

Open Ended Questions Exercise – 10 Min

OBJECTIVE: Learn how to ask open ended question(s) to foster curiosity as a component of reducing conflict.

- Explain that as a group we will practice open ended questions and being curious. We want to understand: “*What is happening? Please tell me more?*” Ask the group for more examples of open-ended questions. Distribute and review the *Open-Ended Questions* handout.

HOW:

- Fishbowl exercise: Gather in a circle with the whole group.
- Have a real-life experience in mind, and share a small part of it. i.e. “*Last week, something happened that made me very angry.*”
- The group then takes turns asking open ended questions and practicing curiosity, and you (the facilitator) gradually let out the full story.
- If someone asks a closed question, a facilitator just answers yes or no. In order to get to the full story, participants have to ask open ended questions.

Open Ended Questions

An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer. It is the opposite of a closed-ended question, which encourages a short or single word answer. Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading than closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as “Why” and “How”, or phrases such as “Tell me about...” Often they are not technically a question, but a statement which implicitly asks for a response. Some examples are:

- Tell me, what do you think about that?
- What is it you like about the idea?
- Why would you suggest that?
- How do you plan to achieve that?
- What do you think will happen now?
- How would you change things?
- What do you want to happen?
- What’s causing the problem?
- What’s the best case scenario?

Now, try them yourself.

Examples of how to begin an open-ended question:

- What would happen if...
- I wonder...
- What do you think about...
- In what way...
- Tell me about...
- What would you do...
- How can we...
- How did you...
- How do you feel about...
- Why?
- What do you mean?
- What if...
- Explain more about...
- What do you think about...
- Can you elaborate on...
- Tell me more about...