Express feelings via storytelling

Learning objectives

- Raise awareness about mental health.
- Express feelings via storytelling.
- Develop communication skills and active listening.
- Promote creative expression
- Develop storytelling skills
- Encourage peer support and facilitate group bonding.

Participants

This workshop serves as an introductory activity suitable for individuals **aged 14-19** who are knowing each other, providing a platform for discussing their feelings. It is adaptable for both small and mid-sized groups, with the optimum number of participants ranging **from 4 to 10**.

Needed tools and resources

Ensure you have a deck of Dixit cards or a diverse collection of pictures and artworks to share with the youngsters. It's crucial to provide a variety of options for them to choose from. Additionally, gather paper, pens, and a yarn ball.

Duration of the workshop

This activity can function as a brief 15-minute warm-up for participants to express their, or it can extend into a longer session lasting 1.5 hours, centred around this activity.

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Description of the workshop

1 Energiser: Start with a quick game designed to energise and engage participants.

Example: “Who is the conductor?” In this activity, one participant leaves the room, while the others choose a conductor to lead movements for everyone to follow simultaneously. The person who left the room returns and tries to identify the conductor. Repeat the process at least three times, involving different volunteers in guessing and leading.

2 Warm-up activity: Initiate a speaking and storytelling exercise to encourage self-expression.

Example: Divide participants into two groups, forming concentric circles facing each other. Assign simple topics like “Share your biggest adventure” or “Talk about your favourite movie” for pairs to discuss within a two-minute timeframe. Rotate the circles to create new pairs at least five times.

3 Express feelings via storytelling

Gather participants and place Dixit cards, photos, or artworks in the middle. Instruct them as follows:
“Here are various beautiful and interesting pictures. Take your time examining them and choose a card that resonates with your current feelings. Craft a short story, limited to one page, reflecting those emotions. Once everyone has selected a card and crafted a story, we’ll have a round to share both the cards and stories.”

Give participants the start signal, offering ample time for the activity. If you want, play instrumental music in the background to enhance the mood. Be careful to choose a soundtrack which is not disturbing. After completing their stories, invite participants to share. If someone becomes emotional, allow them time to compose themselves, encouraging sharing based on comfort levels. After each story, encourage others to ask questions or share similar feelings or experiences, fostering assertive communication and empathy.

4 Debriefing

Wrap up the workshop with an evaluation activity to gauge participants’ feelings and key takeaways.

Form a circle and distribute a yarn ball.
Ask a volunteer to share a significant takeaway from the workshop and then throw the ball to another participant while holding onto the end of the yarn. Continue this process until everyone has shared their takeaways, resulting in a symbolic spiderweb between participants. This symbolises their connection and the understanding that no one is alone with their problems and feelings.

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