

The Titanic Debate

Category of Competencies: Social Intelligence Skills

Description:

An interactive group activity exploring social status and how this can be gained or lost.

Activity Categories:

Group, In-person, Easy to Prepare, One-off Session, Little to No Equipment Needed

Main Competencies Involved:

Assertiveness, Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution, Cooperation, Diplomacy, Empathy, Influencing Others, Mediation, Negotiation, Social Awareness

Other Competencies (Different Category):

Ability to compromise, Group effectiveness, Listening Skills, Non-verbal Communication, Reasoning

Resources Needed and Practical Considerations:

Chairs/floorspace, Persona Cards; minimum group size of six participants

Estimated Time:

30 minutes

Description of Activity:

Step 1: Participants sit in a circle, with five seats set out in the shape of a boat to the side of the group.

Step 2: Each member of the group is given a Persona Card with a role they will play and instructed not to share this information.

Step 3: The Youth Worker reveals to the group that they are onboard the Titanic 2, which will sink in 15 minutes. There is only one lifeboat remaining that has space for 5 people. The group must decide who is deserving of those seats.

Step 4: Each member of the group reveals the first piece of information on their Persona Card and explains why they think they should be saved. Every few minutes, as managed by the facilitator, participants may reveal another piece of information on their Persona Card if they wish. As the group makes decisions, selected individuals should sit on the lifeboat. Decisions can be reversed as more information is revealed. By the end of the 15 minutes, the group should have agreed on who will fill the seats on the lifeboat.



Step 5: If, after 15 minutes, the group has not reached a decision on all seats, participants reveal all information on their Persona Cards and vote on who gets into the lifeboat.

Processing Questions:

How easy/difficult was it to come to your decision?

Who did you feel had the highest status at the beginning of the task?

Who had the lowest status at the beginning of the task?

Did anyone's status change as you learned more information?

What became more important to you: status, skills, or abilities when making your decision?

Did anyone withhold any information when making your argument? If so, why?

Do you feel this activity reflects real life?



Persona Cards

Female Doctor, 61 1. Married with 3 children 2. 7 grandchildren 3. Hobbies include golf and travel Male Rapper, 24 1. Single, no children 2. Two number-one singles 3. Patron of inner-city youth work charity Female Shop Assistant, 33 1. Single, 2 children 2. Favourite music is R&B 3. Studying nursing Male Youth Worker, 27 1. Married with 1 child 2. Has several swimming medals 3. Wheelchair user Male Survival Expert, 42 1. Married with no children 2. Wants to emigrate to Australia 3. Broken arm during collision Ship's Captain, Female, 38 1. Single, no children 2. Interested in astronomy 3. Socialising with guests when collision happened Male Judge, 70 1. Widower with 4 children 2. 13 grandchildren 3. Likes whisky tasting	Male MEP, 51 1. Lives with partner 2. No children 3. Equal rights campaigner Female Artist, 56 1. Single, no children 2. Campaigns against cruelty to animals 3. Recreational drug user Male Chef, 36 1. Single, no children 2. TV personality 3. Speciality is fish Unemployed Male, 18 1. Single, no children 2. Enjoys spending time with friends 3. Carer for sick mother Male Boxer, 28 1. Single, 3 children 2. Likes to party 3. In contention for title fight Female Police Officer, 26 1. Single, no children 2. Volunteers with the Coastguard 3. Competitive rower Female Teacher, 64 1. Married with 1 child 2. Experienced hill walker 3. Qualified first-aider
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