

Title of the activity : Lifeboat Game

For who : 15+
Duration : 60 min
Number of players : 8+
Place : Inside
Characteristic :
- Discussion
- Putting priorities
- Self-reflection

Type of game : Negotiation
Educational interest :
emotions/judgments/negotiations/perceptions
Materials :
- List of 15 people in a yacht

Goal : Discover how emotions effect the success of our judgments/negotiations/perceptions

Method :

Give the team or teams a list of 15 people who are on a yacht. Tell them that the yacht developed a leak and is sinking fast. There is only one lifeboat and it will accommodate only nine people — not one more can fit and there are no more life boats or life jackets.

The group must then come to an agreement as to which of 15 people gets to go in the lifeboat and be saved. However, they must also list those they save in order of importance — because if they run out of food and water the “less important people” will have to be dumped overboard. Of course this is often the more difficult job, since the 15 people on the list are controversial as possible.

Give them a period of time to work out the problem. Make it long enough to get into heated discussion but short enough to be pressed for time. Usually allow six to ten minutes.

The discussion afterward should be in depth and include everyone on the team. You can facilitate with questions. Such as ...

- What problems did you experience?
- How did you resolve these issues?
- Was it the best way?
- How else could you have resolved your differences?
- Why did these problems occur in the first place?

Then...

- How does this exercise reflect your day-to-day relationships?
- What are the similarities between what you just experienced and real life, at home or work?

After fully exploring these questions ask your team — or teams — to reconvene. This time they will list three things they would do differently now that they have had this discussion. Be sure to tell them that this follow-up exercise is not about the lifeboat or anyone on it — it is about the process of perception/negotiation; how stereotypes and prejudices affect our lives.

Desired outcome:

The critical take away here is that negotiation often fails because each participant wants to get his or her way. A better method may be to first learn the needs and intents of others. Understanding fosters a spirit of cooperation and therefore agreement. Use the three things each team determines they learned as a guide to create better understanding in future meetings and discussions.

List of 15 people in a yacht

Remember, you can't save all! Select 9 people, that needs to be saved in an order of importance!

1. A Michael Jackson impersonator;
2. A politician accused of election fraud;
3. A Chef of Roma origin, specialized in French cuisine;
4. A pregnant woman;
5. An orthodox priest;
6. A catholic priest;
7. An Imam;
8. A female doctor accused of sexual harassment;
9. Brad Pitt look-alike;
10. An unfunny comedian;
11. A former convict, that runs now a security company;
12. Victoria Beckham look-alike;
13. The prime-minister of Bangladesh;
14. A kleptomaniac teenage girl;
15. A winner of a survivalist show.