

“BLIND GAMES”

Activities proposed by: Élan Interculturel



OVERVIEW

In this section we present two blind games: “WALK WITH ME” and “BLIND WAITING”. Both activities are about leading and following, physical contact, exploring matters of trust and our reactions to feeling vulnerable.

TIME



30 minutes

PARTICIPANTS



Adaptable for 12– 20 participants

MATERIALS



Sufficient space for people to move freely and safe in order to avoid accidents when moving with closed eyes.

OBJECTIVES



- “Walk with me” develops attention and skills on leading, being followed and following. It also triggers sensitivity to non-verbal contact.
- “Blind waiting” also includes an element of physical contact, and as such helps raise awareness about how we feel this contact, but most of all it is an activity where the alternation of being cared for and waiting can open space to reflect on loneliness, fear of rejection.

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS



“WALK WITH ME”

1. Before starting the activity, ask participants if physical contact on the forearms is OK for everyone (standing side by side and connecting one’s forearm to the other person’s).
2. Ask participants to form pairs, connecting to each other via each other’s forearms. The person with longer hair should be the leader and the other the follower. The leader leads the other only with the forearm as a contact zone. They can go slower, faster, stop, change directions, go higher, lower etc. The only request is that the leader takes care of the follower. Tell them you will signal when they change roles since they should not do it autonomously. If the follower feels safe, they can close their eyes. The leader should not close his or her eyes. If you wish, you can put soft background music, but the activity also works in silence.
3. While they are walking together, invite them to become aware of the quality of the contact that they have. Invite them to change the contact: make it tighter, looser and see how it affects them while they are walking together.
4. After a couple of minutes (you will see if the participants can work with the activity, if so, give them time) you can invite them to change roles.
5. Invite participants to change partners and try the same activity with someone else. The aim of this change is to offer them more space of observation through the comparison.
6. You can do a quick debrief afterwards (see discussion).

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STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS



“BLIND WAITING”

1. Before starting the activity, ask participants if it is OK for them to close their eyes and to have physical contact: being touched on the shoulder or on the back while being accompanied for a couple of meters with this type of contact. If they give you authorisation, proceed.
2. Ask half of the group to remain in the centre of the room and the other half to stand on the side. The ones in the middle should position themselves randomly, occupying all the space in the room. Once it is done, invite them to close their eyes.
3. Now give the instructions for those standing: each one of them should go to one of the people standing, and gently touch them on the shoulder or on the back. They should accompany them for a couple of meters and then leave them. Then, approach another person with eyes closed and so on, always remaining in movement.
4. After 3 minutes you can ask those with open eyes to move to the side of the room, and invite the ones in the middle of the room to open their eyes. Invite them to switch roles.

“COLLECTING”



To collect the experiences/felt senses of participants and put them into words, you can propose a first question of the type: “to wait is to surrender?” and invite them to continue with other questions in the same style (“to wait is to be vulnerable?” “to wait is to be exposed?” etc..) You can do it with “to follow is...” and “to lead is...”.

DISCUSSIONS



WALK WITH ME

- Points to explore can include: how participants felt in the activity, whether it was different to be a leader and a follower and what the difference in terms of emotions was.
- You can ask around who preferred leading and who preferred following.
- The most interesting aspect to explore may be the connection between the quality of the contact and the way the pairs could walk together. The common experience is that it is much easier to lead / follow if the contact of the forearms is a bit tighter. When the contact is loose, it is virtually impossible to lead. Ask participants whether they can connect this insight into something from real life, possibly with contact, connexion and communication.

BLIND WAITING

- “How did you feel in the activity?” can be a good start here too. Try to explore how everyone felt while waiting to be picked up as they kept their eyes closed. What were the thoughts/interpretations that they had while waiting?
- How could they connect this experience to real life, for instance to connections and relationships?
- Both activities deal with eye contact, physical contact, leading and following. You can explore cultural differences in these dimensions, especially if you are in a culturally heterogeneous group.

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HINTS



Use your presence to inspire trust and to give importance to the activities. The activity “BLIND WAITING”, in particular, could lose its relevance if some participants are in a funny mood and end up taking the lead and arranging all the “blind” people facing towards the wall etc.

“BLIND WAITING” can be a very intensive experience (we have had participants tell us they were trembling.). Make sure to be aware, listen and welcome such sharing.


THEORY



You can find many interesting “blind games” in Augusto Boal’s collection of “Games for actors and non-actors” as well as in David Diamond’s “Theatre for living”. A nice collection can also be found here: <http://tophiladelphia.blogspot.com/2015/01/blind-games-what-we-played.html>

We have learnt the “collecting” activity from Amélie Schweiger, teacher of 5 rhythm dance.

“Walk with me” is an introductory contact improvisation exercise.



INTIMACY,
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IN YOUTH WORK

<https://intimacycrosscultures.eu/>

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