

The Dot Activity (15-30min)

Understanding Different Levels of Power

Materials

- Multi coloured sticker dots
- Timer
- Participants of 6 or more
- Chairs and open space/room (it is helpful participants be in a space where they can't see their own reflections)

Objectives

- To bring awareness of how power dynamics influence the way we interact, understand our roles as leaders and participants, and how do we perpetuate or resist to group dynamics.

Instructions

1. Have participants sitting in a circle
2. Instruct the participants that you will:
 - a. Ask participants to close their eyes as you will place a colour sticker dot on their cheek
 - b. Let participants know you will be tapping them on the shoulder gently as it can be jarring to have the dot placed while their eyes are closed
 - c. If participants prefer to place the dot themselves please keep their eyes closed and leave their index finger out so that they can place the **dot** on their cheek themselves
 - d. Please only place dots on cheeks and not on foreheads as that would be culturally insensitive
 - e. Remind participants to keep their eyes closed until you have shared that everyone has a **dot**.
3. Ask participants to close their eyes
4. Place one dot on each participant
 - a. It is helpful to gently tap on the shoulder of each participants as it may be
 - b. Randomly select colours for each participants making sure colours are mixed
 - c. Randomly alternate the side of the cheek for each participant
 - d. Sometimes it may be helpful for the activity to choose by ratio of the group a few people to have 2 dots (they can be of the same colour or different colour, on the same cheek or on both cheeks)
5. Remind participants to keep their eyes close
6. Once you have placed a dot on each participant instruct them:
 - a. Open their eyes
 - b. There will be no verbal communication from this point of the activity

- c. They are allowed to get out of their seats and move around in the space
- d. And what you want them to do now “Sort Yourselves Out”
 - i. It is important to this activity that “sort yourselves out” are the only instructions and not how they can sort and what to base sorting themselves on
 - ii. The term “sort” may not be accessible for folks so finding synonyms may be helpful
- 7. Allow participants approximately 5-10 minutes to sort themselves out
 - a. When participants seem to be done ask them “raise your hands if you’ve sorted yourselves out” and/or “raise your hands if you need more time”
 - b. You can ask as many or little as the time is available for the activity
- 8. Once participants are sorted into their groups you can ask them to stay in their positions and begin the debriefing the activity

Discussions:

- 1. What Happened?
 - a. What did you sort yourselves based on?
 - i. Were there other ways you could have sorted yourselves?
 - 1. Based or not based on **dots**
 - ii. Why weren’t there other ways explored or done?
 - b. How did you sort yourselves out?
 - i. What were the forms of communication?
 - ii. Who were actively moving people?
 - iii. Was everyone on the same page/understanding?
- 2. What were the dynamics in the room?
 - a. What were the rules?
 - i. Participants? Facilitator(s)?

*Often participants will make assumptions that the instructions were to sort based on the colour of the dots. This activity will have some participants take an active role in moving and categorizing themselves and others as “sorting”. This process will show how we play “within” or “outside” rules, who regulates them, group processes and dynamics. The participants represent “personal & positional” power dynamics, while the facilitator and the rules of the game represent the “systemic” power dynamics. All 3 interact with each other and will inform how participants will play.