Action Exploration of Sociometric Choice Options
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Practitioner Question

You are running a personal growth group for a group of eight, using psychodrama as the announced primary mode of exploration. During a session focused on various interpersonal choices you have described the basic options as a positive choice, negative choice, neutral choice, conflicted choice and the â€œchoose not to chooseâ€• options. Describe a way you might involve the group in an action exploration of these sociometric options.

Preparation:

On the floor of the group space I have used masking tape to map a large square, one large enough for group members to stand inside. I place the roll of tape on one corner to represent the zero (O) or neutral position. To the left of that corner I tape a plus sign (+) indicating positive dominance and opposite to that corner I tape a Minus sign (-) to indicate negative dominance. Opposite to the zero I place a Plus/Minus to represent conflictual dominance. This structure is called the Diamond of Opposites 1 and is used to explore polarities and ambivalence in choice situations. It is a structure I want to use in future explorations in the group and this will be the first introduction to the basic template. I also place a chair outside of the diamond and refer to it as the â€œChoose not to chooseâ€• position.

I have generated a list of 10 questions (more than Iâ€™ll need) to which the group members can respond by taking a position. For example: (1) â€œA friend asks you: â€œWill you be my bridesmaid at my wedding?â€• (2) The PTA has asked you to head up a committee on school safety, (3) You see someone on the highway signaling they need help., etc.

I have in mind some exercises to warm the group up to action. I also have organized a way to make notes for myself to keep track of various membersâ€™ placement for each question.

Exploring sociometric choice options

Following some short action warmups such as stretching, using the voice, and interacting in playful ways, I begin to introduce the topic and identify the five positions. When I stand at each place, I ask the group to make sounds, statements and movements which represent, â€œpositiveâ€•,,â€•negativeâ€• â€œneutralâ€• â€œconflictedâ€• and â€œchoosing not to chooseâ€•. If they have questions I suggest that we try to do some brief explorations first and then discuss.

I read a question, and ask group members to go to the area on the diamond which best represents their answer. If any position is not taken by group members, I ask someone to role play that position for the group. I encourage comments by the group members and I make notes of the position taken by the group members. After a few of these I ask people to

get in twos or threes to come up with any questions they want to ask the group. We then explore these questions in action.

In closing, we hold a group discussion. What did people notice about the ease or difficulty to locating their response? What warmup is still with you? What do you need before we close the group session?

1 Carlson Sabelli,Linnea, Hecor Sabelli and Ann E. Hale, (1994) â€œSociometry and sociodynamicsâ€• in Psychodrama Since Moreno, Edited by Marcia Karp, Paul Holmes and Michael Watson. London, Routledge, p. 150-154.

2 Marlo J. Archer, â€œExploring choicesâ€• an e-mail response to sociometryquestions@yahoogroups.com , June 23, 2007. Dr. Archer has listed 14 possible topics and suggested the use of the locogram activity, which has a similar objective to the use of the Diamond of Opposites. Her list includes: (1) choice of your current spouse; (2) choice of an ex-spouse of boy/girlfriend; (3) choice of college; (4) choice of todayâ€™s breakfast; (5) choice of a political party; (6) choice of a presidential candidate; (7) choosing your favorite relative; (8) having to choose a family member to abandon in an emergency to save other family members; (9) choosing to quit a job; (10) choosing to end a relationship; (11) choosing to have a doctor investigate an unusual ache, pain, or symptom; (12) choosing to ask for a promotion or raise; (13) choosing to enter a sweepstakes / play the lottery; (14) choosing to spend a day at a casino.

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