

Message to the world

“Message to the world” is an exercise that aims to explore and exercise active imagination, affective and social exchange and expression. It aims to explore the thoughts and points of view of the characters involved in bullying situations.



Bullying



Improvisation, Stanislavski method, Roleplaying



13-30



20-30 participants



Pens, papers



You can choose the online videoconference platform that better suits your group, it's important that the platform allow the creation of breakout rooms. E.g. Google meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.
Mentimeter.com for the debriefing.



#1 step: 10 minutes

#2 step: 15 minutes

#3 step: 15 minutes

#4 step: 20 minutes

#5 step: 30 minutes



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It is an activity that can be performed both outdoors and indoors depending on the needs of your group. You can distribute chairs in a circle or decide to sit on the ground. During the time of solo work, participants can move around freely and find a place to focus their attention.

If you run it online be sure they have access to the Internet in order to participate the online meeting and that they have the material at their disposal.

Implementation:

Preparation:

Prepare little cards on which to write down the roles (the victim, the bully, a classmate who has knowledge of the violence, a teacher, a parent of the victim, a parent of the bully) so that the number of each role is filled in a balanced way by about the same number of participants (e.g. in a group of 30, 5 victim cards, 5 bully cards, etc). Fold them up and put them in a box, to be drawn by the participants and assigned the role randomly.

If you are running it online set up 6 breakout rooms (1 per each role) that you will use to divide participants and assign roles. Set up also a Mentimeter slide (cloud of words) with the title: "one word to describe how you feel", that you will use during the debriefing.

#1 step (10 minutes):

Introduce the theme of the exercise and inform participants that you will work on bullying, trying to investigate the topic by imagining and identifying with different characters:

the victim, the bully, a classmate who is aware of the violence, a teacher, a parent of the victim, a parent of the bully.

Have each participant draw a ticket.

If you are conducting the activity online, you can prepare breakout rooms. Divide the participants randomly and in a few minutes go in and out of each room to assign each group of participants their role, at this time you only need to tell them their role (one room will be the 'victim' participants, another room the 'bully' participants, etc.). Once you have completed your round of assignments close the breakout rooms and gather everyone back into the main video call.

Implementation:

#2 step (15 minutes):

Still in a circle (or simply in the main video call), each participant imagines their own character. You can suggest some questions to help participants shape their character, for example:

- Who am I?
- Where am I?
- What time is it?
- What do I want?
- Why do I want it?

Ask participants to answer the suggested questions, the answer can be more or less elaborate, they will not be shared with others.

#3 step (15 minutes):

Now that their character is clear in their minds, give the participants about 15 minutes to write their Message to the world. The character will be the one talking and they will then have to write in the first person. In this step participants can stand up and find a space to focus their attention, they do not have to stay necessarily in the circle.

#4 step (20 minutes):

Once back in the circle invite participants to share their message, initially asking them to share which role they play. Participants can read the message or improvise and present it in a monologue. It is not compulsory that everyone share it, but it is important to read at least one message for each role. It is also possible for the facilitator to read the message if none of the participants playing that character feel comfortable presenting it to the group. In case you are running it online and you need to read a message you can ask the participant to send you a picture of the text they wrote or copy paste the text in the chat in case they worked directly on the PC.

#5 step (30 minutes):

Start the debriefing by asking each participant to share one word that describes their overall experience during the activity. If you are running it online you can use Mentimeter and set up a slide with the cloud of words. This can help gauge initial reactions and set the tone for the discussion

Instructions for debriefing:

Ask participants to share the emotions they are feeling or felt during the activity.

Discuss how taking on different roles and perspectives during the activity affected participants' empathy and understanding of the characters involved.

Explore whether participants gained insights into the motivations and emotions of the bully, victim, family members, and classmates and teachers. Did they see the situation from different angles?

Encourage a discussion on the collective responsibility of classmates, families, and others in addressing bullying. What role does each group play in preventing or addressing bullying?

Discuss potential actions or strategies that participants can implement in their own lives to promote empathy, prevent bullying, or support victims.

Closing Round

End the debriefing by asking participants to share one final thought or reflection on what they will carry with them from this activity and discussion.

Closing Thoughts

End the debriefing session by summarizing the key points discussed and thanking participants for their contributions. Reiterate the importance of recognizing and utilizing their strengths to achieve their dreams.

Remember to foster a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere during the debriefing, allowing participants to share their thoughts and feelings openly. The goal is to help participants gain deeper self-awareness and insights that they can carry forward in their personal and professional journeys.

Tips and notes to the facilitator:

Here are some tips for facilitators, along with potential difficulties that may arise during the activity:

1. Preparation:

- Ensure that the roles (victim, bully, etc.) are balanced to provide an equal distribution among participants.
- If conducting the activity online, familiarize yourself with the features of the chosen videoconference platform, especially breakout rooms and chat functionalities, as well as Mentimeter.

2. Icebreaker and Engagement:

- Begin with a brief icebreaker or warm-up activity to create a comfortable atmosphere.
- Emphasize the importance of respect, confidentiality, and open-mindedness throughout the session.

3. Clear Instructions:

- Clearly explain each step of the activity, emphasizing the purpose and goals.
- Provide examples or demonstrations to help participants understand their roles and expectations.

4. Sensitivity and Safety:

- Acknowledge the sensitive nature of the topic and create a safe space for participants to express themselves.
- Be attentive to any signs of discomfort and be prepared to address them with empathy. (In case a participant feels uncomfortable taking the assigned role you can change it).

5. Encourage Creativity:

- During the character-building phase, encourage participants to be creative and think deeply about their character's background, motivations, and feelings.
 - Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers, fostering a non-judgmental environment.
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Tips and notes to the facilitator:

6. Flexibility:

- Be flexible with time management, adapting to the needs and dynamics of the group.
- If running the activity online, be prepared for potential technical issues and have alternative plans in place.

7. Active Participation:

- Encourage all participants to actively engage in each step of the activity.
- Monitor group dynamics, ensuring that quieter participants have opportunities to share.

8. Facilitate Reflection:

- Guide participants in reflecting on their own experiences and feelings during the activity.
- Use open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and exploration of different perspectives.

9. Debriefing Techniques:

- Utilize tools like Mentimeter for debriefing to collect and display participants' feelings and reactions.
- Allow participants to share at their comfort level, whether verbally, through chat, or other means.

10. Follow-Up and Application:

- Conclude the session with a summary of key insights and takeaways.
- Encourage participants to consider how they can apply the lessons learned in their daily lives.

Remember, the success of the activity depends on creating a supportive and inclusive environment where participants feel comfortable exploring and sharing their thoughts and emotions.
