



Exercise Bank Mahis

Mahis – Exercise Bank

The exercises included in these materials have been categorized as follows:

- **Grouping**

Familiarization and trust exercises

- **Functioning group**

Cooperation and objective exercises, self-knowledge and emotional skills, communication, providing feedback, problem-solving, energy release and relaxation

- **Concluding the group**

Summarizing the project, providing closing feedback, and saying goodbye

The above categorization is indicative. Each exercise includes elements from more than one area, and everyone experiences the exercises uniquely. By directing the debriefing discussions, you can highlight things you want the participants to pay attention to at each time.

The exercises can be used as is or they can be adjusted to better suit your group. The purpose of the exercises is to become better acquainted with each other, create a positive team spirit, practice social skills, and learn to observe one's own behavior and that of others in different situations.

For each exercise, we have listed an indicative group size, estimate of duration, and the necessary equipment. With each exercise, it is essential to create a safe atmosphere, where experimenting and success as well as failure are allowed. Most exercises should be debriefed through discussions to ensure the maximum benefit for the group.

Importance of the atmosphere

The instructor's personal attitude has a significant effect on the group members' attitudes toward the exercises and each other, as well as the atmosphere

of the group. Adaptability and flexibility are important, as you should be able to adjust your plans and the rules of an exercise according to the situation.

Getting properly acquainted is important for good teamwork, and should begin with small, easy steps. The intention is to make everyone feel safe and welcome, and to ensure that no one is suddenly put into a situation that is too challenging. Even things that seem small can cause significant emotional reactions during the exercises, as, for example, introductions or maintaining eye contact may be difficult for some. Everyone is allowed to proceed at their own pace or even follow along without participating at first. You should respect individual boundaries, while encouraging the youths to reach beyond them where possible.

During the exercises, you should take note of the physical environment, as sometimes even a minor

change of location can make the situation more comfortable. You should also respect personal space and keep in mind that everyone is entitled to refuse to touch or be touched, even if it is part of an exercise.

Sometimes it may also be necessary to emphasize the fact that the exercises are not used to judge people, and that in actuality there are no right or wrong ways to do them. For example, forgetting the rules of a game is normal and may lead to good insights. These principles should be highlighted in discussions before the exercises and whenever necessary. If you encounter problems during the exercises, they should also be resolved through joint discussions.

Debriefing the exercises

Debriefing the exercises afterward by discussions is often more important than the actual exercise itself. Example questions you can use to reflect on the group's experiences are included with each exercise. Joint discussion can often lead to interesting and fun

observations of your own actions and those of others in other everyday situations. Debriefing should be adapted based on the exercises, and it may not even be necessary with simple familiarization and warmup exercises.

When working as a group, sometimes even difficult emotions, such as uncertainty, jealousy, misapprehension, failure or irritation, may come up. All emotions are correct and acceptable, and they can be expressed within the accepted limits. Any unpleasant situations should be discharged immediately to ensure that any misunderstandings are resolved and participation in the group remains pleasant for everyone.

The questions can be used to guide the discussion and lead it toward the desired theme. It is often good to focus on the thoughts and emotions that the exercises evoked in the participants. If it is difficult to engage the entire group in a discussion, talking in pairs or smaller groups may be more suitable.

› Debriefing questions:

- What thoughts / emotions did the exercise evoke?
- In your opinion, what was the purpose of the exercise?
- How did your group work during the exercise?
- What would your operation have looked like on video?
- How could the exercise have been changed?

Grouping

As the project starts, it is important to establish a good team spirit for the group. If the participants don't know each other, it is good to start with familiarization games. **Familiarization exercises** do not need debriefing, and you can think of them as a warmup. **Trust exercises** require a degree of grouping, and good instructions and observing safety are important when using them. At their best, these exercises reinforce the team spirit of the group and bond the members together more tightly.





MAHIS

Familiarization Exercises

Exercises:

Name ball | Multidimensional nametag | Behind the curtain | This is me | Describe your morning | Back circle
Tea or coffee? | Map | Self-portrait | Who did I meet first? | Drawing | New identity | Changing places

Name ball

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–10 minutes
Equipment: ball

Everyone stands or sits in a circle. In turn, everyone says their first name. If necessary, the name round can be completed more than once to ensure that the names are remembered. One person throws the ball to another. Before the throw, the thrower says the name of the person they are throwing the ball to. The catcher quickly chooses the next person and says their name before throwing the ball. The idea is to move the ball quickly around the circle. Remind the players that forgetting a name is not a problem, as the other players can help.

The exercise can also be performed without the name round, in which case the ball is thrown to a person whose name the thrower wants to learn. The catcher will say their name and then throw the ball to another person whose name they wish to learn.

Multidimensional nametag

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: paper, pens

Each member of the group writes their name in the middle of a name tag using as big letters as possible. Answers to the following questions, for example, are written into the corners of the name tag:

1. My expectations for this group and its goals
2. Three positive adjectives related to me
3. My place of residence
4. My dreams

The instructor asks the participants to form groups of three with people they don't already know. The members spend five minutes getting to know each other by talking about the things on the name tags.

Behind the curtain

Group: no restrictions
Duration: flexible
Equipment: large piece of fabric

Option 1: The instructor divides the group in half with two people holding up a curtain. The curtain is placed between the groups and everyone squats down. One person from each group goes to stand behind the curtain. The curtain is dropped and the people by the curtain say each other's names. The person who says the correct name first earns a point for their team. The next people come to the curtain.

Option 2: The game can also be played as a variant where the slower person moves to the winning team and the goal is to capture the entire opposing team.



This is me

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Remembering names is made easier with adjectives. In turn, each player says their name and adds an adjective that starts with the same letter as their first name (for example, Happy Hanna). Instead of an adjective, the players can also add a hobby or a favorite treat to their name (for example, Salli Singer, Leo Licorice).

Retention of names can be improved by repeating the previous name before saying your own.

Describe your morning

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 10–15 minutes

The players sit or stand in a circle. In turn, each person says their name and something that delighted/surprised/irritated them that morning. The turns can be timed, for example one minute per speaker. This exercise is suitable for a first meeting and provides an easy way to share something slightly personal in our own terms. The players can also express their thoughts by using an appropriate image or card.

Back circle

Group: 10 people

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Other things to consider: This exercise is well-suited for a more timid group, as maintaining eye contact with others is not required. It is especially suitable for a larger group and when the members only know the names of the other people.

The group stands in a circle, facing out. The instructor stands outside the circle and lists hobbies, such as parkour, comic books, reading, football, and music. Everyone with the same hobby turns toward the center of the ring. After a few seconds, everyone returns to their original position. After a few hobbies, the instructor can join the circle. Now, anyone can say a current or previous hobby and turn around for a short while. Everyone who has or has had the same hobby also turns to face the center. After a few seconds, everyone returns to their original position.

You can also use favorite foods, positive traits or music preferences as a theme for the exercise.

Tea or coffee?

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 5–10 minutes

The players choose their places freely in the room. The instructor draws a line in the middle and says: "This side is tea, that side is coffee. Which do you choose?" Coffee drinkers go to their side and the tea drinkers to theirs. The game is continued by naming new pairs of options, always indicating which side is which, for example, cat/dog, night/day, comedy/horror, music/dance, lounging on the beach/deep-sea diving.

The players can also call out their own pairs. Everyone has to choose a side; you cannot stay in the middle. You can also agree that everyone is free to interpret the words as they choose. The pairs do not have to belong to the same category, and outlandish options can make the game more fun, for example: moon landing or porridge for breakfast? Blue or football? Tail or wings?

Map

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 20 minutes
Equipment: masking tape, rope (optional)

Picture (or “draw”) a map of the country, the town, a specific neighborhood or a block in front of the group. The instructor points out central locations on the map to ensure that everyone has the same mental image. For example, the instructor can say: “This is the map of Finland. Helsinki is at this end, Pori is here, Jyväskylä is around the middle, Joensuu in the east, and Inari up north.” Instruct everyone to go to their birthplace. Specifying their place of birth requires a discussion among the youths. When everyone has found their place on the map, you can complete an introductory round where everyone says their name, place of birth, and when they moved, for example.

The exercise can be continued with a second round where the participants name their favorite activity or best friend from childhood. On the third round you can move on to the present and ask about their homes, the condition they left their room in the morning, family members, favorite TV shows, what

they like to do on the weekends, etc.

You can come up with questions relating to things that are important to the members and about which the instructor would like to know more.

Variations:

Camping center

You can also picture a camping center, for example. The instructor asks the players to go to the location within the camp school that was the most exciting/frightening/fun/important (for example pertaining to friends/instructors).

Weekly calendar

Stand on the day on which you are feeling the most fresh/tired. Why? What is your favorite day? Why? What is the most important evening to spend at home for you? Why? What is the most important evening for your hobbies? Why?

Clock face

What is your favorite time of the day? Why? When would you prefer to go to sleep/wake up?

Self-portrait

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 min
Equipment: paper, pens

Everyone gets a pen and a sheet of paper. The participants raise the papers in front of their faces, with the drawing side facing out. With eyes closed, the participants follow these instructions:

1. Draw the outline of your face as big as possible
2. Draw eyes on the face
3. Add a nose, mouth, and ears
4. Also draw hair
5. Add something that is characteristic to you, such as earrings or glasses.

Open your eyes and marvel at the results. Everyone signs their self-portrait, which can then be hung on the wall to form “Our group”.



Who did I meet first?

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 5–10 minutes

The instructor tells the group members to go to the person they have known the longest (someone they already knew, the person they talked to first, or even saw first when entering the room.) The player places their hand on the shoulder of the person they know. The group forms a network.

The instructor starts a round where everyone says their (and the other person's) name and how they became acquainted with the person.

Drawing

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 30–60 minutes

When the members have learned each other's names, they can continue to become better acquainted. Everyone draws a picture of their place of residence, home, family members, hobbies, best friend, or similar. Allow plenty of time for drawing. Everyone presents their drawing and the others can ask questions.

New identity

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15–30 minutes

The group is divided into pairs. The pairs tell each other their names and their place of residence or something about their family, hobbies or the theme of the exercise. Next, each member assumes the other's identity. The players move around the room introducing themselves to the next person they make eye contact with. After each introduction, the players assume the "identity" shared by the other person. At some point, the identities may be mixed, and each player can construct a new identity for themselves by combining things they have learned.

In the end, the players can introduce themselves using their new mixed-up identities and ask who the things are actually related to.

Changing places

Group: no restrictions

Duration: flexible

The players stand in a circle. The instructor stands in the middle and says: "My name is XX, and I drank tea this morning." All the people who drank tea that morning step away from their spot and try to switch places with each other as fast as possible. The instructor tries to move into an empty space. The person left in the middle, continues the game by saying their name and something about their morning/day/life: "My name is Maija, and I walked my dog today." Everyone who has also done that switches places, and the person left in the middle continues the game in the same manner.



MAHIS

Trust Exercises

Exercises:

Trust fall | Eye contact | Human wall | Leading the blind | Safety net

Trust fall

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes

Things to consider: make sure to move away from walls and other objects, emphasize the spotter's responsibility for safety reasons.

Option 1: The exercise is done in pairs, with one person standing straight with their arms held against their body and falling backward. The other person catches the faller. At first, the spotter stands close to the faller, and the distance is increased after each fall. The faller may also close their eyes.

Option 2: The exercise is done as a group, with one person standing in the middle holding their arms tightly against their body. The others form a close circle around the faller. The faller closes their eyes and starts to fall in some direction. The spotters catch the faller and gently guide them to another direction. The faller changes as the exercise proceeds, with each member taking a turn. Extending the distance to the faller makes the exercise more exciting. What did you think about the exercise? What did it feel like to fall backward without seeing? Were you

frightened? Did you manage to keep your eyes closed? How did it feel like to catch the other person? Was it easy to trust another person?

Did your group function well? Which part was easier, falling back or spotting? What did you learn about safety?

Eye contact

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10 minutes

The players stand in a circle. Everyone turns to look at the person on their left. After a short while, the players look at the next person, and then the next, and so on. The players' gaze stays with each person for a while. If two players look at each other, they switch places and begin the cycle again from the start.

What did you think about the exercise? What did you think when the others looked at you? How did it feel? How did you feel when your eyes met with someone else? Did you like switching places?

Human wall

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: a scarf

Things to consider: emphasize the safety aspect.

In a large room, build a solid human wall. One member of the group moves away from the wall and runs toward the wall with their eyes closed. The wall catches the runner safely. Switch places so that everyone gets to run into the wall.

What did you think about the exercise? What did you learn about safety? How did it feel to run toward something you can't see? Was it easy to trust the others? What would happen if the wall failed? What type of protective walls do you have in your life? What happens if they fail? For whom could you provide a protective wall? How could this group act as a protective wall for each other?

Leading the blind

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes

The group is divided into pairs. One person from each pair closes their eyes. The other person takes their partner by the hand and starts to lead them around the room. The leader makes sure that the person being led does not bump into other people or objects. After some time, the partners switch places.

This exercise can also be done without physical contact by having the leader follow alongside the other person and give verbal instructions.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to be led? Were you frightened? How did it feel to lead the other person? Was it easy to trust another person? Were you able to cooperate successfully? What did you learn about safety?

Safety net

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: scarves

A member of the group walks around with their eyes covered, while the others move with them as a "safety net" that prevents them from bumping into things.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it make you feel? Was it easy to trust the others? What would happen if the net fails? What type of safety nets do you have in your life? What happens if they fail? Whose safety net could you be? How could this group act as a safety net for each other?

Functioning Group

These exercises are intended to help the group interact properly and facilitate the clarification of roles and the discovery of common goals. Rules and principles created together for the cooperation of the group help frame the activities and some of the exercises pertain to creating them as well as understanding their significance.

Self-knowledge exercises facilitate the reinforcement of self-image, confidence, and self-esteem and allow the participants to see themselves and their actions through the eyes of others.

Emotional exercises are used to learn how to identify, control, and regulate personal emotions and the related reactions. They also build courage, daring, and the ability to express personal opinions, make choices, and cope with disappointments.

Communication exercises can be used to improve interaction within the group and to emphasize its importance.

Providing and receiving feedback also requires practice. Before conducting **feedback exercises**, you should discuss the principles of providing constructive feedback with the group and think of ways to ensure that the provided feedback makes the recipient feel positive. You should also discuss the differences between feedback provided anonymously or under your name, as well as face to face and confidential feedback.

Teamwork doesn't always go like clockwork. An anxious mood, fatigue, and irritation as well as reduced motivation or disagreements may make it harder to work together. In this case, the **problem-solving exercises** may be helpful, together with physical activities that help release negative energy. In turn, **relaxation exercises** create a calm and relaxed atmosphere by providing the opportunity to think about something completely different for a while. They can also be used to set a pleasant mood for spending time together.



Cooperation and Objective Exercises

Exercises:

Unknown team sport | Physical relay | Superpowers | Faulty factory | Brainstorm | Team image | Logo and name | Miracle | Ball toss | What to pack on a trip? | Jigsaw puzzle | Chain of movement | Rope pulling with friends | Strong chain | Joint story | Shared home | Blind jigsaw | Joint drawing | Magic carpet | Depicting a story | Five feet, seven hands | Harmony | Belonging to a group | Group roles | Body letters | Electric fence
Triple squat | Counting together

Unknown team sport

Group: at least 6
Duration: 10–15 minutes

Other things to consider: Requires plenty of room, such as a gym or an area outside. This exercise is suitable for a lively and energetic group and requires the instructor's full commitment to work. Background music or sounds may be helpful!

Divide the group into two teams. The teams begin to play against each other in the spirit of basketball or football, for example (without a ball or goals), without the players knowing the rules of the game. The purpose is to spur and encourage the members of your team and to always support your team. Gradually, unspoken, maybe even silly rules begin to emerge (for example, when someone jumps, the others squat), at which point successes are cheered. The rules do not have to become clear during the game.

The important thing is to support your teammates in everything they do. The instructor encourages and inspires the players, gives instructions, and stops the game when appropriate. You should point out that

the aim is to commit to the game, not to understand the "rules"; most likely no one will really know what is happening in the game.

What thoughts did the exercise bring up? How did you feel? Were you encouraged? How well did your team work together? What rules did you come up with and were they the same for everyone? How did it feel to throw yourself into the game? How did you feel when you didn't know the rules but still had to act? What did you learn about working as a group?

Physical relay

Group: no restriction, teams of 3–10 people
Duration: 15–30 minutes depending on the length of the course and group size
Equipment: scrubbing brushes, balloons, matchboxes, sugar cubes, tea spoons or similar

Other things to consider: Plan out the track or course in advance.

Divide the group into teams, each of which chooses a method of movement. The options could include, for example, crawling, hopping on one leg, piggyback rides or using a piece of equipment (such as scrubbing brushes attached to feet, balloons carried between the members, etc.). When the teams are ready, the instructor explains that their objective is to go around the track using the method they have chosen. The fastest team wins. The exercise can be complicated further by having the teammates transfer something from one member to another: a matchbox top from one nose to another, a sugar cube from a spoon held in the mouth to another, etc.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to choose your method without knowing its purpose? Was everyone included in the selection? How did your team cooperate as you moved? How did the competition affect the team's operation? What did you learn about working as a group? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to completing your project?

Superpowers

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes or more depending on the size of the group

The group members walk around the room at a relaxed pace. Anyone can name a superpower they would like to have, for example: "I would like to be able to fly!" The other members will then act as that superpower, by lifting the person up in the air, for example. If someone would want to stop time, the others stop where they are like statues. If someone would eliminate all the diseases in the world, the others can act like patients becoming well, etc. The powers are only limited by the imagination, and they can also be funny ones. The same powers may be used more than once. The key is to realize each member's superpower in some way.

What thoughts did the exercise evoke in you? Was it difficult to think what you would do? How did it feel to gain your superpower? How did it feel to help someone else? How did it feel to be helped? How well did the helpers work together?

Faulty factory

Group: no restrictions, 5 person groups
Duration: 15 minutes
Equipment: paper, pens

The purpose of the exercise is to learn to plan and brainstorm together. The exercise encourages uncritical pitching of ideas: there are no bad ideas. Even if some idea is not viable in itself, it may lead to something else that is.

The group is divided into teams of five. The teams are tasked with helping a factory owner in a bind: due to a faulty process, the assembly line has produced 100,000 glass bowls without a bottom (or combs without spikes, leaky paper cups, etc.). The teams have to come up with as many new applications for the products as possible, with the intention of selling them, preferably at a decent price. The teams have 10 minutes to think of ideas. At the end, the ideas are presented to the other teams.

What did you think about the exercise? How well did your team cooperate? What was your favorite of the other teams' ideas? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Brainstorm

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 15–20 minutes
Equipment: paper, pens

This exercise can be used as a warmup for planning a project. The group writes down everything brought to mind by the keywords of their project/group in the form of a mind map (for example, if the group is planning a riding club, they write down thoughts related to the words riding and club). There are no incorrect or useless thoughts, and even the ones that may seem boring or self-evident are recorded. The purpose is to produce as many ideas as possible. In closing, review the recorded ideas, provide reasons, and continue the discussion.

What were the strongest emerging themes? What was the most distinct/surprising/interesting point of view?



Team image

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: plenty of pictures, postcards or other images

The instructor asks each member to choose a picture that best describes the group. When the pictures have been chosen, each member explains their decision and what they see in the picture. You can also ask the group members to choose pictures that describe the future or the goal of the group, for example.

Logo and name

Group: no restrictions
Equipment: paper, pens

The group comes up with a name for itself and designs a logo that reflects the group. The exercise allows your imagination to fly and the intention is that everyone takes part in the process. Small groups can design their own logo ideas, which are then put to a vote. This allows everyone to participate.

The logo may be designed on paper or using a computer.

Miracle

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes

Imagine that a miracle has happened: overnight one of your desires or goals has become a reality or a problem has disappeared. Each member of the group explains how you can tell that the miracle has occurred. In describing the miracle, they also portray the change.

How much time and effort is each person ready to spend on realizing the change? What other resources could each person harness for the change? What could be done now to implement the change? What could be the first step toward the change, what about the second, the third, and so on?

Ball toss

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: ball(s) or balloon(s)

The group stands in a circle. The group throws around an actual/imaginary ball at a fast pace. Before throw-

ing, the thrower names the person the ball is thrown to. Do not drop the ball.

Variation 1: The exercise can be made more difficult by using more than one ball at the same time.

Variation 2: When throwing an imaginary object, the thrower names the object before throwing and the catcher will catch it accordingly and think of a new item to throw (there is a difference in throwing and catching a ping-pong ball, china plate or dish rag).

Variation 3: The group takes each other's hands and moves a balloon around by blowing. Hands cannot be used to touch the balloon. You can increase the number of balloons.

What did you think about the exercise? Was it difficult to keep the balloon in the air? How well did your team cooperate? How was the game affected by adding more balloons? Was it difficult to focus and notice things? And how was the game affected by the introduction of the balloon?

What to pack on a trip?

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes
Equipment: paper, pens

Each person lists 20 items they think they would need on a desert island (food and water are provided, along with wood for building a shelter). The instructor tells the group to form pairs, and the pairs will choose 15 items from both lists to take with them. Next, the players are divided into groups of four, who decide which 10 things they would take with them. If a group has well-established roles, they should be changed. For example, if someone is quite vocal, you could ask them to take on the role of a listener, aide or timekeeper for the exercise.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? Was it difficult to let go of your items in the small groups? How did you negotiate and make decisions? How did you compromise? How did your new role feel like; what elements could you apply from it? Were you satisfied with the result? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Jigsaw puzzle

Group: no restrictions, 5 person groups
Duration: 5–10 minutes
Equipment: jigsaw puzzles

The group is divided into teams of five. Each team is given a jigsaw puzzle with 20–50 pieces. Some teams are given a model image of a completed puzzle, with the pieces placed right side up on the table and divided among the members. The players can organize their pieces and the team is allowed to discuss and plan the assembly. The other teams receive the pieces placed face down in a pile (with couple of pieces missing) and they are not allowed to talk as they assemble the jigsaw. The teams compete to complete the jigsaw first.

What did you think about the exercise? How well did your team cooperate? How did it feel that the teams were given different instructions? What did you think of the missing pieces? What was the impact of not being allowed to talk? What did you think about the other teams' operation? How could you complete the task quicker? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Chain of movement

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes

The group stands in a circle. The first person performs a small movement, which the next person repeats slightly exaggerated. At the end of the circle the movement has become huge. The exaggeration should increase gradually and not shift from small to large in one step. When the movement grown massive, the next person performs a new small movement. You can also use sounds.

What did you think about the exercise? How well did your team cooperate? Has a similar “chain reaction” occurred in the operation of the group? How could this symbolize something that happens in real life (for example, massive things begin small, a small idea can produce a significant result)?

Rope pulling with friends

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 5–10 minutes
Equipment: rope

The group holds up a long rope and uses it, without speaking, to form the figures called out by the instructor (geometric or things like a car, flower, etc.) without allowing the rope to touch the ground. The entire rope must be used for the figure.

What did you think about the exercise? Was it difficult to keep the rope in the air? How well did your team cooperate? Was the exercise more difficult because speaking wasn't allowed? Did you succeed in your task? How could you complete the task quicker?

Strong chain

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes

Other things to consider: Plan out and/or create the obstacle course or track in advance.

The group forms a chain by taking each other's hands. The chain goes through the (obstacle) course with-

out breaking the chain at any point. The exercise can be extended by having a competition between two teams.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to be part of the chain? How well did your team cooperate? Was it hard to maintain the chain? How did the competition affect the team's operation? What did you learn about working as a group and taking others into consideration?

Joint story

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 10–15 minutes

One person begins to tell a story for a few sentences. The story may be interrupted at the end or even in the middle of a sentence. The next person then has to continue the story. Each person continues the story for a bit with the intention of producing a consistent narrative as much as possible. The last narrators must ensure that the story comes to a conclusion. The story will become more interesting and the task more difficult if the narrator ends their part with a surprise or something that is inconsistent with the rest of the story.

What did you think about the exercise? How did the finished story sound like? Was it easy to continue someone else's story? How well did your team cooperate?

Shared home

Group: no restrictions, 5 person groups
Duration: 30 minutes

The group is tasked with constructing a shared home for the group. The home should have a kitchen, living room, sauna, and bedroom, for example. Each member participates in the construction process and the group can use any building materials that can be found at a construction site. The group has 20 minutes. After construction, the home is presented to the others.

What did you think about the exercise? How did the construction feel? How well did your team cooperate? Was the result as you had hoped? What would you have done differently? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Blind jigsaw

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: jigsaw, scarves

The group divides into pairs. One partner acts as the hand and the other as the eyes. The eyes of the people acting as hands are covered with blindfolds and their task is to assemble a jigsaw puzzle. Each of them is given a single piece of the puzzle. The hands have to put the piece in the right place based on the instructions provided by the eyes. The eyes can plan out how to instruct the hands and how to cooperate with each other, but they can only guide the hands verbally.

The goal is to complete the jigsaw following the instructions of the eyes. The exercise can also be carried out as a competition between two teams.

What did you think about the exercise? How hard was it to place the pieces correctly? How did it feel to act as the eyes and to instruct? How did it feel to act as the hand and to be instructed? How well did the eyes cooperate with each other?

How well did the hands cooperate with each other? What helped the cooperation? What made it more difficult? Who took the lead in the situation? What

types of roles emerged in the group? Who did what? Why do you think that happened? How did the competition element affect the exercise?

Joint drawing

Group: no restrictions, teams of approx. 5 people
Duration: approximately 15 minutes
Equipment: paper, pens, finger paint

Take a large sheet of paper on which each person draws in turn. The instructor times each turn, for example 1 minute per drawer. You can agree in advance how many turns will be used to draw the picture together.

The first person begins the drawing. When time is up, they stop, and the next person takes over. It doesn't matter if the previous drawer doesn't finish, as the next person is tasked with continuing the drawing. Each person continues the drawing for a bit with the intention of producing a consistent image. The exercise will become more fun and challenging if the drawer comes up with surprising elements.

The exercise can also be carried out on a large sheet of paper placed on a table. The group members spread

around the table and circle the paper at their own pace without talking, adding elements to the drawing as they see fit. You can play music on the background. The result is a large work of art produced together. **Tip!** You can tape several A3 sheets together to make a larger sheet of paper.

What did you think about the exercise? What did the finished picture look like? Was it easy to continue someone else's drawing? How well did your team cooperate?

Magic carpet

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: plastic sheets or carpets

The instructor places sheets, large scarves or similar items on the floor as carpets, one per approx. 10 people. The group stands on the carpet. The group's task is to flip the carpet over without stepping off it. The group must work together and hold on to each other to complete the task.

What did you think about the exercise? Was it difficult to remain on the carpet? How well did your team cooperate? How could you complete the task quicker?

Depicting a story

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 15–20 minutes

One group member starts to tell a story they have made up and the other people begin to depict it by improvising. The performers can be characters, trees, houses, furniture or any item or prop in the story, and change roles as the story continues.

What did you think about the exercise? Was it easy to act out someone else's story? How did the others' performance of your story look like? How well did your team cooperate? Did everyone get to play a role they liked?

Five feet, seven hands

Group: no restrictions, 6 person groups
Duration: 15 minutes

The groups form various statues based on the instructor's directions, for example: "Five feet and three hands touch the ground" or "Three feet, two arms, and one bottom touch the ground". The in-

structor must approve the formed statue before it can be dismantled.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? How well did your team cooperate? How could you have completed the task quicker? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Harmony

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10 minutes

The group spreads around the room. Each member chooses two people in their head and tries to find a spot that is equidistant from both. There will be a lot of movement in the group, as everyone tries to find their place at the same time. Gradually, the group will find their places creating a state of harmony.

What did you think about the exercise? How did you feel searching for your spot? How well was everyone able to find their place? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Belonging to a group

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10 minutes
Equipment: sticky notes, pens

The instructor has drawn various figures on sticky notes in advance. The number of figures varies, with only a single copy of some. The instructor places a note on the forehead of each player. The group has to form small groups based on the figures without talking. When everyone has found their place (some remain alone), discuss the basis for grouping.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? What was the impact of not being allowed to talk? How well did your team cooperate? Can you decide for yourself whether to join or belong to a group (in this exercise and in life)? How much influence do other people have on the group you belong to (do others make conclusions based on external factors, for example?) How does it feel to be included in or rejected from a group? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Group roles

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 45 minutes

The instructor asks the youths to think in small groups the type of roles that can emerge in a project or a club for example. Use a whiteboard to write down the roles. Next, everyone thinks about their roles in different groups.

What type of roles come up? Are there others? How are these roles created? Do the roles change? Is it easy to let go of a role? Is it easy to let someone else let go of their role? Has someone been placed into an unpleasant role? Is everyone happy with the roles that have emerged in this group?

Bodyletters

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes

The group forms letters using their whole bodies (two people can also form a letter together). The group can spell the names of each member, each alphabet in order or small groups can try to guess each other's words.

Electric fence

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes
Equipment: cord

The instructor stretches a cord between two trees, for example. An imaginary electric charge goes through the cord, which means that it cannot be touched. Each member of the group has to go over the cord and only the other members can be used for help. After a person has crossed over, they cannot return to the other side and even the last person has to be helped over the cord without touching or cutting the cord.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? How did you decide who would be last person to go over? How well did your team cooperate? How could you have completed the task quicker? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Triple squat

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10 minutes

The group stands in a circle. Three people squat down while the others remain standing. When one of the

people squatting stands up, someone else squats down. The aim of the exercise is to keep changing the squatters change constantly and fluently. The entire group must work together to ensure that only three people squat down at any time.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? How well did your team cooperate? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Counting together

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10 minutes

The group stands in a circle and lists the numbers 1–20 with only one person speaking at any time. Everyone calls out a number when they feel like it without a specific order. If two people say a number at the same time, start over.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? How well did your team cooperate? How could you have completed the task quicker? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?



MAHIS

Self-knowledge Exercises

Exercises:

Dreaming | Tag | This is me | Personality | Johari window | Things in order | Strength trade
Happy life | Factions | Marketplace of self

Dreaming

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 30 minutes
Equipment: paper and pens

The youths think of and write down their most important and less important dreams five years ago, now, and five years from now.

Do dreams change according to age? In what ways? Why? Are the dreams of the group members similar? On what basis have the youths divided their dreams into important and less important ones? What creates “small candles in the dark”, i.e. what little things in our everyday lives can make us happy and keep us going?

Tag

Group: 10 people (larger groups are divided)
Duration: 30 minutes
Equipment: markers, paper, magazines

Each youth draws a tag or logo that symbolizes their life. The logo or tag is explained to the group, a partner or the instructor. For example, you can explain what the logo symbolizes or what its message is. This

exercise helps to contemplate how the youths see their own lives.

This is me

Group: 10 people (larger groups are divided)
Duration: 30 minutes
Equipment: a stack of pictures

The instructor places a pack of stimulus cards or, for example, a stack of pictures of people from post-cards or magazines. Each youth chooses four images that describe them

1. Before school age
2. Now
3. As an adult
4. As elderly

Everyone places their images in front of them for others to see and says something about them. The instructor asks specifying questions and helps the youths to see positive aspects and to create belief in the future.

Personality

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 30 minutes
Equipment: small cards with a personality trait written on each

The instructor hands out three cards randomly to each person. The youths look at the cards to see which cards match them and which do not. The instructor tells the youths to trade cards with others to get ones that are a better match. The trading continues for the agreed period of time. The trading requires moving around, getting to know other people, and conversations. When each person has three cards that best describe them, the group gathers in a circle and everyone uses the card to describe themselves to the group.

Johari window

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 45 minutes
Equipment: template of the Johari Window for each (see below)

The purpose of this exercise is to allow us to see the complexity of our self and the fact that we may sometimes see ourselves differently than others do.

The instructor gives each person their own chart and asks them to write sentences into the boxes titled **known me** and **secret me**. The youths work independently in silence for 10–15 minutes, after which they pair up with people they know. Each pair quietly fills in **the me seen by others** square in each other's papers. Next, the pairs show the descriptions they have written for each other and compare them with their own. Last, each person also fills in **the unknown me** square.

Was it easy to describe yourself? What was easy/difficult? Was some square more challenging than others? How did the description written by the other person differ from yours? Were there any surprises?

The known me

- The me that is known to me and others, the me that people close to me know
- Our way of acting, thinking, and responding to things.
- How am I in my own opinion?

The secret me

- The me that is known to me but concealed from others.
- The things and emotions we don't want to reveal to others, such as anxiousness, fear, depression
- What don't I want others to know?

The me seen by others

- The me that others see but I myself am blind to, for example, constant talking, jealousy, silence.
- How do my acquaintances and friends describe

The unknown me

- The part of me that I don't know but neither do others.

Things in order

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 20 minutes
Equipment: paper and pens

The instructor tells each youth to fold a sheet of paper in half three times. When the paper is opened, the creases will show eight squares. Into each square, the youths write an important thing they want the group or themselves to achieve during the group's existence. The youths are given approximately 5 minutes to write.

Next, the papers are torn or cut along the creases to make separate slips. The youths place the slips in a line in front of them. Next, everyone follows along as the instructor says "One, two, three – remove/tear up a slip". This is repeated at a quick pace until each youth has just one slip remaining. This is their most important objective. Go around the room, allowing everyone the chance to say what objective they kept and why. The theme of this exercise can also be values, choice of career, relationships, dreams, etc.

Strength trade

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes

Each person thinks about their strengths and areas of development in relation to the group activity. What can I give to this group? What would I want from the others? Next, everyone pairs up with a person sitting next to them and trades using their various qualities. Each takes a turn being the customer and the merchant. The personal strengths are used as a means of payment to purchase desired qualities from the other person.

For example: a customer wants to buy two meters of strong nerves. The merchant will ask what the customer will use to pay for their purchase. The customer offers imagination as payment. The merchant agrees to sell two meters of strong nerves for three liters of creativity. The roles are switched at some point.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? Did you find things to buy and sell? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Happy life

Group: groups of 4–5 youths
Duration: 45 minutes
Equipment: A3 sheet of paper for each group, markers

The instructor divides the youths into groups. Each group discusses what a good life would be as a 25-year-old or 55-year-old, for example. What does it entail, what does it consist of? The groups write the down the signs of a good life at the top of the paper. Next, the groups write down instructions for achieving a good life.

What has to happen or what do you have to do to achieve a happy life? Whose help will you need along the way? What choices do you have to make? The groups present their lives and phases of life to the others.

What did you think about the exercise? Was it difficult to work together to formulate a happy life? Was it easy to picture the road to happiness? How will you check every now and then whether you are on the right path toward your happy life?

Factions

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 20–30 minutes

The instructor lists different group roles: leader, listener, questioner, conformist, etc. The corners of the room are named after these roles and the members of the group are told to go to the corner that they feel most typifies them within this group. Each faction discusses their role and its good and bad aspects.

What does the person in that role do? What is typical to them? What are the good and bad aspects of the role? Is the role your typical role? If not, what role do you normally assume? Why do you have a different role in this group? If your role is the same as usual, are you willing to try other roles? Why? When and how could you try out another role? The instructor talks to each group together about their role and its good and bad aspects. After the joint discussion, the instructor tells everyone to move to another corner based on the behavior they would like to try or develop in themselves. Once again, the new factions talk about the good and bad aspects of their role.

Marketplace of self

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes
Equipment: hat or similar, slips of paper with personality traits

Each person takes five slips from the hat, each with a single personality trait. The slips are traded with others to find traits are a good match for yourself (three suitable traits, for example). Next, you can continue the trading to let everyone try to acquire traits they would like to have (more of).

What did you think about the exercise? Was it easy to find your traits / the traits you would like to have? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project? In closing, it is advisable to discuss the various traits, personal choices, etc. Different personalities are suited for different tasks: everyone is needed in the group!



MAHIS

Emotional Exercises

Exercises:

Help | Ocean of emotions | Who's afraid of the bogeyman? | Decide for yourself! | Wing it | How does it feel?

Help

- Group:** a maximum of 10 youths, suitable for a group that already knows each other
- Duration:** 30 minutes
- Equipment:** paper, markers

The youths think about how they act when they are having a tough time or are depressed. What is helpful in that situation? Who can help you? The instructor asks the youths to write down helpful resources alone, in pairs or as a group (if everyone feels safe in the group). The helpful resources are discussed together.

What is the most common resource? Are all resources good? Always? For everyone? What was helpful when you were under school age? What would be helpful for adults? Where can you get help if you feel that you don't have enough resources? Does everyone have an adult they can talk to when they are feeling down? How can you know that your friend is feeling down or having a tough time? Can someone look happy but still be depressed? What type of help has provided

relief for you? Have you been able to help someone else? How can you support a friend? What can you do when the other person does not want to accept help? What can you do if you are unable to help a friend?

Ocean of emotions

- Group:** a maximum of 20 youths
- Duration:** First time takes approx. 30 minutes. Afterward, the exercise can be used throughout the group's existence
- Equipment:** Blue fabric, cardboard, old cardboard packages or boxes, and markers etc. for building the ocean and boats.

The instructor has prepared the ocean of emotions from fabric, cardboard or crêpe paper, for example. The ocean can be built on top of a large table or on the wall in a smaller room. The instructor creates islands in the ocean that represent different emotions using

cardboard of another color, for example. The ocean and the islands can also be created together. The instructor asks each member of the group to build a small ship for themselves, on which they write their name. The idea is that the players place their boat on the island that best represents their emotional state. You can create more islands if a player cannot find an island that represents their emotional state. When all ships have been placed, the group gathers around the ocean. The instructor asks the players to explain why they have chosen their specific islands.

It should be explained that all emotions are allowed, the other players' emotions cannot be judged, and speaking about your emotions is voluntary. The players can move their ship whenever they want.

Variations: The ocean of emotions can also be used for debriefing other exercises or at the beginning or end of a meeting as a mood round. The ocean can also be created digitally, as a Padlet wall, for example (padlet.com).

Who's afraid of the bogeyman?

Group: a maximum of 10 youths, suitable for a group that already knows each other

Duration: 45 minutes

Equipment: paper, markers

Working together, the youths think about things that can be frightening to children. Place sheets of paper on the floor or a table, on which you write down the things that come up. Also leave a few blank sheets in view. The youths stand next to the paper that represents their biggest childhood fear. If their fear isn't listed, they can write theirs on a blank sheet.

In a familiar group, you can ask the youths who chose the same fear to discuss it. You can also ask them what the fear was related to and how they overcame it as children.

What does the word fear bring to mind? Was it hard to remember your fears? Was it difficult to talk about your fears? Was it easy to understand the childhood fears of others? When were you last afraid? How did you overcome it? What helped? How can you learn to control your fears?

Decide for yourself!

Group: 20 youths

Duration: 60 minutes

This exercise is used to learn how to resist social pressure. The instructor asks the youths to think of situations with significant social pressure. If the group is large or largely unknown to each other, the situations are first discussed in smaller groups. The situations are presented to the others and one or more of them are chosen for further processing. The youths consider the situations with the instructor or use dramatic means to establish how to act in that situation. How can the youth act according to their personal values and the rules learned at the home or in school? If the youths cannot think of such situations, they can consider what to do in the following events:

1. Your friend offers you a pill. How can you say no to the offer? How will you justify it? How can you stay firm if someone else takes one? If you are pressured, what will you do?
2. People around you are smoking weed. What will

you do if it is offered to you? How can you justify your position if necessary? How can you stick to your decision? If the issue leads to a fuss, what will you do?

Where/who does the pressure to conform come from? Why? Is it always present? Do the situations in the examples seem possible? Does your attitude/mood affect the creation of pressure?

Which skills/characteristics do you need to handle such situations? (Practice, reinforce skills with the group) Who has these skills (imaginary characters, animals, etc.)?

Wing it

Group: 20 youths
Duration: 45 minutes
Equipment: slips of paper, markers, a hat

The group sits around in a circle. A hat is placed upside down in the middle of the circle. The instructor asks a question that is related to the group's theme or general moral dilemma (such as drugs, attitudes toward immigrants or poverty). Each member of the group answers the question by writing their response on a slip of paper. All slips are placed into the hat. When each person's answer is in the hat, the instructor sends the hat around. Each person takes a slip, reads the response out loud, and says what it makes them think. Does the reader agree with the responder? You should use questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no, but instead require more consideration.

Example: "Why do so many people in Finland have to turn to food banks?" or "What do I think about the situation of immigrant families in Finland?". This exercise allows even the quieter members of the group to express their opinions and thoughts anonymously.

How does it feel?

Group: approx. 20 youths max.
Duration: 30 minutes
Equipment: A4 sheets of paper, markers

The instructor asks the youths to write down a long list of words that express emotions. Next, the youths will pair up and think of difficult situations or events that have bothered them. What happened? What was difficult, unpleasant, etc.? Who was involved in the situation? When the situations have been recalled (by acting, for example), the pairs find as many words as possible on their list that describe the emotion related to that situation for themselves and the other people involved.

What did you think of the exercise? What type of emotions related to the difficult situations? Was it easy to identify the emotions? Was it difficult to think about the emotions of other people? How will the exercise affect the next difficult situation?



MAHIS

Communication Exercises

Exercises:

Active listening | Stick dance | Moving mirror | Relay the story | Identify the emotion | Circle
Expression mirror | In your own words | Limited speech | Culture clash | Four-stage rocket

Active listening

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 10 minutes

This exercise can also be carried out by one of the youths saying a sentence out loud. The next youth repeats it in their own words and adds one new thing. Each person repeats the previous sentence and adds something. This teaches active listening.

Stick dance

Group: no restrictions, even number

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Equipment: matchsticks, music

Stage 1: The instructor tells the youths to pair up. The pairs place a single matchstick between their index fingers and move in time with the music without dropping it. If the matchstick falls, the pair steps aside. The purpose is to find a common rhythm and movement. The exercise should be done without speaking.

Stage 2: The entire group holds matchsticks between their fingers and moves in time with the music.

What did you think about the exercise? Was it difficult to keep the matchsticks in place? How well did your team cooperate? Was it easy to find a common rhythm?

Moving mirror

Group: no restrictions, an even number

Duration: 15 minutes

Equipment: music

Everyone pairs up and stands opposite each other. Pick which partner leads. When music plays, the leader starts moving their hands, for example, and their partner mirrors them. The movement may increase and also expand to the legs, head, torso, and throughout the body. Finally, the players move around the room mirroring both the movement and distance of their partner. The roles are switched at some point. In the third stage, both partners try to move uniformly with neither leading / both partners leading at the same time. The instructor should point out that the movements should be slow, continuous, and simple enough to ensure that mirroring is possible.

Relay the story

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15 minutes

Five members of the group go into another room and a story is read to the others. The first person comes back to the room and someone recounts the story for them from memory. Then the next person is called in and the first entrant in turn recounts the story from memory. When everyone has come back to the room and heard the story, the original story is read once more. How much of the original remains?

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task difficult? How could you improve communication? How could it become clearer? How could this exercise be utilized for your project? Why won't a recipient always get the desired message?

Identify the emotion

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 10 minutes

The youths form pairs or small groups. One person talks about a subject with an emotion that is opposite to it (i.e. speak happily about a sad thing) and the others try to guess their emotional state. The instructor can also tell the listeners to empathize with the speaker's emotion physically with gestures, expressions, and sounds, such as sighs or yelling. At some point, the speaker is switched.

Circle

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 20 minutes

Place chairs opposite each other to form an inner and outer circle. The group members sit on the chairs. The task is to add to the sentence given by the instructor as many times as possible in the allotted time (for example 45 seconds). The inner circle begins. The outer circle uses their active listening skills

to demonstrate that they are listening by only using their demeanor. When time is up, it is the outer circle's turn to add to a different sentence from the instructor while the inner circle listens.

After this, the inner circle moves one chair to the left for a new partner. The outer circle begins to add to the sentence provided by the instructor for their partner. When both partners have spoken, the outer circle moves one chair to the left to listen to a new partner.

Example sentences: I like/I am fond of..., I don't like/I hate..., I feel lonely/sad when..., I feel glad/happy when..., I want/I hope..., In myself, I appreciate/like...

What did you think about the exercise? Is it difficult to talk about your emotions? How could this exercise be utilized for your project? How could you improve your listening skills?

This exercise can also be used for familiarization.

Expression mirror

Group: no restrictions, an even number

Duration: 10 minutes

The youths pair up. The pairs stand opposite and look each other in the eyes. The exercise is done without speaking.

Each partner simultaneously mirrors the other's facial expressions and movements, repeating even small blinks and twitches in an exaggerated manner. At first, you shouldn't make faces intentionally, as the purpose is to find small, unnoticeable expressions and mimic them. Gradually the expressions become larger as the mirroring continues, and eventually both partners are in sync. The exercise may also be extended to movements. The instructor should remind the youths that neither partner is intentionally leading the exercise, and instead both are specifically mirroring the other.



In your own words

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes

The group members pair up and stand opposite each other. The instructor tells them to agree on a theme on which both partners speak for one minute. You can also give the same topic for all pairs, for example: "What happened to me this morning" or "What I hope to gain from this project group". Before speaking, each person can have a moment to think about what they are going to say. One partner begins and the other focuses on listening actively. The speaker cannot be interrupted, but they can be encouraged by nodding, for example. After a minute, the listener repeats what they heard in their own words in 30 seconds. Now, the first speaker cannot interrupt or correct the story. Next, the roles are changed.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to tell a story? How did it feel to explain what you heard? Was it easy to distil what you heard? Did the other's summary correspond to the original story or was the message changed? Were you good listeners? How could you improve your listening skills? What did you learn?

Limited speech

Group: 3–4
Duration: 15 minutes
Equipment: sticky notes

Each group member gets five sticky notes to represent their turns to speak. The instructor tells the groups to discuss something related to the day's theme for 10 minutes, for example. The participants do not have to keep time as the instructor will announce when time is up. Each time a person speaks, they put away one of their notes. When a person has used all of their notes and thus turns, they will focus on listening to others. This exercise can help you ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak if they wish. The players don't have to use all of their sticky notes.

What did you think about the exercise? Did you use your notes quickly or slowly? How did it feel to be part of the discussion without notes? What did you learn?

Culture clash

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes

Two people leave the room while the others agree on their "culture's" rules, for example: questions are answered yes or no; if the questioner smiles say yes, otherwise no. The people from the outside try to communicate with the others and decipher the rules of the culture.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task difficult? What is the impact of different cultures and rules at school and in this group, for example? How could this exercise be utilized for your project? How could you improve communication and interaction?

Four-stage rocket

Group: no restrictions, 6 person groups

Duration: 20 minutes

Equipment: paper, pens, a hat or similar

This exercise directs the group members to pay attention to four important skills that can help initiate a conversation. Choose a suitable topic for a group of 6–7 people (for example, something related to a lesson). Where helpful, the groups can include 1–2 people observing the conversation.

1. Distillation: The groups discuss the agreed topic for 5 minutes. One member monitors that each person talks for a maximum of 15 seconds at a time.
2. Listening: the timekeeper changes and the discussion continues for 5 minutes. Each turn is still limited to 15 seconds. New rule: each person must wait 3 seconds before beginning their turn.

3. Repeating in your own words: the timekeeper changes and the discussion continues as previously. New rule: before your turn, you have to summarize the previous speaker's statement briefly in your own words.

4. Everyone's included: The timekeeper changes and the discussion continues as previously. New rule: No one is allowed a second turn before each person has spoken at least once.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? What was the hardest part? How could this exercise be utilized for your project? How could you improve your conversational skills?



MAHIS

Feedback Exercises

Exercises:

Figure out the sentence | Hat circle | Titles of the year | Heart on your back | Feedback mail

Figure out the sentence

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15–30 minutes

The instructor tells the group to come up with a theme or topic related to the group's task or activity. A volunteer leaves the room while the others formulate a sentence that person should say. The volunteer is called back in and the improvisation begins. Everyone participates in acting out the situation. The purpose is to go over the agreed situation until the volunteer has said the chosen phrase as their line. The other group members help the volunteer to figure out the sentence by hinting toward it with their lines.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the task easy? How did you figure out the correct sentence? How well did your team cooperate? How could you have completed the task quicker? How could you apply the lessons from this exercise to your project?

Hat circle

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 20 minutes

Equipment: paper, pens, a hat or similar

This exercise helps you learn how to receive feedback. The group comes up with fictional positive, neutral, and negative feedback, which is formed into sentences. Next, one person goes into the middle of the circle and a few others pick up slips and read the feedback out loud. The person in the middle reacts either based on how the feedback makes them feel or in a manner agreed in advance (belittling themselves, aggressively, indifferently, self-congratulatorily, inquisitively, etc.)

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to receive feedback? How should critical feedback be received? How can you learn from it? What is good feedback?

Titles of the year

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15 minutes

This exercise can be used toward the end of the group's operation.

It can be carried out on paper or orally. Working in pairs or small groups, each person is given a "Title of the Year" based on things the members have shown particular enthusiasm toward, such as the Comedian, the Conscience, the Social Media Influencer or the Optimist of the Year. The titles can also be funny, but you should remind the youths that they have to be positive.

You should ensure that each youth receives a title, which can also be the same for several people.

Heart on your back

Group: 25 max.
Duration: 30 minutes
Equipment: paper, markers

The papers are cut into the shape of a heart and attached to each person's back. The instructor tells the youths to write positive feedback on everyone else's back. The feedback must pertain to acting as a member of the group and working on the project. This is continued until each person has given feedback to everyone else. The hearts are removed from the backs and everyone reads their feedback. In turn, each person shares how the feedback sounds like. If something is surprising or not understood by the recipient, they can ask questions and the writer will explain what they meant.

What did you think about the exercise? What did it feel like to receive feedback? Was it easy to give feedback in this manner? Why? What about receiving? What is good feedback? Did you identify the attributes as your own?

Feedback mail

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15 minutes
Equipment: envelopes, pens, paper, tape

The instructor places a stack of envelopes on the floor, each with the name of a group member. Everyone writes positive things about the other people on slips of paper which are then placed into their intended envelopes. Next, the envelopes are handed out to their owners. You can discuss in advance whether to include the writer's name on the notes. You can also agree that each person reads one feedback out loud and the writer explains why they wrote it. The instructor should ensure that everyone gets positive feedback.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to receive positive feedback? Was it easy/nice to give feedback?



MAHIS

Problem-solving Exercises

Exercises:

Knot | Different teams | Sectors | The obstacle is a river

Knot

Group: no restrictions, 10 person groups
Duration: 15–20 minutes depending on the size

If your project becomes a tangled mess, you can concretize it by twisting your group into a knot.

Option 1: The group stands closely together with shoulders touching. Everyone closes their eyes and brings their arms into the middle, taking hold of someone else's hand (the players should not grab their neighbor's hand, and they should avoid crossing their arms). When the instructor has made sure that each person has another person's hand in each of theirs, the group opens their eyes and begins to untangle the knot without letting go. Hands may be repositioned without changing the hold.

Option 2: The group can also form a knot by holding hands and stepping over and under each other. Hands must be kept together. Two people step away while the group forms a knot, and then try to untangle overhand knot as they return.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to be in a knot? How well did your team cooperate? How could this be applied to the tangle in your project?

Different teams

Group: 9–18 participants
Duration: 20–30 minutes
Equipment: a suitable crafting task and supplies

The instructor divides the group into three teams. Each team is given the same assignment, for example a crafting task. The teams have different roles and they complete the assignment according to their specified roles. The instructor does not interfere. The exercise ends when the task is finished or the instructor steps in. The members of the first team are dutiful and thorough. They want to perform their task as well and correctly as possible, and they stay calm throughout. The second team also wants to perform well. They have a strong sense of justice and stand up for their rights. The third team are troublemakers, who want to complete their task by any means necessary.

What did you think about the exercise? Was the situation familiar from real life? How did it feel to assume a role? Was it natural for you? What did the other teams' actions look like? Were you annoyed by them? What type of roles exist in the group and in life in general? How do those roles affect your ac-

tions and those of others? Where useful, you can change the groups' roles for the next task or move one person from each group to another.

Sectors

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: paper

This exercise can be used to reflect on the themes related to the operation of the group.

Draw a circle with several sectors on the ground. Write keywords relating to the topic at hand in the sectors. Each person stands next to a sector based on the keyword they feel is the most important one.

The theme processed using the circle could, for example, be the group's most significant challenges (keywords: fear, unfamiliarity, boredom, pressure, arguments...) or strengths (safety, cooperation, humor, inventiveness...).

What did you think about the exercise? Was it easy to choose a sector? Did the other people's choices influence yours? How could this be applied to your project?

The obstacle is a river

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15–30 minutes

During a project, you may encounter a problem or obstacle. When you seem to be out of options and come up against the wall, find a positive solution by asking yourself and your team the following questions: What is the obstacle like? Define the obstacle and think of its impact. How to face or go around, under or over the obstacle? What are the consequences of each option? Why does the obstacle exist? Together, you can define various obstacles and think of their impact.

If the obstacle is a threshold: What steps are required to set your foot on it? How do you prepare for those steps? What waits you on the other side?

If the obstacle is an opportunity: How does it enable the progress of the project? What about its success?

If the obstacle is a fast-flowing river: How can you reach the other side? How do you prepare to cross it? How does the crossing help the project further?



MAHIS

Energy Release and Relaxation Exercises

Exercises:

5 chairs to the right | Catch the snap | Knee tag | Zip-zap-zog

Chain tag | Sense circles | Three things | Relaxation

5 chairs to the right

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Equipment: a chair for each player

The group sits on chairs in a circle. The person designated as captain closes their eyes and sits in the middle of the circle. Their task is to call out instructions, such as: "Everyone wearing white moves 5 chairs to the left." Others remain where they are. Players may sit on each other's laps and several people can sit on one chair. Instructions are called until the instructor ends the game.

Catch the snap

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–10 minutes

Players stand in a circle. The instructor snaps their fingers while pretending to throw something in the air. The recipient catches the "snap" and mimes throwing it further within the circle. Players can use sound effects and physical exaggeration is allowed and even desirable! If the instructor throws

themselves into the game fully, the other players will also be more committed. If a player cannot snap their fingers, they can pretend to snap. The snap can also be replaced by a handclap or some other gesture. The players can also move around while throwing.

Knee tag

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5 minutes

First phase: The players pair up and stand facing each other at a distance of approximately 50 cm. The players use their hands to protect their knees. The objective is to hit the other person's unprotected knee with your hand as many times as possible. To be able to slap the other person's knee, you must leave your own knee unprotected. The game should only continue for approx. 30 seconds.

Second phase: The players move around trying to slap any other player's knees. This phase is also continued for approx. 30 seconds.

Zip-zap-zog

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–10 minutes

The players stand in a circle. One player claps their hands together while looking someone in the eye and says "zip". The recipient continues by clapping their hands at someone and saying "zap". The next person continues by clapping and saying "zog". The recipient starts over by saying "zip" and sends a clap to someone else.

It is important to remain alert as a clap can come from anyone at any time. At the same time the players must remember to maintain the correct order: zip, zap, zog, zip, zap, zog, etc.

If someone says the wrong syllable or doesn't notice a clap sent to them, they receive a short round of applause and start the next round. When the players' concentration improves, you can increase the speed.



Chain tag

Group: works better with a large group

Duration: 10 minutes

Other things to consider: Requires a lot of room, such as a gym or an area outside.

Designate one person to try to catch the others. When the catcher tags someone, they grab each other's hands and continue the chase as a pair. When either of them tags the next person, the chain grows. When the chain has 4 or 6 catchers, it splits in two, and both pairs or trios try to catch the others. Note that only the people at the ends of a chain can tag others, and runners can try to slip through the chain. When everyone has been caught, the game restarts.

Sense circles

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15 minutes

Sit/stand/lie down in a comfortable position. In a calm voice, the instructor guides the participants to first listen to the sounds of their own bodies, then the sounds of the room, and finally the sounds from outside. The

aim is to isolate the consciousness from noise.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to listen? Was it difficult to concentrate? Did you follow others?

Three things

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 10–15 minutes

The players stand in a circle. One person starts by pointing at someone and saying: "Tell me three things about shrimp." The designated person thinks of three things about shrimp, such as: "Small, curved, frozen". Stress the fact that the things don't have to be true, the point is to say anything. Next, that person points at someone else and asks for "Three things about [subject]", etc. The topics can be mundane or significant, such as hairclips or love. The rest of the group encourages the responder to come up with the three things as quickly as possible.

The exercise can also be carried out in pairs or by expressing the things through mime.

Relaxation

Group: no restrictions

Duration: 15 minutes

The relaxation is carried out by assuming a comfortable position while peaceful music plays in the background. Everyone concentrates on themselves and clears their mind of all other things. In a calm voice, the instructor guides the participants to focus on a single body part at a time. You can go over the whole body from head to toes, sensing how heavy, warm, and relaxed each part of the body feels.

During the relaxation, you can also utilize pleasant imagery (beautiful landscapes, warm summer days, successful performances, etc.).

This exercise does not need to be debriefed, but if you want to discuss it later, you can use the following questions: How can you best relax? What prevents you from relaxing? What does touch feel like?

Concluding the Group

In terms of learning, the conclusion of the group's operation is one of the most important phases of the project. A careful completion and the final evaluation give the project an honorable conclusion. You should pay attention to the provision of feedback and ensure a clear conclusion for the operation. Commendations and farewells are also in order and contact information may be exchanged.





MAHIS

Concluding the Group

Exercises:

Candy commendations | Guard of honor | Our space | Greeting circle | Feedback game | Memories
Handprints | Work of art | Insight cards | Closing celebration

Candy commendations

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15–20 minutes depending on the size
Equipment: candy

Option 1: One person goes to the middle of the circle and thanks the entire group. The reason for the thanks is stated in concrete terms. Each person can take a turn in the middle of the ring when they feel like it. You can also take more than one turn.

Option 2: A bag of candy goes around the circle. In turn, each person gives the group positive feedback or thanks and takes a piece of candy.

Guard of honor

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–10 minutes depending on the size

The group stands in two lines facing each other approximately 2–3 meters apart. Each person takes a turn running through the guard as the others clap and cheer the runner's name.

Our space

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5 minutes

The group forms as large a circle as possible. The members can assume any position but must touch each other. Next, the group bunches up as small as possible, right next to each other.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel? How far can you go from the others? How tight is your community, how close can you get?

Greeting circle

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–10 minutes depending on the size
Equipment: music

Two nested circles walk in the opposite directions while music plays in the background. As the music stops, each player greets the person opposite.

Feedback game

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5 minutes
Equipment: playing cards

In turn, each person takes a card from the pack. Black cards are areas of development, red cards are positives, numbers 1–6 mean yourself, and 7–13 the group.

For example: the 8 of spades means that the person has to say one thing the group could have done differently or better, while the 3 of clubs means that the person has to say one thing they believe they did well or have learned during the project. The game continues for as long as the players have something to say.

What did you think about the exercise? How did it feel to receive feedback? How should critical feedback be received? How can you learn from it? What is good feedback?

Memories

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–10 minutes depending on the size

The group lies down in a circle eyes closed and heads toward the center. Each person shares a pleasant memory of the group's operation. The order does not matter, and each person may speak when they feel like it.

Handprints

Group: no restrictions
Duration: flexible
Equipment: a sheet or a large piece of paper, finger paint, markers

As the operation is concluded, each person gets to leave their handprint as a sign of participation in the group.

Each member covers their hand with finger paint and presses a handprint on a large sheet. The prints are signed using a marker. The resulting sheet can be hung on the wall of the room you have shared, and everyone can also take a picture of it as a reminder.

The handprints can also be done at the beginning of the operation to form an image of "our team".

Work of art

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 15–20 minutes depending on the size

Paint, sculpt or create a performance, for example, on how the shared activity felt and seemed like, and what it gave to you. Each person can explain their artwork if they wish.

Insight cards

Group: no restrictions
Duration: 5–20 minutes depending on the size
Equipment: idea cards or other picture cards

The instructor places the cards on the table and asks each person to pick a card that represents the significance of the group for personal insights and learning experiences. In turn, each person speaks about their card and insight.

Closing celebration

Together with the group, arrange a closing party during the last meeting, for example. The party can include the group's favorite exercises, games, dancing, treats, music or a movie – the most important thing is to spend time together and have a party that feels your own!