

COMPASSION



Introduction

Information is the source for all our decision making, and often incomplete or inaccurate information leads us to erroneous decisions. Sometimes these decisions can result in catastrophic consequences for us. In such situations, our ability to see alternative options may help us make better decisions.

The objective of this activity is to understand such situations and explore alternative solutions keeping empathy and compassion as the base for interventions.

What is Forum Theatre?

Forum theatre is a drama skit/play that depicts an issue which requests the audience to change the outcome by re-enacting the situation in order to bring out a positive result. This tool provides the opportunity for participants to try out courses of action which could be applicable in their everyday lives.

Instructions

- Participants are invited to think of a situation where compassion was compromised due to misinformation and disinformation and had led to a serious personal issue or a community crisis.
- Inform participants that facilitators are going to enact a play that would showcase the situation that is related to their reflection.
- Provide the guidance that the same play would be shown twice.
- During the first show, participants are to carefully observe the situation, characters and the outcome.
- During the replay, any participant has the opportunity to lift their hand up and say 'STOP!!!' where they see a possible intervention.
- They can then step forward and replace one of the characters of the scene. In doing so, the participant is encouraged to change the situation to produce a more positive outcome.
- It is important that the participant does not change the identity of the character during his/her intervention.
- Multiple opportunities can be provided to change the outcome of the play by replacing the same or different characters.
- While the character is replaced and enacted other actors in the play are required to be in character, while improvising their responses.
- The facilitator is required to enable the communication between the actors of the play and the audience.

Reflections

During the interventions, facilitators are required to reflect with the audience to understand the impact of each intervention. The aim is to build a discussion through each intervention point. Following are some reflection questions facilitators could ask:

- Was the outcome created by the intervention a positive one?
- Did the intervention solve the issue?
- Was compassion practiced through the intervention?
- Optional: Are there any better intervention for the situation that was not acted out?

Examples for Scenarios:

Scenario 1

The neighborhood watch committee is gathered to discuss on an important matter. Mr. Fernando is a person who has been living in the neighborhood for over 10 years. He has been an active member of the community until it was found that he is HIV positive. This condition has made his community uncomfortable, and the neighborhood watch is gathered to find a way to ask him to leave or to make him leave by force.

Scenario 2

Shyamala is identified as a person who has contracted the COVID-19 virus and she's been taken to a treatment center to prevent the virus from spreading in the area. Priyanka is her sister who is living in the same neighborhood. An incident takes place when Priyanka goes to purchase some household items from a grocery shop and she is been refused to obtain those items and humiliated in public by the grocery shop owner. There are several bystanders in the scene who opt to take no action.