

Conflict

Identifying Conflict Triggers and "Hot Buttons"

Brief Description/Purpose

Reactions to conflict and situations that cause anger tend to be immediate because they are a result of being triggered, and having one's buttons pushed. I do a similar exercise with my groups on dealing with angry customers. This is about having each person identify their own triggers, so they can be prepared when they pop up.

Type

Small group

Age Appropriate

Teens, adults

Ideal Group Size

Any group size, since the exercise is done in sub-groups of 5-9 people.

Time For Exercise

20 -40 minutes

Topic/Subject

Preventing conflict escalation, self-awareness, conflict management

Detailed Instructions If Needed

[The following is from the 3s library.](#)

This exercise is designed to help people have their emotions rather than be them.

We all have our emotions and knowing how to manage them productively is a large part of dealing with conflict and in taking the Third Side.

In this exercise we begin to help people make a distinction between emotions, the triggers for those emotions, physical clues, and methods for handling them. This is done so people have a process for dealing with this element of conflict.

The purpose of this exercise is to give people an opportunity to think about the things that trigger their emotions in conflict. In addition, they are also asked to reflect on the physical clues that tell them their emotions are taking over and discuss with the other participants how to manage these emotions productively. The goal is to give them a process to work through so they can best manage their emotions in conflicts and to help others do so as Thirdsiders.

Conflict

- Ideally participants will be at round tables of 6. If they are in such a configuration have them work on this together. If not you can have them get into groups of 6 for the exercise.
- Tell the group that they are going to think about and discuss the things that trigger their emotions in conflict and why. In other words, what are their hot button issues that set off their emotions and what physical clues tell them their buttons are being pushed.

You should tell them to take a few minutes each and go around the table sharing these.

- Then explain that once everyone has shared their triggers and clues the respective tables should brainstorm a list of possible ways to manage these triggers.

What strategies do they have – or can they think of with the help of others -- for controlling these triggers and emotional reactions?

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