

# Leader Training

## Skills for self empowerment and leading groups

TOOLKIT



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This document aims to share some of the activities implemented during the training course. This publication is aimed at youth workers, social workers, teachers, and anyone interested in approaching the topic of intercultural learning, non-violent communication, and decision making.

### **“Skills for self empowerment and leading groups”**

is a training course funded by the European Union in the frame of the Erasmus+ programme and implemented by InformaGiovani ETS.

### **Disclaimer**

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## Training Course - Skills for self empowerment and leading groups

“Skills for self empowerment and leading groups” was an intercultural training course involving 22 participants from 12 countries and 2 trainers. The aim of the activity was to share concrete tools to increase confidence of youth workers and youth leaders in leading groups in multicultural and international settings. Topics discussed included intercultural learning e stereotypes, leadership, non violent communication and conflict management, Inclusion and participation, safety and safer space.

The training was designed for youth leaders and youth workers who wanted to develop and improve their life skills in the management of international activities and group leading.

### Aims of the activity

- To expand the ability of dealing with unexpected events, conflict management, effective communication, work in group, time management
- To deepen the understanding of the role of the leader in volunteer projects
- To be able to create the condition for the creation of spaces where young people can express themselves and participate in educational processes in informal settings
- To enhance the recognition of learning in volunteering activities

|    | 23/04                                   | 24/04                     | 25/04                                             | 26/04                            | 27/04                                  |
|----|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
|    | Energizer                               | Energizer                 | Energizer                                         | Energizer                        | Energizer                              |
| AM | Get to know and Team building           | Decision making           | Safe space and Personal boundaries                | Intercultural learning and shock | Conflict management                    |
|    | Agenda, Expectations, Contributions     | Skills for leading groups | Simulation on group dynamics                      | Stereotypes                      | Inclusion and participation            |
|    | Energizer                               | Energizer                 | Energizer                                         | Energizer                        | Energizer                              |
| PM | ETS competences model for youth workers | Non Violent Communication | Open space                                        | Visit to Prizzi                  | Security during project                |
|    | Learning in a non formal setting        | Active Listening          | Erasmus+/ESC opportunities<br>Mid-Term evaluation | Intercultural evening            | Final Evaluation + Receiving youthpass |

# Clowning Around: Stepping into Silliness Together

by Claudia

**Duration:** 35-45 min

**Source:** mixture of [“The art of the red nose”](#) and activities from an impro theater workshop

## Aim of the activity

- To foster a comfortable and playful atmosphere, encouraging connection through shared silliness.
- To create a safe space for participants to embrace vulnerability and reframe "failures" as opportunities for laughter and learning.
- To encourage non-judgmental interaction and build comfort within the group.

## Materials needed for the activity

- Craft materials for creating clown elements (red noses, ties, hats, oversized glasses, scarves,...) coloured paper, pens, scissors, tape, face paint (optional)
- Stopwatch / phone timer
- (Optional) materials for improv theater scenes like scarfs, hats, umbrellas, blankets. Or, anything that lies around in the room can be used

## Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Environment/Space: Open, uncluttered space
- Personal Preparation for facilitator: Gather and organize the craft materials. Prepare a few initial silly walk prompts and short scene/statue prompts. Mentally prepare to be enthusiastic, playful, and model silliness.

## Instructions (described step by step)

1. Introduction & safe space creation (5 mins): Introduce activity, explain that everything is optional, judgement-free room, the sillier the better.
2. Crafting Our Clown Persona (5 mins): Invite participants to create a small clown signature using the provided materials. Once they put it on they're in the role of clowns.
3. Stepping into the Clown Shoes (5-7 mins): Begin with free clown walking, then guide participants through prompted silly walks, encouraging exaggerated movements. Invite participants to add 1-2 suggestions.
  1. Walk as if you needed to go to the toilet VERY urgently.
  2. Walk as if you were trying to impersonate a tiny angry penguin.
  3. Walk as if you were a newborn calf making its first attempts at walking.
  4. Walk as if gravitation didn't exist.
  5. Walk as if you just had the best day of your life and you are so happy that you need to share that with the whole world.

4. Instant Clown Scenes & Statues (15 mins): Explain the concept of quick, imaginative scenarios. Provide short scene prompts (action-based) and collective statue prompts (frozen poses), allowing ~10 seconds for each.

- A. Show us a group of clowns trying to share one tiny umbrella in a sudden downpour! (quick scene)
- B. Quickly show us clowns trying to have a very serious, very important meeting (but they keep getting distracted by bubbles)! (Short, active scene)
- C. Freeze! You are a group of very confused clowns trying to follow incredibly complicated dance instructions. (Tableau)
- D. Show us a quick scene of clowns attempting to build the world's tallest, wobbly tower out of imaginary blocks. (Short, active scene)

5. Gentle Landing & Reflection (5-7 mins): Guide participants to slowly bring their energy down. Invite them to remove their clown elements if they wish. Lead a brief reflection using the questions below.

### Questions for debriefing

- What did it feel like to step into that clown persona, even for a little while?
- Were there moments where you felt a little silly or vulnerable? What was that like?
- Did you notice anything about how we interacted with each other in our clown mode?
- Can we take some of this playful, non-judgmental energy with us as we continue our training?

# How do we learn?

## Types of education & learning styles

### By Giorgia e Chiara

Duration: 90 minutes

Source: Inspired by the TC “the power of non formal education”

#### Aim of the activity

- Understand the differences between formal, non-formal, and informal education.
- Recognize the characteristics and value of each type of learning.
- Explore and reflect on personal learning styles.
- Promote active participation and experiential learning through choice and collaboration.

#### Materials needed for the activity

- Flipcharts or A3 paper (at least 5)
- Markers, pens, post-its
- large soft dice (or number generator app)
- Origami paper (or square colored paper sheets)
- 3 instruction sets: (*Text-based instructions* for origami, *Image-only* diagrams, *Facilitator* to demonstrate the origami live or videos)

#### Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Prepare the instruction sets and origami paper
- Arrange 5 group workstations with flipchart paper and markers.
- Set up the 3 origami learning style tables.
- Test the dice (physical or app version).
- (Optional) Prepare a slide or poster summarizing Kolb's learning styles or the VAK model.

#### Instructions (described step by step)

##### PART 1

##### Step A: Types of Education – Group Brainstorming

1. Divide participants into groups of 4-5 people. You need 5 groups in total.
2. Give each group a blank poster or flipchart and markers.
3. Present to all that each group will brainstorm and visually represent what they know about the three types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal.
4. Give these guiding questions:
  - Where does this type of learning happen?

- Who is the teacher/guide? Describe them.
- Are there rules or a structure?
- What tools or methods are used?
- What are some real-life examples? (Try to name at least 3)
- How is success or progress measured?

### **Step B: Dice Roll & Presentation**

Roll the dice. If the result is from 1 to 5, the group with that number presents their poster. The other groups can add or adjust based on their own brainstorm. If the result is 6, do a quick energizer instead, and roll the dice at the end again.

## **PART 2**

### **Step C: Learning Styles in Action – Origami Challenge**

The facilitator introduces briefly the learning styles and the Experiential Learning Theory by David A. Kolb by using visuals and then asks the participants: “If you could choose how to learn something new, what would you prefer?”

### **Step D: Origami Learning Style Activity**

Arrange in the space **3 learning stations** (preferably 3 tables) where participants will find instructions. In one table the instructions will be in a written form; in a second table the type of instruction will be only visual, and in the third table there will be a live demonstration made by a facilitator.

Participants can choose freely in which table to go, whether to work alone, in pairs, or in a group, whether to try just one or move between styles. Let participants build 1–2 origami shapes per person.

### **Questions for debriefing**

- Which station did you choose and why?
- How did you feel during the activity? Was it easy, frustrating, surprising?
- Did the method match your learning preference?
- What did this teach you about yourself as a learner?
- How can this experience help when working with others or in groups?



# Can you hear me?

## by Aleksandra

Duration: 90 min

Source: Facilitate the Change training by Egyesek

### Aim of the activity

- Provide participants with ways of communicating clearly, making it efficient and universal for everybody;
- Raise self-awareness and introspection whilst communicating with others;
- Equip facilitators/youth workers with tools that may be used in a group.

### Materials needed for the activity

- Flip charts, sticky notes, colored paper (A3,A4), markers

### Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Participants sit in banana shape to face the wall, flipchart and the facilitator, 2 other facilitators to show an activity.

### Instructions (described step by step)

OPENING - 15 min:

- 3 min: standing up and shaking the body, deep breath
- 5 min: individual reflection, then discussion in pairs on the topic: what is non - violent communication and actively listening to you?
- 5 min: talking a bit about non-violent communication, where does it stand with active listening, what does it mean to them, collecting main points and writing it down on the flipchart, relate it to feedback, collecting comparative boards (VIOLENT/ NON-VIOLENT)

ICE BREAKER - 10 min: participants are invited to walk in the space in relation to requests/needs/observations/feelings (on the floor) with questions, after the discussion:

- What is more comfortable for you to express?
- What is easier to express?

INTRODUCING NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION SCHEME - 5-8 min:

- 4 staples: requests, needs, observations, feelings. How to express them (crossed out evaluations, thoughts, strategies, demands)
- Introduction to *I noticed + It makes me feel + I propose framework*



CREATING ACT OUT PLAYS about non-violent communication (5 groups of 4 people) - 20 min:

- 7 min: The participants are divided in groups of 5 and they have 7 min. to prepare a play that will last one minute. After each performance, the performing group stays on stage while the audience shares what they saw. At the end of the audience sharing, the performing team shares with the audience what the play was about.

- prompts: 1. expressing emotions and observations instead of thoughts and evaluations; 2. demanding without expressing a need; 3. requesting with expression of a need 4. evaluating and expressing thoughts about people, without mentioning initial feelings;

- 10 min: presenting and discussing.

**discussion questions:**

What did you notice?

What did “non-violent communication style” have in common?

What can we do to turn it into a non-violent communication language?

How can we use it in our daily lives?

DEBRIEFING WITH ACTIVE LISTENING FRAMEWORK - 25/30 min:

- 3 min: all-together, answering questions about non-violent communication: How to express intense feelings and needs if it may confuse others? How can it be implemented into your daily life? What would you like to improve and how when it comes to communication?

- 3 min: introducing the framework of active listening: 1 person talks for 2 min without interruption, the other one makes notes to summarize, the third one paraphrases and asks again to clarify. (With the help of 2 facilitators can be shown).

- 15 min (6 min there was): uniting participants in groups of 3/2, changing 3 rounds of 2 min, they exchange roles.

DEBRIEFING IN A LARGE CIRCLE - 5 MIN:

- “What is growing in me right now?” space to discuss for 2-3 people.

# Conflict management

Duration 75 min

Source: former Erasmus+ project (Emotic and Oasis)

## Aim of the activity

- To get to know conflict and how to manage them

## Materials needed for the activity

- A board where we can share ideas
- Paper and pens for the participants
- A room big enough to allow participants to work in groups without bothering each other

## Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- Get familiar with the topic of conflict

## Instructions (described step by step)

1st part : active listening

Divided participants in groups of 2 (someone who never talked with). Participant A talks for 2 to 3 min about a conflict they've been through or the meaning of conflict management for them, participant B can't talk (just body language). Then participant B has to sum up what participant A said, in 1 to 2 minutes. Then we switch A and B (B talks, A listens).

Debrief after the first part on active listening:

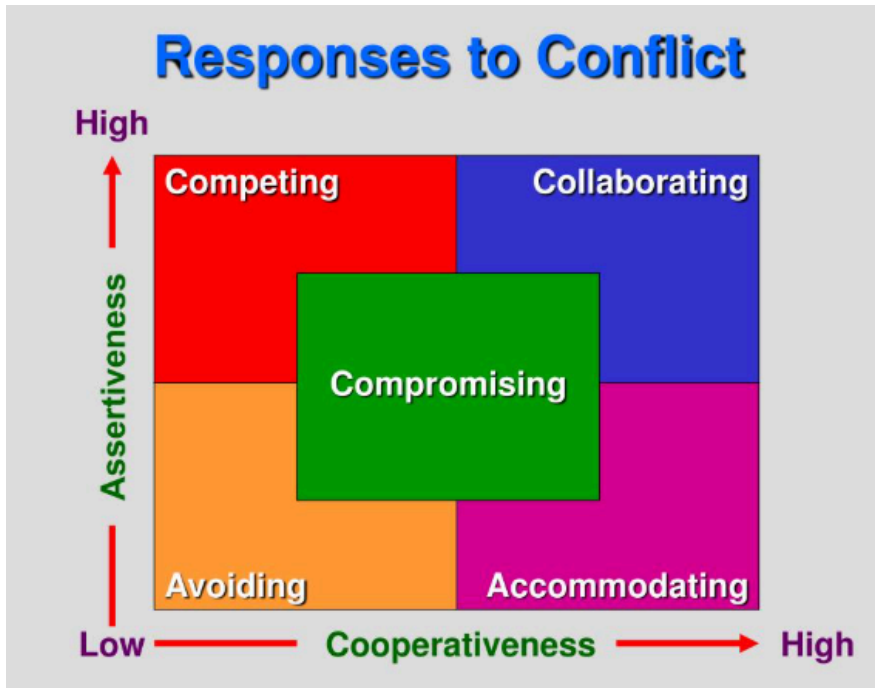
- How did it feel for you when you were talking and not being interrupted ?
- How did it feel for you to listen without being able to talk, ask questions etc ?
- Was it hard for you to reformulate after ? to stay focused ?
- What do you think this skill could do in your everyday life ? How do you think you can use it in the context of a conflict?

2nd part : theatre - 30 to 60 min

Groups of 2 merge into 2 groups of 7 participants and one group of 6, they choose one conflict to represent as a theatre scene. They will choose roles in the conflict and try to clearly present different perspectives and the typical reactions based on how people tend to behave. They can either choose to have the same outcome as the one they described, or come up with a different one.

Debrief after the second part:

- use image 1 after each group's scene to place the 'characters' depending on their behavior
- make a link between active listening and the way participants dealt with their conflict
- What does assertiveness and cooperativeness mean for you ?



# Culture Clash: Understanding and Navigating Intercultural Shock

By Greta

Duration: 70-75'

Source: Inspired from a paper by [Oberg Kalervo](#)

## Aim of the activity

- to help participants recognize, understand, and reflect on the phenomenon of cultural shock
- to develop empathy, awareness, and practical skills to manage cultural shock when leading or participating in multicultural groups.

## Materials needed for the activity

- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Markers and pens
- Sticky notes
- Printed scenario cards
- Timer

## Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)

- A room would be necessary. It would be easier if participants were sitting in a circle so they can look each other in the eye and begin to familiarize themselves with the different cultures around them. Print or write on papers the texts that you will find in "Extra materials"

## Instructions (described step by step)

This workshop is based on three steps: 1. collecting ideas on what culture is; 2. A theory of cultural shock; 3. Scenarios to experience different cultures.

### 1. Brainstorming on the meaning of culture

Ask participants what comes to their mind when they hear the word 'culture' and to write one word per sticky note (every participant has 1 or 2 sticky notes) and post them on a whiteboard/board. Once everyone has done it, read some aloud and group similar ideas. (You can digitize this part using the Mentimeter app or a similar one.)

### 2. A theory of cultural shock

Brief explanation of what is an *cultural shock* by analysing the four stages described by Oberg K. (Honeymoon - culture shock - adaptation - integration)

### 3. Scenario experience

Divide the group into 4 small groups of 5 people. Each group receives a scenario card (made-up examples of people experiencing culture shock) and after reading it they answer the following questions:

- What emotions might this person feel?
- What cultural misunderstandings are happening?
- What could help this person feel more at ease?
- What would you do in their place?

Allow 20 minutes to discuss scenarios and after each group presents their scenario and insights (3–5 mins per group) to the whole group.

### Questions for debriefing

1. Have you ever experienced something like this yourself?
2. How would you define culture shock in your own words?
3. Why is it important to recognize culture shock when working with multicultural groups?
4. What can group leaders do to create a culturally safe space?

### Extra Materials

#### Scenario 1

Lina is a 19-year-old student from Asia. She joins a youth exchange in southern Italy.

During group activities, everyone talks at the same time, laughs loudly, interrupts each other and gets very physical, hugging, touching, shouting playfully.

Lina feels uncomfortable, confused, and a bit isolated. She thinks people are being rude or not taking things seriously.

#### Scenario 2

Youssef is a 22-year-old volunteer from Morocco placed in a Scandinavian country.

He tries to connect with locals but finds people distant, quiet, and uninterested in small talk.

At dinner, everyone takes food and eats in silence. No one offers to share.

He feels ignored and thinks people don't like him.

#### Scenario 3

Camila, from Brazil, loves to greet people with hugs and kisses.

She's living abroad as a trainee and notices everyone just shakes hands or says a quick "hi."

Once, she hugged someone at breakfast and everyone seemed shocked.

Now she feels awkward and unsure how to act.

#### Scenario 4

Aleksi is from Sweden and joins a youth leadership program in another country.

He likes structure and schedules. But in his new group, activities always start late, breaks last forever, and plans constantly change. He's stressed, feels things are chaotic, and thinks people are being unprofessional.

## **Stereotype and prejudice**

### **by Charlotte and Linda**

Duration: 60-75 min

Source: created by participants

#### **Aim of the activity**

- Collectively reflect on the causes, consequences to stereotypes and prejudices and solutions to reduce them.

#### **Materials needed for the activity**

- 4 paper boards

#### **Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)**

- 4 tables

#### **Instructions (described step by step)**

In groups of 5 people, each group must collectively reflect on the question placed on the table and has 10 minutes to write down their thoughts.

After these 10 minutes, the group moves to a new table and a new question.

The questions are as follows:

- What is a stereotype?
- What is prejudice?
- What are the causes of these stereotypes? Who reinforces stereotypes in society?
- What are the consequences?
- What solutions can we implement?

Then, we debrief collectively with a presentation of the different paperboards.

#### **Questions for debriefing**

1. Did you learn anything new about the topic?
2. Did you find yourselves agreeing more often, or disagreeing?
3. How easy is it to apply the solutions suggested in daily life?
4. How can international projects help to reduce stereotypes?

# **The Movie Murder Mystery Party – Director’s Cut**

## **by Annija and Irene**

Duration: 60+ min

Source: A party game by Dennis Spielman [The Movie Murder Mystery Party – Dennis Spielman](#)

### **Aim of the activity**

- The aim of the activity is for participants to get creative, collaborate, strategize and find the murderer (creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, deductive/critical thinking, connect in a fun way). Interactive murder mystery games provide players with details of their character from the start, but it is up to the character to determine how they solve the murder.

### **Materials needed for the activity**

- Print out clues, the character descriptions, the invitation to the murder mystery party and the death note with some instructions for what the participants should do.

### **Preparation needed for the implementation of the activity (preparation of the environment/space, or personal preparation, if any)**

- As the setting is supposed to be a movie premiere party where the director dies, arrange the room accordingly with some snacks / beverages to make it more realistic.
- Spread some pieces of paper with the clues to solve the mystery before the gathering starts.

### **Instructions (described step by step)**

Two people act as moderator of the game, they arrange the space and spread the clues around the room before the participants arrive. Once participants are in, the moderator welcomes them to the party and hands out their roles (one role per two participants) and asks them to read the descriptions privately and to not disclose who the murderer is. The moderator asks them if they have any questions. And now...

- 1) The moderator read the introductory script to welcome them officially to the party and to mention that a murder will soon take place. The moderator explained some of the rules of the game.
- 2) The moderator asks them to start socializing based on the description of their character but they are allowed to incorporate aspects of themselves. The moderator asks them not to speak to the same person for more than two minutes. (The moderator announces when it's time to change interlocutor)
- 3) The murder occurs!
- 4) They must read the death note that the dead person is holding, which prompts them to start looking for clues.
- 5) They go around the room, looking for the clues that have been spread in the room at the beginning by the moderators.
- 6) We gather in a circle and they make one round of discussion where each one gives their theory of who the killer is and a second round where they vote who each person thinks the killer to be.



- 7) The killer is revealed – end of game. (If the group is up for it, the detective process could take longer and more theories could be investigated regarding the motives etc. and therefore the conclusion of the game could come more organically rather than rushed.)

Debriefing starts...

### **Questions for debriefing**

1. Did you like the activity?
2. How did you feel about your character?
3. Would you like to have played a different character?
4. Did you incorporate aspects of your own character into the role you played?
5. What would you have changed?
6. What did you find challenging?



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