

INCLUSION TANDEM EXERCISES



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INTRODUCTION

InclusionTandem invites you to explore the topic of inclusion in a practical, lasting, and experiential way. The exercises in this collection are designed to help you develop, bring to life, and practice inclusive thinking and action. These exercises are suitable for use in workshops, seminars, and other educational contexts. They offer examples of how an inclusive mindset can be experienced, for instance, through training perception and attention, conscious listening and questioning, the consistent implementation of collaborative work methods, and the cultivation of solution-oriented optimism.

This collection is a treasure trove for anyone who initiates or supports inclusive processes in contexts such as adult education, youth work, cultural education, or arts education. Many exercises incorporate the two-senses principle. These exercises address more than one sense, increasing accessibility for people with sensory impairments.

Absolutely fundamental to all exercises that aim to make sensory impairments or disabilities tangible is the direct involvement of people personally affected by these impairments. We named our project “InclusionTandem” based on this principle. Forming tandems of people with and without disabilities should be standard practice when planning and conducting awareness workshops.

InclusionTandem views disability as one dimension of diversity. The approach described here for fostering inclusive thinking and action can certainly be applied to other dimensions of diversity.

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ICEBREAKERS

What is your “superpower”?

Time: 10-15 minutes

Objectives:

Introduction, getting to know the members of the group, building relationships

Description of the exercise:

The group sits in a circle, and the trainer asks the participants to introduce themselves briefly one after another. The participants are also asked to share one or two of their characteristics or abilities which they consider their strengths, i.e. their superpower.

Instructions for the trainers:

- There may be participants for whom it is difficult to answer this question. You must emphasise that they do not have to think about extraordinary talents; any characteristic, skill, or ability can be a superpower in which they think they are good at. Positive thinking about ourselves supports self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- There are almost one or two participants in each group who love talking in detail. Such long monologues can hamper the trainers’ work and the progress of the training. To avoid such inconvenient situations, you can use an hourglass or stopwatch to limit each introduction to 1-1.5 minutes.

Mystery Bag

Time: 8 minutes

Objectives:

Association via touch, expressing emotions, building relationships

Preparations:

In a bag, place small objects that are tactile, made out of different materials, and have interesting shapes. Adjust the number of objects to the number of participants so that even the last person drawing an object has the opportunity of choice.

Tools required:

Bag, small objects that are interesting to touch (their number should be adjusted to the group's size)

Description of the exercise:

The trainer offers the bag to each participant, and asks them first to draw an object from it, then to form pairs. Now everyone should examine the object in their hand, relying on touch instead of sight. What emotion or feeling does the object's texture/form evoke? After identifying an emotion or feeling, each participant should turn towards their partner and tell them a short personal story about when they felt the same way as they are feeling now, touching the object. The story can be fresh experiences from the day before, or earlier memories, even from childhood. The exercise is then repeated: the pairs are asked to change their objects, then, with the new object in hand, find themselves a new partner.

Instructions for the trainers:

Limiting the time is useful in this exercise as well as the previous one. Give one minute to one member of the pair to tell their stories, then one minute to the other. You can use a simple musical instrument or a bell to signal when the time is up.

Drawing in Pairs

Time: 7 minutes

Objectives:

Imagination, projecting inner pictures, "switching off" the eyes, building relationships

Tools required:

- sheets of A/4 paper
- tools for drawing

Description of the exercise:

Participants are asked again to form pairs and sit down at the tables opposite each other. One member of each pair should tell their partner a short story in 1 minute about travelling. Meanwhile, the listener draws the story but without looking at the paper. After 1 minute, the pair looks at the drawing and the listener explains what they have drawn, what associations they made listening to the other's story. Then the roles are changed and the exercise is repeated.

Variations:

- If there is a visually impaired person in the group:

When it is the visually impaired participant's turn to draw, the interpretation of the drawing should be a discussion – the non-visually impaired partner telling what they see on the paper while the visually impaired listener explains their thoughts and associations. When the visually impaired participant is the storyteller and the non-visually impaired person is the one drawing, the reflection on the drawing should go as explained in the description.

Instructions for the trainers:

The aim of this exercise is neither self-expression nor perfection. Emphasise that the participants should think in simple lines and forms, and drawings can be non-figurative. The point is to capture emotions and moods; the listeners should pay attention to the voice, facial expression, and gestures of the storyteller.



TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISES

Tuning

Time: 7 minutes

Objectives:

Getting in tune with each other, creating contact non-verbally

Description of the exercise:

The participants form a circle and are asked to make a sound one after the other using their mouth, hands, legs (clap, snap, stomp, rub palms together, sigh, whistle, etc.), any sound that they are comfortable with at that moment.

After one round, the group starts walking in the room, everyone at their own pace, changing directions once in a while. Everyone is asked to start „playing” a short rhythm in the form and way they like (clap, snap, stomp, etc.) and keep repeating that rhythm while walking.

When they meet someone in the space, they should stop for a little while, make eye contact, play together for some seconds, then walk away and meet someone new with whom they can play together.

After some encounters, they should stop, but continue playing their rhythm. Then, gradually, everyone should get quieter until the exercise ends in silence.

Variations:

- If there is a participant with a visual or mobility impairment: Ask them if they prefer doing this exercise standing in one place or sitting. If yes, ask the non-disabled participants to walk in the space so that they can meet and play together with the person standing or sitting.

- If there is a person with hearing impairment in the group:
Ask them whether it is acceptable for them that the other participants tap their rhythm on their shoulder/arm/hand, or if they prefer any other way of playing together.

Impro of Three

Time: 5 minutes

Objectives:

Nonverbal communication, group cohesion, practising concentration relying on sounds without visual cues

Tools required:

- a kit of percussion instruments, or objects that can be used to make sounds (shorn of these: 'body percussion' technique – drumming on the body, clapping, snapping, stomping, or any sound the participants can make)

Description of the exercise:

The group sits down in a circle with the participants' eyes closed or blindfolded. The first participant (preferably the trainer) starts playing a short rhythm with their instrument, to which the person sitting to the left of them joins after a few seconds, and then the third person joins in with their rhythm (following the clockwise direction). The three participants play together, each repeating their short rhythm for a while. Then, the first participant stops, and the fourth one starts to play. Then, the second one stops, and the fifth participant begins to play, and so on. The point is that only three participants are playing at the same time.

Instructions for the trainers:

Explain the exercise and give instructions beforehand. Do not speak during the exercise, and ask the participants to avoid talking until the end of the exercise.

From Silence to Silence

Time: 5 minutes

Objectives:

Nonverbal self-expression, connecting, group cohesion, releasing tension

Tools required:

- a kit of percussion instruments, or objects that can be used to make sounds (shorn of these: 'body percussion' technique – drumming on the body, clapping, snapping, stomping, or any sound the participants can make)

Description of the exercise:

Each participant chooses a percussion instrument/object/mode of body percussion. The exercise begins in complete silence. Then, the participants start to play whenever they feel like doing so. They play a rhythm they prefer. They can continue playing their original rhythm, or change the rhythm, pace, or volume as they are listening to the rhythms of the other participants. The participants stop playing in a random order. The exercise ends when nobody plays any longer and the group returns to complete silence.

This exercise can be done standing, sitting, or moving in the room. In the case of the latter, when someone stops playing, they stop walking and stand still.

Variations:

- If there is a person with a visual or mobility impairment among the participants

The group should preferably stand or sit during the exercise.

Instructions for the trainers:

Explain the exercise and give instructions beforehand. Do not speak during the exercise, and ask the participants to avoid talking until the end of the exercise.

Get in Shape

Time: 10 minutes

Objectives:

Nonverbal communication, group cohesion, cooperation

Tools required:

- a blindfold for each participant

Description of the exercise:

The group is divided into smaller teams of 6-8 members. The teams are asked to create shapes of themselves by working together without speaking. The first shape can be a star, the second a ball, and the third a square. The square can be done in a way that everyone is blindfolded – talking is allowed in this variation.

Variations:

- If there is a person with a visual impairment in the group:
The team to which the visually impaired person belongs does not have to communicate nonverbally. The members can discuss how they will create the shapes. This is crucial because in the absence of visual cues the visually impaired participant can easily become the object of pulling and pushing without verbal communication.

Instructions for the trainers:

The last variation with the square can be an exercise for the whole big group. That way, the smaller teams do not disturb each other by speaking over each other, and communication can be clearer.

Soundscapes

Time: 6 minutes

Objectives:

Nonverbal self-expression, strengthening group cohesion

Tools required:

- musical instruments and/or objects that can be used to make sounds and/or voices and/or body percussion
- slips of paper with the themes

Description of the exercise:

The group is divided into smaller teams of three or four. The trainer gives each team a theme, e.g dawn, storm, noises of the city, the sea, dusk in the woods, etc. The teams are asked to evoke their themes through sounds. The teams can prepare and practice for 4-5 minutes, then the whole group reassembles and each team performs their soundscape for the others. The listeners can guess after each performance what the theme of the given soundscape might have been.



INCLUSION-FOCUSED EXERCISES

Find the right objects

Time: 20-30 minutes

Objectives:

Recognising objects by touch, providing clear instructions

Tools required:

A photo for each pair on which a composition of objects is visible; a bag full of different, tactually partly similar, objects, with the objects on the photo among them for each pair; a blindfold for each pair

Description of the exercise:

The participants are asked to form pairs. One member of each pair gets a photo on which a composition of objects is visible. They do not show their partner this picture. The other member of the pair puts on the blindfold (or closes their eyes), and they get a bag full of objects which they can only explore by touch. The blindfolded participants are asked not to pull out objects from the bag yet (so they should not show their partner the objects). The sighted member of the pair thus, sees the photo but does not know what kind of objects are in the bag.

The sighted member looks at the photo with the composition. Their task is to describe the objects on the picture without actually telling the objects' name. They can only describe the objects by their shape, material, size, function, and how they may feel to the touch.

The blindfolded member meanwhile searches in the bag and tries to identify the right objects based on the description of their partner. When they pull out an object from the bag, it becomes a chosen one and cannot be put back into the bag or be changed for another object. The sighted partner cannot correct or comment on the decision.

When all the right objects are out of the bag, the sighted partner describes the composition on the photo. The blindfolded partner has to arrange the objects on the table in the right order and composition based on the description. The arrangement is still done with the blindfold on.

When the composition is deemed ready, the blindfold can be taken off, and the two partners can compare the composition on the photo and the arrangement on the table.

The exercise should be followed by a round of reflection with the whole group. How accurate were the descriptions? What strategies worked? What was surprising or difficult?

A Strange Conversation

Time: 15-20 minutes

Objectives:

Stepping out of the comfort zone, learning to handle difficulties in communication, raising awareness about “otherness”

Tools required:

- a slip of paper/card with an instruction for each participant

Description of the exercise:

Each participant gets a slip of paper/card with an instruction related to communication (see the list of suggested instructions below). The participants work in pairs, and each participant communicates according to the instructions on their paper. They do so even if the situation seems strange and unreasonable.

- The pairs are formed.
- Everyone reads only their instruction. The partners should not show each other their instructions.
- The trainer gives a topic for the conversation: What kind of weather do you like and dislike?
- The pairs talk for 1.5-2 minutes and follow the instructions.
- When the time is up, the members of the pair swap their papers and go to find themselves a new partner. The trainer gives a new topic: How do you feel about pets?

- The participants swap papers, find new partners, and start new conversations for one or two more times.
- After the conversations, the trainer asks the group to reflect on the exercise. This is important since frustration and other feelings should be expressed. The group also discusses the following questions: What was the aim of the exercise? How does it relate to the subject of inclusion and integration?

Variations:

- If there is a participant with visual impairment in the group: The instructions should be modified so that they do not only influence the communication in a visual way (e.g repetition of a gesture) but can be sensed without vision. These instructions may influence directions, movement, rhythm, and sounds.

Instructions for the trainers:

The instructions on the slips of paper/cards might be:

- Munch!
- Speak very quietly!
- Speak loudly!
- Rub your nose!
- Start all your sentences this way: Well... I don't really know...
- Turn your back on your partner!
- While talking, touch your partner's arm or shoulder several times!
- Yawn constantly!
- Clear your throat!
- Ask questions only, speak using only questions!
- Start all your sentences this way: In my opinion...
- Rub together your hands, rub your arms as if you were cold!
- Sniff!
- Snigger (laugh) at everything!

- While speaking, shift your weight from foot to foot!
- Clap your hands nervously!

The Circle

Time: 3 minutes

Objectives:

Raising awareness and empathy

Tools required:

- blindfolds

Description of the exercise:

Half of the group gets a blindfold and is asked to put it on. The trainer walks to the other end of the room and asks the participants to come over and create a circle.

Instructions for the trainers:

- In an ideal scenario, every participant who can see goes and helps those who are blindfolded get to their place in the circle. However, it does not always work out that way even in the group that you consider cohesive and empathetic. It can also happen that some participants try to get to the circle without waiting or asking for help. That is not a problem; at least you can discuss that too.
- As the circle is complete, you can discuss the exercise and the different solutions: How did the participants react to the situation? How did they feel in the role of the person needing help/providing help? Was there someone who did not get any help?

The Sound of Silence

Time: 3 minutes

Objectives:

Practising concentration relying on sounds without visual cues, getting to understand visually impaired people

Description of the exercise:

The participants are asked to close their eyes and, for one minute – in silence –, listen to the noises in the room and coming from outside. After one minute, the group discusses what sounds and noises they heard and recognised. How did it feel to „switch off“ their vision?

The Gate

Time: 5 minutes

Objectives:

Introducing touch to the groupwork, nonverbal communication

Tools required:

- one blindfold

Description of the exercise:

The group forms a circle. A volunteering participant steps into the middle of the circle and puts the blindfold on. The participants in the circle nonverbally decide who will be “the gate”. The blindfolded participant’s task is to find this gate that metaphorically lets them out of the circle. The participants forming the circle extend their right hands, and the participant in the middle slowly spins and shakes hands with everyone. They have to find „the gate“ based on the feeling and intensity of the handshakes. The exercise can be repeated with one or two more volunteers. At the end, there should be time and opportunity for a short discussion on how everyone felt in the exercise.

Instructions for the trainers:

- This exercise can be an excellent preparation for the ‚Guiding‘ exercise.
- As discussed in our A Brief Guide to Visual Impairment booklet, people with visual impairment are used to getting information and help by being touched on, or touching hands, arms, and/or shoulders. This is true even if the person providing the help is a stranger to the visually impaired person. Being touched or touching a stranger is unfamiliar (or, even

uncomfortable) for the majority of non-visually impaired adults. Though the handshake might be the most accepted form of contact between strangers in Western culture, this exercise can still be uncomfortable for some participants. The discussion at the end of the exercise is there to express these feelings of discomfort, too. It is important to understand that the aim of the training is not to evoke only positive feelings. To raise awareness and empathy, it is essential that the participants experience the difficulties that people with disabilities encounter every day.

Guiding

Time: 10 minutes

Objectives:

Stepping out of the comfort zone, experiencing dependence on someone else, paying attention to each other, and raising empathy

Tools required:

- one blindfold per pair

Description of the exercise:

The group is asked to form pairs. One member of each pair gets a blindfold; they will be the ones guided in the room by their partners. It is important that the guides pay attention to the needs of the guided partners. The guides should observe how lost or confident their blindfolded partner is and adjust the pace of their walk accordingly. The blindfolded participants may be uncertain, and the guides have to respect this, even if this means that they walk extremely slowly. Similarly, turns and changes of pace should first be done very gently by the guides until they feel that their partners are getting more confident. The guides also have to pay attention to the environment and avoid any uncomfortable situations or collisions with other pairs/objects.

- Before the exercise begins, the members of each pair decide the roles: the guide and the guided.
- Each pair then agrees on a mode of touch that is accept-

able and comfortable for both of them. This might be, e.g. holding the other's wrist, their arm above the elbow, or the shoulder/shoulders with one/two hands.

- When all the pairs are prepared and ready, the guided members are asked to put on their blindfolds, and the trainer starts the exercise.
- The time for this task is 1.5-2 minutes. After this interval, the trainer signals that the time is up and asks the pairs to stop. The guided participants can remove the blindfolds after they stop.
- In 1-1.5 minutes, the pairs can discuss their impressions.
- Now the roles are changed, guides become the guided and vice versa. Before the exercise begins, the pairs should discuss whether they will use the same guiding method as the first time, or if another method is more comfortable for them.
- The exercise is started by the trainer again, lasts for 1.5-2 minutes, and is followed by the discussion as before.

Variations:

- If there is a participant with visual impairment in the group:
Ask them if they are willing to participate in a way that they guide their blindfolded partner by using their white cane or their guide dog. The trainer conducting the exercise should pay extra attention to this pair, and if they see a difficult situation, they have to intervene immediately.
- If there is a participant with a mobility impairment in the group:
Ask them if they are comfortable with guiding their partner. If they use a cane, the realisation of the exercise might be „bumpy” but not impossible at all. If they use a wheelchair, their blindfolded partner can hold on to the wheelchair. The blindfolded partner can follow the movement of the wheelchair.

Instructions for the trainers:

- This exercise builds heavily on trust, so you should only introduce it after the participants have already got to know each other and are through the exercises strengthening group cohesion.
- You should observe and take into consideration the group's nature regarding timing. There are groups where members like to speak and share their impressions in detail, while in other groups, the participants may be more reserved. When it is time for the pairs to discuss their impressions, pay attention to this and manage the times accordingly.
- It is also important to talk about and demonstrate the generally accepted way of guiding a person as you introduce the exercise. This not only makes the participants' task easier in this exercise but also gives them a useful method which they can use in real life to help visually impaired people - if they ask for help. Emphasise that asking questions should always precede action when offering help to people with disability. The main point to keep in mind is that it is always the visually impaired, or now blindfolded person, who holds onto the sighted guide's arm - usually above the elbow, as if holding a glass of water - and not vice versa. This is so because this way the guided person is a half step behind the sighted guide and can follow them easily, while if the sighted guide held their arm, the visually impaired/blindfolded person would be one step in front of the guide and would feel pushed around. Without vision, this situation can generate uncertainty and be frightening. Naturally, if they wish to, the pairs can test guiding both ways in order to feel the difference.

Treasure Hunt

Time: 10 minutes

Objectives:

Stepping out of the comfort zone, experiencing dependence on someone else, paying attention to each other, raising empathy, providing precise verbal instructions and directions

Tools required:

- one blindfold per pair
- one object (treasure) per pair

Description of the exercise:

This is the continuation of the 'Guiding' exercise, so the pairs should remain together. The participants without the blindfolds hide the objects somewhere in the room. The aim of the sighted guide in this exercise is to navigate their blindfolded partner to the object by using only verbal instructions. There is no physical contact between the members of the pairs. When the blindfolded participant finds the object, the blindfold can be taken off and given to the guide. The pairs are asked to postpone the discussion of their impressions until all pairs have finished. This is important so that the pairs still working are not disturbed by the noise. After the pairs discuss their impressions, the roles are switched and the exercise is repeated.

Variations:

If there is a participant with visual impairment in the group, ask them whether they would like to participate in the exercise. They can rely on their white cane or guide dog to find a suitable hiding place in the room, then use their memory to navigate their partner to the object. The trainer conducting this exercise has to pay special attention to this pair and intervene immediately if they see a difficult situation.

Instructions for the trainers:

- Emphasise that the hiding place does not have to be too complicated; participants do not have to create extreme obstacles for each other. If they perceive the exercise as too difficult, they can place the object in an easily accessible nearby spot. If you have time and the participants are willing, you can repeat the exercise on a more advanced level.
- The 'Guiding' and 'Treasure Hunt' exercises are advised to be regarded as a unit and worthy of a group discussion. Give the opportunity for the participants to reflect and share their impressions and feelings about the two exercises in front of the whole group.

Hot Chair

Time: 15-20 minutes at a minimum

Objectives:

Open and honest communication, raising important and serious questions, and raising empathy

Tools required:

- blindfolds for every non-visually impaired participant and trainer (sitting in the circle)

Description of the exercise:

The group sits in a circle, and the trainer coordinating the exercise presents the instructions and rules.

- Surely everybody has questions concerning disability that they have not asked yet, either because they have not dared to, or have not had the opportunity. In the following 30 minutes (at maximum), the participants can ask their questions to the trainer with visual or mobility impairment (and, if there is a non-disabled trainer who participates, they can be asked too – see the Instructions for the trainers for details).
- Any question might be posed; however, the trainer(s) have the right to leave the question unanswered without explanation if they feel that way for any reason. It is important to emphasise that the decision has to be respected and the person asking the question should not take the refusal personally.
- To encourage the participants and allow an open and honest discussion, everyone is asked to put on their blindfolds. Only one person, the trainer conducting this exercise, remains „sighted“. They do not sit in the circle and do not take part in the exercise, but stay outside, ensuring the safety of the participants.

After the presentation of the rules, the participants are asked to put on their blindfolds, and the trainer, who is staying outside, gives the cue to start when everyone is ready. When the trainer perceives that there are no more questions, they close the ex-

ercise. The participants are cautioned to take the blindfolds off slowly, as it feels comfortable for them. This exercise should be followed by some less demanding exercise that can be used for releasing tension.

Variations:

- If there is a person with disability among the participants:
It is preferable that there is a non-disabled trainer besides the trainer with disability from whom the participants can ask questions. However, this is only an option if there is another trainer who can conduct and observe the exercise from outside (see the Instructions).

Instructions for the trainers:

- It is advisable to do this exercise only if the trainers are working in tandem, i.e if there is a trainer with disability and a trainer without disability. Everyone must put on the blindfold, except for the trainer with sight. It is their task to ensure the safety and comfort of the group. They do not sit in the circle; they only observe the discussion from outside. Also, they start and close the exercise when they perceive that there are no more questions. If there are more than the two trainers mentioned above, these other trainers can participate and can be asked questions, just like the trainer with disability.
- When you introduce the exercise, you can set some boundaries by adding a little hint about asking questions related to “how the trainer with visual/mobility impairment lives their everyday life”. With this hint, the discussion might be steered away from such deep questions as “How can you live this way?” “How did your parents cope with your disability?”. These are equally important questions, but it is not that fortunate if the discussion ends up digging into the soul of the trainer with disability instead of an informative conversation about the abilities, solutions, and everyday life of the trainer (which is quite interesting on its own without psychologising).
- Another crucial point is to introduce this exercise only after a 2-hour (at a minimum) work with the group. Beforehand,

the participants need to get to know each other verbally and through the exercises, building group cohesion. It is also preferable if the group has already done exercises with the blindfolds on, e.g the 'Guiding' exercise. If these steps are left out, the discussion may turn into being either disrespectful or superficial.

- If you, as the responding trainer, feel it necessary, you can go to a separate room to relax and recharge after this exercise. This can be useful when the exercise is followed by a break because boundaries can dissolve easily, and despite the closure, the participants might continue to ask you questions. Of course, this is not a bad thing; still, it is important that you have the opportunity to retreat and relax if you need it.

Scenes in Small Groups

Time: 20 minutes

Objectives:

Raising empathy, stepping out of the comfort zone, getting better at communication, cooperation, and sensing problems

Description of the exercise:

People with disabilities often find themselves in situations where they feel helpless and in need of assistance. However, regardless of their condition, everyone has experienced helplessness in some shape or form and thus is familiar with the feeling of helplessness. The participants are asked to form smaller teams of 4-8 and discuss situations in which they felt helpless. Based on the discussions, each team creates a short scene in which somebody finds themselves helpless. The teams cast the roles, rehearse their scenes, and finally show the group their improvisations.

Instructions for the trainers:

- Ask the participants to avoid reconstructing an exact situation from their personal life. Personal experiences are important and useful, but should only be used as a foundation. The teams can also decide how their scenes end.

- How gifted an actor someone is does not matter in this exercise. Play is our common language. We know how to speak this language from our childhood; everyone can play. This exercise is like being in a lab where we can test different interactions in test tubes. We can best test different situations in human life by creating, performing, and discussing scenes.
- If there is a participant who does not want to play in the scene, ask them to participate actively in the discussion and the brainstorming in their team.

Working with Symbols

Time: 45 minutes

Objectives:

Recognising problems, understanding inclusion, finding solutions

Tools required:

- at least 20-25 small objects (symbols) for each team
- papers with the categories for each team

Description of the exercise:

The trainer prepares as many tables with the symbols and categories as needed so that the group can sit down in smaller groups of 3-6 people. The 20-25 symbols are placed in a heap on each table next to the papers with the following categories: workplace, health, education/learning, social support, transportation, free time, and other.

The participants are asked to divide into smaller teams of 3 to 6 people and sit down at a table. If there are more participants with disabilities, they are asked to join different teams. The team members talk about each category on the table and identify at least one difficulty for each category that people with disabilities encounter in the given field. After identifying this difficulty, the team chooses a symbol from the heap which, according to them, best represents that problem and places it in the category. Then, the team tries to find some inclusive solution for the problem, chooses a symbol representing this solution and places it on the category.

When most of the teams are ready, one after the other, they show each other the symbols on their tables. Through the symbols, they explain their thoughts and present their solutions. It is not a problem if there are slower teams that did not have time to discuss all the categories.

Variations:

- If there is a participant with a disability:
The team to which they join can benefit from their personal experience. The team can base their discussion on this person's difficulties and can find inclusive solutions for these.
- If there is a participant with visual impairment in the group:
They should get a hands-on experience of the symbols both during the teamwork and the presentation of the results. The symbols, thus, should be handed over to them so that they can understand the symbol in a tactile way and not only verbally. Also, if the visually impaired participant has some degree of vision, it might be helpful to print the categories on colourful paper. This way, they can distinguish the categories on the table with more ease.

Instructions for the trainers:

- Emphasise that inclusion means changing the system. It is a compromise in which each side has to adapt to a tolerable degree. It is not an inclusive solution if one side expects adaptation from the other but is not willing to adapt in return.
- You need a serious amount of symbols, which might sound daunting, but in reality, it is not that difficult to collect these small objects. Almost any kind of small knick-knack can be the part of your kit: a button, a pebble, a hairpin, a medicine vial, a syringe, a paperclip, an eraser (rubber), a plastic spoon, a small glass bottle, a safety pin, small figurines from Kinder Surprise, a chess piece, a LEGO brick... Almost any object can connect to an underlying meaning. Any object can be an embodiment of something seemingly unrelated in the right context.

Planning an Accessible Workplace

Time: 30 minutes

Objectives:

Thinking within the inclusive mindset, solving problems

Tools required:

- flipchart (or a large sheet of paper)
- felt-tip pens/markers for each team

Description of the exercise:

The group is divided into smaller teams so that each team can sit comfortably around a table. The teams draw/create maps of their workplace (or an imaginary workplace) and mark points on the map where some changes are due in terms of inclusion. Besides making the work itself inclusive and accessible, the teams should also think about the ways the lunch breaks are spent, and the ways one can get to the workplace and then get around in the building with inclusion in mind.

After the discussions, each team presents their results to the others.

Variations:

- If there is a participant with visual impairment in the group: the team can use threads to create a tactile map. The threads can be fixed onto the sheet with any kind of adhesive tape. The points where change is due according to the team can be marked with small objects, e.g pebbles.

Instructions for the trainers:

- If you hold the training as an awareness-raising programme for the employees of a given firm, organisation, etc., the base of this exercise should be their actual workplace. If the size of the workplace allows it, you can divide it between the teams so that, e.g each team works on a different floor, area, or unit of the workplace. If the participants are not co-workers and thus do not share a workplace, first they should agree on the profile of an imaginary workplace, and then they can plan inclusively.

- Emphasise that inclusion means changing the system. It is a compromise in which each side has to adapt to a tolerable degree. It is not an inclusive solution if one side expects adaptation from the other but is not willing to adapt in return.



STRESS-RELIEF EXERCISES

The rain

Time: 5 minutes

Objectives:

Creating something together, releasing tension, building team cohesion

Description of the exercise:

The participants stand or sit in a circle. The trainer stands in the middle of the circle and slowly walks round and round in front of the participants. While walking, the trainer is making a sound which the participant in front of whom they stand begins to imitate. Thus, following the movement of the trainer, everyone begins and continues to make the given sound in the circle. As the trainer reaches the beginning of the circle, they start making a new sound, and the participant in front of whom they pass starts to imitate this new sound. Thus, there are participants who are still continuing to make the previous sound, and there are those who start playing the new one. The group imitates the sounds of rain. First, the sounds are getting louder and louder as the “rain gets heavier,” then gradually the sounds become more and more gentle as the “rain gets lighter” and eventually stops.

Variations:

- If there is a visually impaired participant:
Tell them verbally how you make the given sound
- If there is a participant with a mobility impairment
You should adjust the mode of making the sounds to the abilities of this person; some sounds may have to be changed or omitted completely (meaning the whole group)

Instructions for the trainers:

You are going to show the participants the following sounds:

1. Rub your palms together.
2. Clap quietly, using only two fingers to hit the palm of your other hand in a fast rhythm.
3. Snap with your hands – one after the other – in a fast rhythm.
4. Drum on your thighs with your palms in a fast rhythm.
5. Stomp on the ground with your feet in an irregular rhythm.

After the stomping, repeat the first four rounds in an inverted order, the same way as before. Walk before the participants and after the palm rubbing round walk another round, silencing each participant as you pass with a gesture.

Breathing exercise with sounds

Time: 5 minutes

Objectives:

Relaxation, releasing tension

Description of the exercise:

The group sits in a circle with eyes closed or blindfolded (as each participant prefers). The trainer asks the participants to take deep breaths and change the mode of exhalation in the following ways:

1. Take a few deep breaths. Then, the participants are asked to make an 'sh', 's', or 'f' sound with the next 3 exhalations. They can choose a single sound for all three exhalations, or they can mix it up and decide which sound they make with each exhalation.
2. During the next three exhalations, the participants are asked to make a sound, with a closed mouth, using the same sound in the same pitch for all three exhalations.
3. For the next four exhalations, the participants are asked to make a sound; this time, each exhalation should have a different pitch and the mouths should not be closed but rather form an 'a', 'e', 'o', or 'u' sound.

Instructions for the trainers:

- This exercise is great to release tension after an emotionally demanding exercise.
- You should give the instructions about the mode of exhalation during the exercise, step by step – so not beforehand

Spelling

Time: 3 minutes

Objectives:

Relaxation, releasing tension

Tools required:

- blindfolds (optional)

Description of the exercise:

The participants are asked to spell out their names aloud, all at the same time. Consonants should be pronounced short and loud, while vowels should be almost “sung” for a longer time, each one on a different pitch. For instance, Alex should be AAAAA, L, EEEEE, X.

Instructions for the trainers:

- This exercise may be linked to the ‘Breathing Exercise with Sounds’ one.
- It might be done with closed eyes or using the blindfolds (optional).

The Choir

Time: 5 minutes

Objectives:

Releasing tension, cooperation

Description of the exercise:

This exercise merges and builds upon the ‘Breathing Exercise with Sounds’ and the ‘Spelling’ exercises. The group is divided into three smaller groups, which will be the three parts of the choir:

1. As they exhale, make an 'sh', 's', or 'f' sound
2. As they exhale, form an ,a', ,e', ,o', or ,u' sound, and each exhalation should have a different pitch
3. They should spell out their names aloud, consonants should be pronounced short and loud, while vowels should be almost "sung" for a longer time, each one on a different pitch, e.g Alex should be AAAAA, L, EEEEE, X

This three-parted choir is conducted by a volunteering participant. The conductor can use hand gestures to start, or stop a part, or make them „sing" louder, or in a more gentle way.

Sound Ball

Time: 2 minutes

Objectives:

Energising, releasing tension, releasing positive energies, strengthening the spirit of community

Description of the exercise:

Standing in a circle, the group launches a 'ball of energy':

1. The participants start from a bent, or squatting, position and make a continuous, low humming sound.
2. Paying attention to each other, the participants begin to rise gradually, lifting their hands as if lifting an imaginary ball in the middle of the circle. The volume and pitch of humming follow the movement.
3. Eventually, the participants stretch their hands to the sky, while making the loudest and highest humming sound. Then, together at once, they release the ball.