

EXERCISE:

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FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

Introductions and Expectations

TIME: 60 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: ITEMS FROM PAST WORKSHOPS (IF POSSIBLE); AND BLANK CARDS (OPTIONAL).

SUMMARY:

This is an exercise to allow participants to introduce themselves in an unusual way – by laying down and describing two items that represent something important in their personal life and something important in their professional (public) life. In addition, they will present their expectations of the workshop after their introductions.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

In the centre of the room, facilitators will have already prepared a focal area where they should set out items from past workshops (in many workshops, we have traditionally used scarves that were given as gifts to the facilitators from each region – this is very beautiful and creates a strong centrepiece – then we have included items from different workshops, such as country postcards and invitations). If a candle has been used to open the workshop, it should be in the middle, with these items surrounding it.

To open the exercise, remind participants that they were asked to bring two objects – one personal and one professional – representing something very important to them.

Ask each participant to lay out their personal and professional items in the centrepiece, with items touching or overlapping (they can do this simultaneously, but in silence).

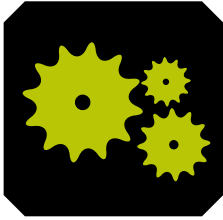
Part one:

Once they have finished laying out their items, go around the circle and ask each participant to introduce themselves (name, country and organisation) – and then ask them to talk briefly about the objects they put down – why did they choose these items? What meaning do they hold in their lives?

Part two:

Once the first round of explanations is completed, ask each participant to say a few words about their expectations of the workshop, specifically highlighting:

- what do I bring to this group?
- what do I want to take away?

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FACILITATION NOTES:

If participants did not manage to bring items, they can:

- choose something they may have with them; or
- they can use a blank card either to draw a symbol or to write down the name of the item they would like to put down.

Reassure participants that they will get their objects back at the end of the workshop – if there are very valuable items, they can take them back at the close of each day, but they should set them down again on the morning of each new day. Alternately, they can lay down the item initially and then replace it with a drawing on a card, leaving it there symbolically.

Each person should be brief, as this is a long exercise – and you can tell them that there will be many opportunities over the three days to say more about themselves and to get to know each other; this is just a beginning.

Allow about 1.5 minutes per person for each ‘round’ of questions. Make sure answers are recorded; these are all important for observations and future evaluations.

Alternative option:

Have individuals quickly think of who in their life they would choose to introduce them. Ask them to take five minutes to think of what that person would say. Then ask them to be that person when they introduce themselves. This is a lighter version of the archetypes exercise (page 127), but it helps participants to step out of the ‘traditional’ way of introducing themselves.