

13

Tips for trainers

Alan Margolis

• 45. The Margolis wheel

Objectives

- To give individuals the opportunity to discuss real problems they face or will face and to generate potential solutions;
- To emphasise equality in power and authority with the group;
- To encourage participants to share problems and actively seek experiences and suggestions from each other; and,
- To highlight that we all have relevant and valuable experiences.

Materials

Five or six chairs arranged in reach of two concentric circles, the inside ones facing the outside.

A watch or electronic timer to time each round. Object to make a noise, e.g. cup and spoon, bell.

Time

45 minutes.

Procedure

1. Ask participants to reflect on particular problems they will face or have faced. This can be focused to the session you have just been conducting and could be:
 - Problems in training for participatory inquiry; and,
 - Problems in carrying out a participatory inquiry;

- Problem/difficulties likely to be faced when returning to your own institution.

Figure 39

2. Then ask participants to sit in any seat. Instruct them that those sitting in the outside circle will be the consultants or solution suggesters. Those sitting on the inside facing out will be the clients or problem-presenters. Explain that each pair has three minutes to discuss problems and potential solutions.
3. After 3 minutes, the outside circle rotates by one chair, bringing a new consultant to face each client.
4. Give another 3 minutes for discussion. This continues for all 5 or 6 people in the circles.
5. Then give 2 minutes for all clients and consultants to write down a summary of problems and solutions.
6. After this is complete the clients and consultants change circles and reverse roles. The exercise is repeated. If there are more than 10-12 participants (i.e. more than one set of circles, then arrange for the consultants to switch circles after the first round so that a new source of potential solutions can be brought to each circle).

Comments

Inform participants that they may discuss private as well as public problems. No one but the consultants will get to hear of them, as there is no presentation after the exercise.

However, this exercise is best used when there has been prior discussion of problems and constraints. For example, participants may have been with colleagues from the same institution, programme or department discussing what should happen after the workshop. Break the discussion by using the Margolis Wheel, as this will permit participants to discuss private as well as public problems.

This exercise almost always generates highly animated discussion. It is important that individuals do write down a summary of the problems and potential solutions. These can then be used in a follow up discussion, such as in the elaboration of detailed implementation or action plans.

An extra learning point can be made if participants are asked to choose one problem to present to each consultant. During the debriefing you can discuss how the problem presented initially changed as the client became more aware of the real issues after each consultation.

- **Alan Margolis**, Hampstead Training.