

Fishbowl Observation Challenge

Goals

- develop participant's skills in watching and observing;
- increase skill in note-taking and further practice using a camera.

Time

45 minutes

Special Materials

Cameras [optional]; notebooks and pens; papers for fake flyers

How it's Done

A tool to assist people to notice more in the midst of conflict. Great practice for training observers, protestors, and anyone wanting to help people practice staying aware in the middle of conflicts.

Set-up the physical space: a big circle of chairs surrounding a wide open space (a "fishbowl").

First get three volunteers to be actors. Have a facilitator pull them away from the rest of the group and brief them on the scenario they will act out (see scenario).

While the actors are being briefed, have the other facilitator(s) explain to the rest of folks that they will be "observers" to an action. Ask them what are the kinds of things they may want to document? To watch? To take pictures of? Then handout cameras (especially giving them to people who feel less comfortable working a camera) and notebooks and pens to the remainder of participants. Have folks with notebooks sit down and have folks with the camera outside of the circle (where they can circle around and take pictures). Bring the actors back in the room.

During the acting, those being observers will take notes or take pictures to document the incident.

After the acting is over or is cut off by the facilitator, thank the actors. Debrief around what notes people took ("what information do you need to document?") and what kinds of pictures did people take ("what kind of pictures are most useful? For what purposes?"). For example, have

each participant who wrote down notes say one thing (not already mentioned) that they wrote down: list those aspects on the board. Notice which ones are particularly useful.

Scenario

Role A is standing at a corner passing out flyers as people walk by. Role B is a police officer who demands that Role A stops. Role A declines, saying the constitution gives him/her a right to do this. The police officer snatches the flyers away. The activists defies the police officer and produces more flyers. The police officer begins to beat the activist. Role C is a third-party who nonviolently intervenes in the situation.

Where this Tool Comes from

This tool is adapted from Renee Martyna (Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada; phone: 613-564-0999; e-mail: info@npcanada.org).