

Title: Controlled Dialogue

Brief summary of activity

Participants will work on communication skills, concentration and perception. Disagreement and conflict can be caused by misunderstandings, and this exercise is all about listening to the other. Also, as the activity requires not only active listening skills, but also engages analytical and summarising skills, it would be very useful for trainers as they often have to engage them during training.

Aim of the activity

To highlight the importance of active listening when engaging with participants, to better understand what they want to say and being able to mediate in case of disagreement and conflict.

Expected Outcomes

- outline the values which inform practice in training / training practices
- demonstrate good training practice
- describe different preferred learning styles, training styles and conflict resolution techniques
- identify personal training and development needs

Information for Trainers:

- **experience and skills required**
- **Infrastructure, setting, resources**

A room big enough to allow participants to stand in groups of 3 to carry out the activity.

- **Length:**
30 minutes

Materials

Description

- **How the activity should take place.**

Agree on one topic that everyone can talk about and where there are different points of view (Preferred music genres, or preferred film/actor/film director, etc)

Divide the participants into groups of 3 and explain the exercise.

Each person in the group will take turns to talk. For example, person A talks, when person A finishes, Person B needs to summarise what person A has said before expressing their own opinion. Person C has the observation role, and intervenes if something in the summary is not correct or something important is missing.

Bring the participants into their groups and allow them 5-10 minutes to carry out the exercise.

After 5-10 minutes bring the group together and discuss the roles of the debaters and the observer.

- Was the observer frustrated as they could express their own opinion?
- How many times did the observer or one of the discussing pair have to intervene because the summary didn't reflect what it was being said?
- Analyse the problems that appeared during the exercise: What was difficult when listening, What was difficult when summarising?

If you have time, repeat the exercise, with the observer in every group taking a speaking role.

- **Recommended max. number of participants and trainees to trainers ratio**
9-12 to 1

Risk and possible adaptation

Variations:

Tips for Trainers:

Be clear with the participants that the exercise is not about the issue or theme they are debating, but about the listening and summarising process experiences.

Participants:

Analysis and evaluation:

Ask participants about their experience during activity. How will they use this activity with the learner group? Do they think it is a good exercise to get the group listening to each other before jumping into conclusions that might create conflict?

Scheduling:

Tagging (Keywords):

Training challenge, Conflict, group dynamics, active listening.