

[After] Prohibition: A conversation about drugs

A workshop to prompt conversation about important questions regarding drugs in Norway.

Roles:

Facilitator — Host of the dialogue, keeps time
Co-facilitator — Distributes papers, takes notes, takes pictures(if players agree)
Players — Participates

Materials:

3 hours
Blank sheets of paper, one per player
Character sheets, one per player (half orange, half purple)
(print extra so that if mistakes are made, new sheets can be provided)
Thick markers(Sharpie or similar), one per player
Pens, one per player.

1 Introduce the workshop:

In this workshop we are going to have a dialogue about drugs in Norway in the future. That dialogue will be with people who holds different views than our own, but since we are all more or less on the same side, we will have to create our interlocutor and act in their absence.

This version of the workshop assumes that the players are on the same side in the debate around recreational drug reform in Norway.

2 Warm-up:

Start by warming up your players.

Hand out a blank piece of paper to all players, ask them to write an argument for their point of view in the drug-debate at the top of the page.

After one minute, hand the piece of paper to the person to your right.

Spend 3 minutes to write a counter argument to the point of view on the sheet of paper you received.

Hand the piece of paper to the person to your right.

Spend 5 minutes to write a counter argument to the counter argument.

Repeat the process until there is 4 arguments for each point of view on each piece of paper. (8 arguments in total) Take your time, the arguments are important.

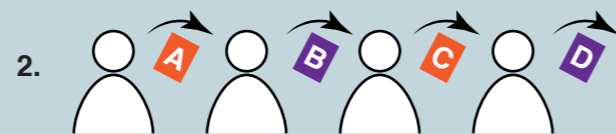
1. **Argument for...**
2. **Argument against...**
3. **Argument for...**
4. **Argument against...**
5. **Argument for...**
6. **Argument against...**
7. **Argument for...**
8. **Argument against...**

3 Characters:

Part 1:
Distribute character sheets to the players alternating between purple and orange sheets. Have the players fill out character the sheets by answering the questions on the sheet. The Purple characters have a "pro regulation for recreation" point of view, and the orange have a "against regulation for recreation" point of view. Focus on making the characters possible to have a dialogue with, they will serve as the interlocutors in this dialogue.



Part 2:
Hand the character sheets to the player to your right, you should receive a character sheet of a different color from the one you filled out. Analyse the new character sheet. What prejudice and assumptions can you spot? Take notes on what prejudice and assumptions you can identify and try to adjust the character to remove as much of the prejudice you can.



Tips for making characters believable:
Ask yourself, is this person intelligent/ethical/rational/good-natured person? If yes, precede with the workshop, and if not, spend some time to make the character believable as a real person with those qualities.

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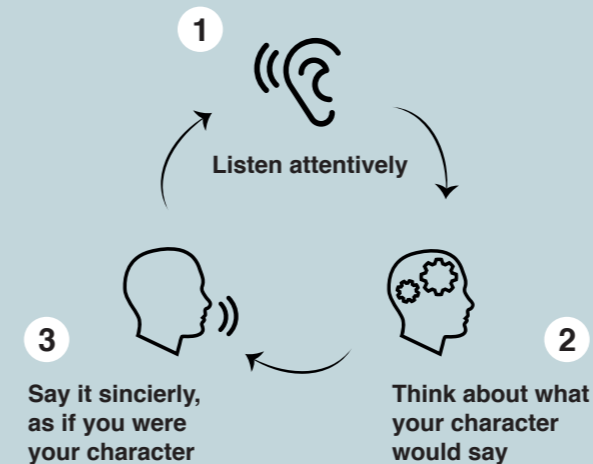
Break:

During the break, look over the character sheets, if any of them seem like caricatures, talk to the people who made it, and encourage them to make the character more believable. One way to do this is to imagine that the character is someone in the players family, an uncle or cousin.

5 Roleplaying dialogue:

Divide the players according to color on character sheet. Introduce role-play instructions.

Roleplay instructions:



Ask these quick questions and have the players respond in character, in order to practise. Ask them to reply honestly and comprehensively.

- What is your character most insecure about?
- What person does your character admire most?

6

Future scenario:

Introduce the setting for the discussion:

"Welcome today to 'Drugs, now and then' the talk show of the future, where we talk about the future. We have a wonderful cast of people with us today. Would the Purple team introduce themselves please?"

The Purple team introduces themselves (in character)

"Welcome, and Orange team, would you do the same?"

The Orange team introduces themselves (in character)

"Today we will peer into a possible future, and talk about it! Let's begin..."

NOTE:

It's important to note that these futures are possibilities of what might be. Regarding them as such, for the purposes of exploration will be necessary to engage in dialogue about the issues in question.

Pick **one** of the future scenarios(cartoons) and hand out copies of the timeline and comic. Read the full scenario out loud for the players. Give the players 2 minutes to write down their characters gut reactions in silence. Then, hand out the timeline-sheets, and have the groups spend 5-10 minutes with themselves to discuss them, and clarify what positions their characters, and team, would take on the different questions. Remind the players to discuss "in character."

7 Facilitating dialogue:

When the dialogue begins, ask the players to first read what their characters gut reaction was to the scenario.

Ask the questions linked to the scenario you're using, and have the players answer from the point of view of their character. If interesting questions come up, ask those too, and note them down for later. Spend time on each question, rather than rushing through all of them.

The dialogue should be just that, a dialogue. If the players don't engage with each other, use your position as the facilitator to direct questions. example:

Purple team states their point of view "I see, what do you think about this reaction, orange team?" Encourage them to take a position relative to the other teams statement. They might agree or disagree, see the problem from a different angle or question the other teams statement.

When they reply, ask them to be comprehensive ie. "I disagree because..."
"I agree because..."
"I am unsure about that, could you clarify?"

NOTE:

As facilitator you are responsible reminding players of staying in character throughout the dialogue, and for all characters to take part in the dialogue.

Identifying common ground:

Take notes whenever the two sides agree on something. What did they agree on, what did they not agree on?

8 Finishing the workshop:

End the dialogue when there is 10 minutes left of the allocated time, the conversation dies out or players no longer can manage to stay in character and continue the discussion. If the dialogue is interesting propose that you continue for some more time, or to play through once more at a later time. When finished, tell the players to "step out of their characters."

Ask for feedback on the discussion. What was easy, and what was hard?
How did it feel to step into the opposition?
How did it feel to be on the receiving end of the arguments you generally use?
Did they learn something?
Did something surprise you?
Finally, did they have fun? Finish up the workshop by summarising what you did. Everyone claps for each other.