



Don't Say a Word

Aim:

that participants understand how assumptions and lack of communication can result in conflict.

Age:

6 years and older

Time:

20 minutes

Materials:

instruction for each group, set of chairs (five or six)

Note to Leader

The game is 'won' when all the groups complete their task in the time allotted. By working together all the groups can achieve their aims. Ensure that groups do not introduce new chairs into the game. For younger age groups, substitute cushions for the chairs.

What to do:

Announce that no one is allowed to talk. Ask participants to form three equal sized groups. Place a set of chairs in the middle of the room. Hand out an instruction face down to each group. Explain that they have 5 minutes to complete their task. Repeat that no one is allowed to talk during the exercise.

Let the game begin and observe what happens. If after 4 minutes the groups are still in conflict, point out that no one said it was a competition.

After 5 minutes call a halt to the game. In the large group ask:
What happened in the game?

What assumptions did the groups make when they got their instructions?
How did people feel about the other groups initially?

How did the groups feel when they realised it wasn't a competition?
What did the groups have to do to work together?

Now explain that the game is over. Get everyone to stand up, walk around and then sit beside someone from another group. You could play a quick game such as 'change places if...'. In the large group, ask:

Does this happen in real life?

Why does conflict occur?

How is it resolved?

How important is communication between all sides in resolving or preventing conflict?

Instructions

Group 1:

Place the chairs
in a straight line.

Group 2:

Place the chairs
in a circle.

Group 3:

Bring the chairs
outside the room.

