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Creating safe spaces in informal and peer led groups session one

Notes for presentation



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Introduction

Please read with PowerPoint presentation Safe Space Workshop Session One.

The aim of this FREE online training resource is to share ideas on actions which may help create psychologically safer places in informal and peer led groups. The resource can be used many ways; as a learning aid for someone facilitating a group, an established group seeking to see if there is anything which may be helpful for them. A group just setting up and looking for ideas helps make the group a success.

We have arranged the training in a way which means you can dip in and out. Spending as much time in specific areas as meets the needs of your group.

There may be some areas where you feel, 'we don't need any more learning in this area', if that's the case, skip over that. There may be other areas where you want to spend more time. It's your choice.

The benefits of online learning are that you can access it when it suits you and the group and can go at a pace which you are comfortable with and meets your needs, even repeating a section if that's helpful.

We devised this online resource because although it would be nice to think everyone got on and was kind to each other and disagreements never happened, people are complex and sometimes it's not people mean to be unkind, it's simply group dynamics can change and this can be a challenge for those involved unless it's managed.

We don't claim to have all the answers, we will also share with you other resources we have found which others have shared online, which you may find helpful. Our aim, to help build a kinder world where people suffer less.

Please feel free to feedback and make comments, we also learn by knowing what works and what needs to change.

Opening slide (one) and Introduction Slide two

There is an opening slide to have on when the group begins so as people arrive, or settle down to watch online, they can see what the session is going to be about. Which then moves to the beginning of the workshop where people are welcomed to the day's session



Slide three

Invite people to take a couple of moments to bring their attention to the moment. You may use the following text, or something you feel helps introduce the 3min relaxation video, which is accessed by [clicking this link](#) on the slide or cutting and pasting into your browser

“Most of us have a lot going on which can be distracting. For the next few minutes, just make yourself comfortable, as we watch this wee video. Please bring your attention to what is happening now. While you are watching this wee video there is nothing else to do, and nothing else to think about”

The aim of this is to help everyone; including the facilitator, take a few moments to arrive in the room and begin to focus on the learning experience.

Slide four

We want the workshop to be a safe place, so spend a few minutes asking the group what they think will help make this workshop a safe space. Honour those answers by capturing them on a flipchart and posting on the wall for everyone to see. The slide offers some ideas for creating a safe space if people do not yet feel safe to share ideas.

To balance comfort and challenge you may ask people if they would like to introduce themselves as they share their thoughts, don't force anyone to contribute. There will be some people very keen to talk and share, other people who may feel uncomfortable speaking out in front of others, by creating a safe nurturing space it maybe in time they choose to share more but this needs to be their choice.

Using icebreakers can support this process, there are many to choose from. [e.g. visit](#) or you may know of ones you prefer to use yourself. Something as simple as ***‘what is your favourite; soup, or, colour, or, animal, or, season?’*** can help people begin to share.

Slide five

It's always good to ensure people know what the aims of a session are so read the slide maybe ask, ***‘does this cover everyone's expectations?’*** If people, ask for something you aren't sure will be covered honour that and put it on a parking flipchart to come back to (a sheet of paper with parking written at the top, where anything not covered in the group, or has an immediate answer, is captured for later reference).

If at the end of the session, there is anything left on the parking flipchart, that neither you nor any of the group have the answer to, then say you will try and get the answer from someone else, to share at the next group. Or, it maybe you don't know where the answer maybe found and the person with the question seeks the answer themselves.



Slide six

Remind people this is only one series of workshops, people are complicated and not all answers can be found over a few sessions, but it is hoped the following sessions may help in setting up a group to make sure it's the success all its members want it to be. Discuss the differences between extrovert and introvert and share the [Myers Briggs Free online resource](#).

Slide seven to Slide eleven

These slides give a very basic overview of the differences between introvert and extrovert. The key learning messages are, Introverts need time alone to recharge, extroverts need to be around people to be energised. This doesn't mean introverts are shy and cannot be around people, they can, and can often be very entertaining, its just they also need time alone. The point for further discussion with the group being established is people understanding themselves and each other better. If people realise, we have different needs then sometimes misunderstandings can be avoided e.g. someone leaves the group early one day. They are not in 'a mood' just the group that day was very energetic, and they need some downtime to recharge so don't want to go on somewhere else for a cup of tea and more conversation with others.

Slide twelve Tea break

The aim of these sessions is to bring people together who are in, or, setting up a peer led, or informal group, so taking time and offering comfort breaks for people to chat about what they have heard so far will help support learning. Also realise, if there maybe introverts in the group, they may want to use this time to sit and have a think so remain away from the group as they process what has been discussed so far.

Slide thirteen

Read the slide, then share with people '**... we are going to watch a ted talk**', click the link or paste this into your browser it lasts just under 19minutes. Invite people to watch and listen and share '**at the end of this we will have a wee discussion around what people thought about the video**'.

Slide fourteen

Explain this video was selected as often people coming to a group may have experienced loneliness or isolation. This can happen for many reasons and is a workshop in its own right. By understanding loneliness and the challenges this can bring for people, it helps us be one step closer to understanding sometimes why people may want company, but then when they [are in company still feel alone](#).



Slide fifteen

People have been sitting for a while, now is time for people to move into smaller groups, you will know size of group so see what works for the group. Suggest people

‘spend 15minutes talking about the video and any thoughts they had.’ Reassure people ***‘there are no right or wrong answers, it’s about what you thought of the video’***. Ask ***‘if people feel comfortable before sharing their thoughts in their smaller groups to introduce each other again?’***

After the 15minutes ask ***‘does anyone want to feedback their thought’s***, honour the answers and maybe share after this any thoughts you have e.g. surprised that loneliness is like thirst a biological warning system. Fifteen minutes is suggested, but you can make this longer or shorter depending on the needs of your group.

Slide sixteen

Creates space for group members to reflect on learning so far and write down any points they want to think about, also, to remind people of the next session where it will be and what time, also use this to find out how the pace was for the session. Some people may have preferred to cover more, some less, some it was just right.

You determine how fast this training takes with the group so if you need to adjust times that’s perfectly all right so long as people engage with the learning process in a way most helpful for them and meets their learning needs

Slide seventeen

Offer people the chance to cover any final points, check the parking lot and see if any issues are outstanding and discuss how these will be addressed. Invite people to complete the feedback card, thank them for coming and that you are looking forward to the next session. Make sure you share the date for the next session

Reflection

It is helpful to read the feedback cards, reflect on what they are saying and if any changes need made for next time. It is always helpful after any training to complete your own reflective log regards how you felt the session went and any ideas for future sessions.

These notes and slides are a guide, but the real magic comes from the trainer, make these sessions your own and enjoy delivering them, when we as trainers are passionate about what we are doing this can transfer to participants



If you are going to be part of the group being established reflect on your own thoughts about points to consider

Thank you for helping build a kinder world

