



Module: Group Skills

Skill 39: Cooperative Power

Activity B: Cooperative Process

Activity Skills:

Group discussion, role playing, and critical thinking.

Leadership Skills:

This activity will expose participants to the cooperative process which focuses on redirection to positive discussion and dealing with difficult people.

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

45 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Flipchart and markers
- Note cards
- Pens or pencils to write

Do Ahead:

Make "Role Cards". Write a description of each role from list for each person attending.

- Leaders
- Sherman Tanks
- Sniper
- Chronic Complainers
- Negativists
- Exploders
- Town People

**The number of people assigned to each role will vary depending on the total number of participants.*

BACKGROUND:

Leaders can often find themselves in the middle of other people's conflict and a few angry people can quickly create a fiasco. How can leaders keep the cooperative process flowing?

Below are some descriptions of different types of difficult people that will be dealt with during the activity:

Sherman Tanks- *These people try to intimidate you with "in your face" arguments, and state opinions as facts.*

- Get their attention by using their first name to begin a sentence.
- Maintain eye contact; give them time to wind down.
- Stand up to them without fighting; don't worry about being polite.
- Suggest you sit down to continue discussions.

Snipers- *These individuals take potshots in meetings but avoid one-on-one confrontations.*

- Expose the attack; draw them out in public and don't let social convention stop you.
- Get other opinions. Don't give in to the sniper's views.
- Provide the sniper with alternatives to a direct contest.

Chronic Complainers- *These people find faults with everyone- except themselves.*

- Politely interrupt and get control of the situation.
- Quickly sum up the facts.
- Ask for their complaints in writing.

Negativists- *Know that nothing new will work; they'll toss a wet blanket when you're trying to light a fire in group brainstorming sessions.*

- Acknowledge their valid points.
- Describe past successes.
- Avoid "you're wrong, I'm right" arguments.

Exploders- *Throw tantrums that can escalate quickly.*

- Give them time to regain self control.
- If they don't, shout a neutral phrase such as "STOP!"
- Take a time out or have a private meeting with them.

WHAT TO DO:

Begin with a role playing game called, "The Town Meeting". Brainstorm a list community issues that are a source of conflict for example: gang violence, poor quality of education, vandalism, and crime

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Make copies of the “Dealing with Difficult People” handout.

Source:

Developed By:
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Notes:

etc. Display this list of issues. Explain that each person should identify an issue that concerns them and they will have a chance to express their views at the “Town Meeting”

The leaders’ should not select an issue because their main concern is the happiness and overall well being of the town. Pass out the Role Cards. Do NOT share your role identity with anyone. Everyone should have a specific role to play at the “Town Meeting”. Ask the leaders to step forward and begin the meeting.

- **Leaders** (such as a Major, Principal, and Police Officer etc) the leaders will call the meeting and attempt to keep order. **There must be at least two Leaders.*
- **Town People** These people are simply concerned with an issue in their town.
- **Sherman Tanks**
- **Sniper**
- **Chronic Complainers**
- **Negativists**
- **Exploders**

Allow 15mins for the first round or until the discussion gets very heated.

Stop the game. Allow the Leaders to express feelings and frustrations.

(NOTE: *Even though this is a role playing game it becomes stressful for the people playing the Leaders. Remember to encourage and compliment them for their leadership.*)

Pass around the “Dealing with Difficult People” hand out. Review the handout and discuss the strategies for dealing with each personality. Ask everyone to identify the role they played during the first round. Begin round 2 although this time the “Leaders” and “Town People” will practice deescalating the conflict using the suggestions from the “Dealing with Difficult People” handout.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- Why was the first round so difficult?
- What could have been done to change that?
- How did the handout “Dealing with Difficult People” help you communicate during the second round?
- Have you ever encountered people who reacted in this way?

Apply:

- How will you use what you have learned today?

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- What can you do as a leader to redirect people when a situation begins to escalate?
- How can you keep an angry group of people focused on one issue?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Resources and Web Links:

The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution: Preserving Relationships at Work, at Home, and in the Community by Dudley Weeks