

Just Do It!

*Sometimes other people like parents, bosses and adults,
can be so narrow minded... but aren't we too?*

This activity is a simulation.

Issues addressed

- Discrimination against people who are different.
- The mechanisms that maintain minorities in an underprivileged position in our society.

Aims

- To experience discrimination
- To analyse how we discriminate against certain social groups and at the same time blame them for the situation they are in.
- To raise awareness about how we help preserve unfair social structures.

Time: 60 minutes

Group size: Maximum 40. You will need to divide participants into four sub-groups.

Preparation

- 4 large sheets of paper
- 4 old magazines
- 4 scissors
- 4 packs of coloured felt tip pens
- 4 tubes of glue
- Optional: 4 sets of other bits and pieces e.g. string, wool, buttons, paper clips.
- Paper and pen for the observers
- Clock or watch

Instructions

1. Divide the players into four groups and ask each group to sit in a corner of the room where they can work comfortably.
2. Ask each group to nominate one person to be an observer to note down what the members of the group do or say.
3. Announce that you will be coming round to each group in turn to give them the materials and the instructions of what to do.
4. Go to the first group, give them a set of materials and say clearly, "You have a sheet of paper, a magazine, scissors and glue. You must make a collage representing Spring. You have 20 minutes. You may start whenever you want.
5. Then go to the second group, give them a set of materials and say clearly, "You have a sheet of paper, a magazine, scissors and glue. You must make a collage representing Summer. You have 20 minutes. You may start whenever you want."



6. Then go to the third group, give them their materials and say clearly, "You have a sheet of paper, a magazine, scissors and glue. You must make a collage representing Autumn. You have 20 minutes. You may start whenever you want."
7. Then go to the last group, give them their materials and say clearly, "Mso, flosamd loerabtbz losnise bauqvxa poyeks, nseioamans sajiyudo laverza losi-falitome. You have 20 minutes to do it. You may start whenever you want."
8. While the groups are working, go round the groups, be encouraging and supportive to the first, second and third groups, but blame the fourth group for not doing what you asked them to.
9. After 20 minutes stop the activity and ask the groups hand in their collages. If the first group has not yet finished give them 3 or 4 minutes more.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start with a round from those who played. Ask them to say how they felt about the activity and how they worked together in their groups, did everyone participate?

Follow with a round from the observers. Ask them to say what happened in each group.

Then involve everybody in a discussion about the links with reality:

- Can you see any links with real life?
- In our society, who is in the fourth group?
- How do we tend to blame the victims of social injustice?
- How do people who feel they are the victims of social injustice react?
- Do they react the same way as the people in group 4 did?

Tips for the facilitator

If you are working with just a few people adapt the game and create two sub-groups, the first with very clear instructions and the second with confusing ones.

An alternative to using the nonsense sentence with the fourth group is to give them proper instructions spoken very fast or in another language.

Be aware that this activity is likely to generate strong reactions from the members of the fourth group because of the frustration of not understanding the instructions and still being blamed for it. Sometimes they get angry with the facilitator and leave; sometimes they turn their frustration against the other groups and prevent them from doing or finishing their work; sometimes they withhold their feelings and keep their aggression for later.

Therefore we suggest the following:

- Make sure that the groups are formed randomly so as to avoid anybody in group four feeling victimised.
- Before starting the evaluation it is essential to make clear that this was a simulation and that we must now get out of our roles.
- It is important to leave time during the evaluation for everyone to express their feelings before going on to analyse what happened. If you don't allow for this the feelings will come out later on and a good evaluation will be difficult.

Variations

If you want to make it more challenging or you don't have the materials, you can ask the groups to perform a short sketch. This is more stressful for the forth group who will be worried about having to perform and not look foolish.

Suggestions for follow up

Take a further look at groups in our society. How do you see the people you might describe as social losers and those who are social winners? Explore this through the activity 'Portraits' (page 149).

Alternatively you could move on to the board game 'The path to development' (page 138) which brings out the many mechanisms by which the present economic system discriminates against the majority of people living in countries of the South in order to maintain the privileged position of those in the North.