

The dots game

Length		20 minutes
Difficulty		Beginner
Group size		Small to medium
Aim	To give participants an insight into how, through our body language, we tacitly communicate our identity within groups we belong to, while simultaneously rejecting groups we do not belong to.	
Description	A simple, quick exercise highlighting our tendency to think and behave in terms of 'them' and 'us'	
Materials	Round stickers in different colours	
Source	Education for peace	

Tips for facilitators

NB! If some of the participants have read or done this exercise before, they should not participate. Their previous knowledge may prevent the intended experience of withdrawal and isolation to take place.

Outline and instructions

Ask everyone in the group to close their eyes and tell them that they may not express themselves verbally from the time they close their eyes and until the facilitator says they may start speaking again (after they have formed groups).

Explain that you will walk around the room and place a sticker on each participants' forehead. Depending on the group's size, choose 1 to 3 people who each get a sticker in a colour that no-one else in the room has. The remaining people in the room should receive the same colour as one to four other people. Up to 5 persons may have the same colour and you can vary the size of the colour groups, for example two green, four red, five blue etc.

Let the participants open their eyes and ask them to form groups *without talking*. This is the only instruction the groups get. (Participants may help each other to find their group, but they are not allowed to speak.)

When everyone has found their group, it is only the “chosen ones” (with different colors) left that still are looking for their group. As soon as these people understand that they don’t belong to a group, the facilitator says “stop” and lets the participants speak again. Let everyone stay in his or her group.

The facilitator now asks questions to find out how people who did and who did not belong to a group felt. Point out the fact that it was never said that it was not allowed to let anyone join the group. Did it occur to anyone to invite the “different” persons into their group? Or perhaps someone felt like breaking out of their own group and forming a new one with the person that was “different”? Does anyone recognize these feelings from real life experiences of being part of or outside of a group?