relaxing music in the background. After a few minutes, change the person on the mattress and continue till everybody has a chance to receive a massage.

- Falling

Group of 5 people stand in the circle. One is coming in the middle, closes her eyes, and keeping the body straight she falls down into one of the directions. The task of 4 other people is to gently catch the person and put her in another direction. 4 members of the team are passing the person in the middle to each other making sure she is safe and has a good experience. Give every participant the chance to be in the middle and do the exercise till the extent which feels comfortable to them.

2. Setting boundaries

After warming up our bodies, propose a series of exercises which help us to recognise and set our boundaries.

- Trees

Divide participants into couples. Ask person A to imagine that she is a tree, deeply rooted to the ground, in firm posture. Person B is pushing person A in different points with hand or all her body, at the beginning gently, then stronger and stronger. The task of person A is to stay firmed, with her feet strongly on the ground. After a few minutes change the role. Invite participants to discuss this experience firstly in couples and then in the whole group.



- No

Ask participants in different couples to stand opposite to each other, creating two lines of people. The task of women on the left side would be to stop those who are at the right side. When you say start, women from the right side start to go toward their partners on the left side. Women on the left should say stop or no whenever they start to feel uncomfortable with their partner coming closer. First time probably their “stop” would be very delicate and gentle. Repeat the exercise a few times, asking them to say it stronger, to shout, to show with all their body that they are serious in saying NO. You can ask women on the right to go faster, more aggressively. After a few trials, change the roles. Let participants discuss the experience in couples and then in the whole group.

- Consent

Divide participants into new couples. Person A names parts of the body she doesn't want to be touched. The task of person B would be to put her hand in different parts of the body of person A (omitting those which person A named as untouchable). Task of person A is to physically reject the hand of person B from their body (by pushing it away) and say out loud “no”. Person B is trying in different parts of the body. After a few minutes change the role. Then give a few minutes to discuss these experiences.

In the second round of this exercise, the person who is touched has three options: yes, I don't know, no. In case of no and I don't know she rejects the hand physically pushing it away. In the case of yes, the person who is touching leaves the hand for a few more seconds and then takes it away by herself. Person who is touched can spend a few seconds to really feel if the touch she is experiencing is acceptable (yes), not acceptable (no) or she is not sure (I don't know). Very important part is that “I don't know” also means a lack of agreement. Change the role, give time after to discuss this experience in couples and summarize in the whole group. What did you learn about consent? What is the difference between no, I don't know and yes?



- Circle of no

To have a strong closing of this part you can invite women to stand together in the circle and one by one shout “NO!” with the body expressing clear disagreement (they can stamp their leg, put the hand ahead, do anything with the body which confirms their disagreement). At the end you can all shout together.

3. Summary

Discuss with participants what they have learned and experienced in this workshop. How can we give our agreement and disagreement in daily life? Why is setting boundaries important? How can we recognize them? How can we train our ability to say “no”? At the end ask participants to fill the application form.

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