

I Am the Center

Goals

- to help the group get to know each other (to "warm up" the room);
- to have the group learn where each other are literally and figuratively "coming from".

Time

30 minutes (depending on size of group)

How it's Done

Have participants stand up and clear out any mess/chairs from the floor space. Physically place yourself in the center of the room and declare, "Where I am standing is" - and finish with the location of the training (Bangkok, Philadelphia, Accra, etc.). Explain that the ground in the room is something like a map of the world - you might have the group point out the directions (North/South/East/West).

Tell participants their task is to position themselves around the room based on where they are from. Don't guide participants too much, since part of the challenge is for the group to begin to turn to each other as resources. On the other hand, give enough instruction and direction so participants aren't left completely baffled, as they try to figure out where is the Congo, where is Australia, etc.

After participants have arranged themselves, go around the room and give everyone a chance to give their name and where they are coming from. As you walk around, help the group notice any large clumps or small clumps, great time to acknowledge differences existing in the room. Welcome in the diversity.

No debrief is needed on this tool, although you might want to give people a chance to notice any feeling level expression. I've used this tool as a kind of diversity speak-out. For example, I used it where a percentage of the group was Native peoples who have been forced all their lives to live under United States' labels ("South Dakota"... "Alaska"....etc). They passionately spoke about their experiences -- it gave them a chance to be seen and more fully understood -- and a chance for other participants to become more conscious of the margins of society.

WHERE THIS TOOL COMES FROM

Created by Daniel Hunter with Margaret Lechner and the Conflict Resolution Center in Richmond, Indiana.