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## The dialogic space - How to create a safe environment for personal development

Fri, 16/10/2015 - 13:20 -- Eike Totter

### **Type of tool:**

Activity

### **Duration:**

120+ min

### **Topics addressed:**

Conflict management

Personal development

Social inclusion

Setting up (and ensuring) a safe space is crucial when working on personal development as through diversity and inclusion issues. This session proposes some basic rules, how to put them into practise and how to deal with resistance and irritations.

### **Aim:**

The main idea is to get access to the cause of unexpressed assumptions, to show how participants can and need to take responsibility for communication and to get into a common mood of learning and appreciation of each others contributions without blame or shame.

### **Methodology:**

It is most often applied by verbal discussions following an input on different issues and causes of conflict, verbal (and other) violent behaviour and personal needs for safety and security. It would be possible (but still needs to be done) to adapt these issues also into a playful setting. I use it regularly on the beginning of projects lasting for several days and make it an integral part during the whole period.

### **Step by step process:**

- Introduction to the topic
- Introduction of communication issues and necessity to ensure a pleasant environment.
- Research for (or introduction of) certain issues that can come up between members and development of possible sustainable and respectful interventions.
- Agreement and commitment on tangible (and reliable) rules of conduct.
- Return to the agreement in times of conflict or perceived discrimination.
- Guided search for solutions that include everyone in a respectful way and enlarge the common ground.

### **Materials and resources:**

No material is needed necessarily.

It has shown, that it can make sense to write a contract about how we will communicate with each other and how we will address issues and that would require some printed agreement or also a wallpaper that people can sign.

If the tool would serve a wider aim and could be integrated more seamless into the setting up of a teaching environment, it would be possible to support some inputs of films, some development of issues through theatre or handcraft/ art work.

### **Outcomes:**

- Awareness about own discriminative potential.
- Awareness about how the common ground needs to be enlarged to get into progress and touch with others, especially those we are not in tune with already.
- Experience of having discovered everyday discrimination and stereotyping.
- Success-stories in making unpleasant situations visible and having experience in which way they could be tackled (maybe even solved) respectfully and sustainably.

### **Evaluation:**

The tool is serving very well and allows for a deep examination of everyday discrimination and bullying. It is suitable to give involved people high confidence in sharing their perceptions and concerns and also touching their own offending habits. The overall approach addresses the struggles and resistances in changing one's habit and admitting that one didn't act the way they wished to - and that conflict is a threat not only to the victim but also the aggressor. Being able to put them on the same table in a setting that is no trial but a workbench for future positive cohabitation takes a lot of load and gives a lot of empowerment.

The approach helps to get the struggle of powerlessness and oppression into an emotional stage that helps to solve it. Therefore, on the side of further development, I might use the tool-fair workshop to imagine on how the prior agreements can also be achieved in a way that is less cognitive and verbal but touches more senses and reveals not only intellectual treatment of the issue.

### **Notes for further use:**

- This would be a workshop.
- I'd somehow apply the tool but would also want to get on a meta-level to get some feedback on how to make it more versatile. So, it might become a presentation, depending on how we work on the contribution.
- I applied it around two or three dozen times in different scopes of time, depth, methodology, participating people - and version history, too.
- I'd like to have a longer slot, so 120 mins. (60 mins would allow for a presentation only.)

### **Rating:**

No votes yet

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### **Source URL:**

<http://educationaltoolsportal.eu/en/tools/dialogic-space-how-create-safe-environment-personal-development>