

Enlisting Allies Tag Team

GOALS

- practice identifying allies through awareness;
- connect some of the theory of de-escalation with skill of interposition.

TIME

45 minutes

HOW IT'S DONE

What to do when confronted with a crowd ready to riot or an imminent police invasion? Well, if you're alone or only in a small group: get allies! In this exercise participants get to practice enlisting allies rapidly through quick glances and trying different techniques.

The set-up is a bit complex, so make sure participants understand it fairly well before it begins. Have facilitators highly available, especially in the beginning, to assure a smooth running of the exercise.

This exercise is best done in work teams which are then broken down into three sub-teams (Group A, B, and C). Each group is about five people. At any time, one group will be the intervenors, the others will be the actors. By the end of the exercise, each participant will each get chances to be both actors and an intervenor. Round 1 will begin with one group (say Group A) being the intervenors and Group B and C being the actors.

INTERVENORS: THEIR TASK

As intervenors, one group will be placed outside of one room (e.g. in a hallway). In the room will be a bus stop (actually the other two groups in their role as actors).

The intervenors will run in the room and quickly try to identify a potential ally who will help them handle "the conflict" (actually just facilitators yelling as if fighting in still another room). Having enlisted an ally they are successful and will run (with a person from the bus stop, their ally) to the next room with the facilitators. (The ally then returns to the room.) Once participants reach where the facilitators are stationed, facilitators do a quick debrief to help intervenors anchor their experience.

The intervenors then signal to their team members waiting in the hallway to go: and the process continues with another person running into the room. This continues until everyone in the hallway has had a chance to try intervening.

THE ACTORS

Meanwhile, each of the actors (say Group B and C) will be given a sheet of paper with some description of their role. Their role dictates how they carry themselves and how they respond to be enlisted by the intervenors. Some roles will be highly ready to intervene and run off with the intervenors. Others, however, will be more challenging (and thus not worth the time!).

SWITCHING INTERVENORS/ACTORS

After each Round, the groups will rotate and the roles for the actors will be redistributed. So Group B would become the intervenors and move to the hallway. Group A would join Group C as actors and recast all the roles (so Group C gets new roles).

Between each round, also do some debrief: "How did you pick someone to enlist? What guided you? What did you do when the person did not react? How did it work to pick out one person versus the general group of people?"

Help participants notice that it is great to trust their intuition (even if it didn't work here - because it's just a role-play). But even if their intuition does not work (because intuition is often very rooted in culture) they need to keep trying to get folks.

After all the rounds are complete, debrief more completely with theory around de-escalation techniques for getting allies with larger scale interposition.

WHERE TOOL COMES FROM

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Tool Material: Tag Team Instruction Sheets

Cut each of these and hand them to participants who are being actors at the bus stop.

You are at a bus stop waiting for your kids to get off the bus. You have had a long day and just want to get them home. When you hear the fight breaking out, you only inch slightly away from it.

You are at a bus stop waiting for the bus. When you hear the fight breaking out, you wonder what is happening.

You are at a bus stop waiting for the bus. When you hear the fight breaking out, you look around for other people to see if anyone will do anything.

You are at a bus stop waiting for the bus. When you hear the fight breaking out, you freeze and get scared.

You are at a bus stop waiting for the bus. When you hear the fight breaking out, you get very nervous and worried about your personal safety.

You are at a bus stop waiting for the bus. When you hear the fight breaking out, you hope someone will deal with the situation.