



thinking space

GAMES TO FOCUS

WHAT IS IT?

When the group's attention starts to drift, or when they're over-excited, use these games to help focus attention back to the room and get everyone ready for the next task.

These games are useful for encouraging the participants to think as a group and work as a team.

Make up your own rules and adapt them to suit your group... but here are just a few to get you started.

RECIPE

- **No. of participants:** Any
- **Age of participants:** Suitable for any age
- **Preparation time:** None
- **Delivery time:** 5 minutes each
- **Materials:** None

GAMES

Collaborative Counting (Or One To Ten)

In a circle facing each other to begin with (but with backs to one another as the group becomes more tightly knit), participants must slowly count to ten. One person contributes a number at any one time. If two people speak at the same time the group must start again. After the process the group can be asked to reflect on what worked and what didn't.

Make it harder by introducing new rules e.g. no-one can say the same number twice when you restart the game; try with just boys then just girls to see who can get further; no-one can say more than one number during one game.

Eye Contact Shuffle

This is a game to promote collaboration and positive non-verbal group interaction. (It also gets everyone to shush and sit next to someone new). In silence members of the group look around the circle. When they catch the gaze of another person they have to swap seats. The group has to maintain focus for as many swaps as possible. If the pair or anyone in the group laughs or speaks the swap counter is reset. Try setting them a challenge, maybe 10 swaps.

GAMES (cont.)

Make it harder by asking the person to say 'yes' when they receive your eye contact. You start walking towards them but they can't move until someone else has said 'yes' to them.

Who Started That?

Some one is 'it' and briefly leaves the room. In a circle the rest of the group appoint a leader. When 'it' rejoins the group the leader starts a series of subtle actions one after the other (e.g. swaying, twitching or chewing.) Everyone in the circle begins to imitate it. The person in the middle has to work out who started the action with three goes. If they succeed the leader becomes 'it' and goes outside. If 'it' fails, they go outside again and a new leader is chosen.

Make it harder by having two leaders.

One, Two, Three

The group pair off. Each pair has to count to three, alternating each time. i.e. Person A: "One"; Person B "Two"; Person A: "Three"; Person B "One; Person A "Two" etc. As the counting speeds up the activity requires more and more concentration. If one pair is particularly fast, ask the rest of the group to watch them.

Make it harder by replacing one or all of the numbers with an action or sound like a clap, a jump or a whoop.

TIPS

- To encourage a group to manage their own behaviour, offer them these and similar games as 'strategies' to use if they feel the group is losing focus.
- If a group struggles to achieve the objective of a game return to it again at the end of the session; try girls versus boys or ask the group to come up with three 'top tips' or strategies.

FIND OUT MORE

- 'Games for Actors and Non-Actors' by Augusto Boal and Adrian Jackson
- 'Drama Games for Classrooms and Workshops' by Jessica Swale
- See 'Games to Re-energise' Tool
- See 'Games to Support Enquiry' Tool



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