WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHY? HOW?

CRITICAL THINKING

INTRODUCTION

Critical Thinking defined as 'evaluating something by both its merits and faults' was introduced to the world as a method of questioning. In order to understand the complexity and the depth of the mundane and the simple, questioning requires a thorough analysis of the aim, the knowledge at hand, the interpretation, and the assumption of the object of questioning.

Understanding, comprehending, and analyzing are all part of the critical thinking process. This process of critical thinking helps the individual separate the facts from the manipulation, ultimately facilitating the development of one's judgment.

Fostering Critical Thinking Project aims to teach capabilities and attitudes which are especially important for adults. In the captivating journey of the Erasmus+ project "Fostering Critical Thinking", our project team embarked on a two-week exploration across France and Türkiye. This expedition was driven by a diverse group of individuals, hailing from different corners of the world with unique personal experiences and cultural backgrounds. Such training or events would allow adults to learn the ability to question certain things in their lives and ultimately help them live satisfying lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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MARSHMALLOW SPAGHETTI CHALLENGE

TARGET GROUP:
6+ years
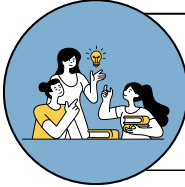
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
5 players per group,
at least 2 groups.

DURATION
18 minutes
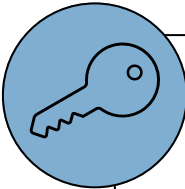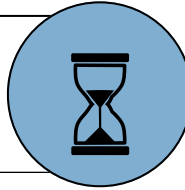
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

hand crafting, critical thinking, group communication, leadership dynamics, collaboration, innovation and problem solving strategy.

OBJECTIVES

- Making the highest tower of spaghetti
- Deciding which materials are necessary
- Discussing about the different ideas to achieve highest tower
- Active listening
- Rethinking
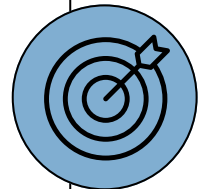
PREPARATION:

Each table has to have 5 chairs around and the material needed.

Materials (per team):
 1 marshmallow, 20 spaghetti, 1 meter of rope and 1 meter of tape

DESCRIPTION: A team-building activity in which teams must compete to build the tallest free-standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one meter of tape, one meter of string, and one marshmallow.

The only rule is that the team cannot break the marshmallow which has to sit on the top of the tower. When the time is up, they have to stop and take their hands off of their construction.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Who won the game?

Who was the leader of each group?

Was everyone in the group listened to?

Why did you go with that idea? Explain your process.

Would you go for a different approach now that you have seen the other groups' towers?

Did you use all the materials?

THE PAPER PLANE CHALLENGE

TARGET GROUP:

10+ years
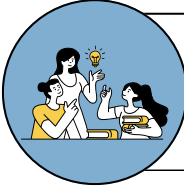
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

5-6 per group, at least 2 groups

DURATION

10 minutes
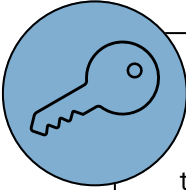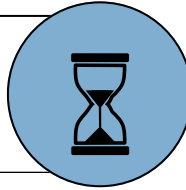
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, sharing ideas, active listening, rethinking

OBJECTIVES

- Making the plane that will fly the furthest
- Deciding how to use all materials
- Discussing the different ideas
- Active listening
- Rethinking
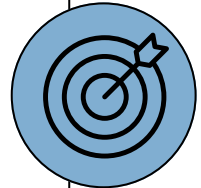
PREPARATION:

The educator needs to prepare the materials for each group and make sure to divide the participants into heterogeneous groups to encourage active listening and sharing of different opinions.

Half of the group gets minimal material for the optimal paper plane (two pieces of paper) and the other half gets more material (two pieces of paper, a small rock, a clipper, a clothespin, a tape, a small branch, an elastic band, pencil).

The groups should start the challenge separately so they can't hear/see the other group.

Make sure to do the throws in an area large enough for the planes to fly without obstacles such as branches, strong wind, or other things that might affect the trajectory of the paper planes.

Materials: one-half of the groups: two pieces of paper, a small rock, a clipper, a pin, tape, a small branch, elastic band, pencil — other half of the groups: two pieces of paper, a pencil

DESCRIPTION:

The participants are divided into groups. Each group is stationed away from each other not to see/hear each other. The groups are given the materials. The facilitator announces the beginning of the challenge and tracks the time. When the time is up, one representative of each group throws the plane 3 times and the furthest flight is recorded by the facilitator. The group that makes the farthest-flying paper plane with the given materials wins the challenge. After the challenge, all the participants are invited for a debriefing led by the facilitator.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Who was the leader of the groups? Why did you go with that idea? What was the thinking process behind your ideas? Do you think you would do better if you had more/fewer materials? Would you go for a different approach now that you've seen the other group's approach? What do you think was the goal of this activity?

5 SQUARES–PUZZLE CHALLENGE

TARGET GROUP:
14+ years
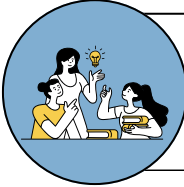
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
5-25

DURATION
30 minutes
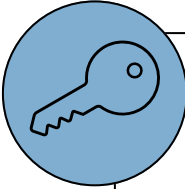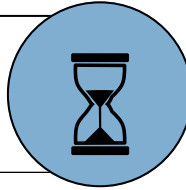
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

critical thinking, creative thinking, teamwork, cooperation

OBJECTIVES

- foster critical and creative thinking
- enhance group cooperation
- see how an individual's decisions affect a group's decision
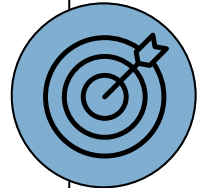
PREPARATION: For each group prepare five envelopes with parts of the puzzles in them.
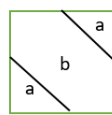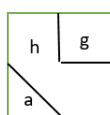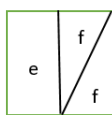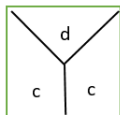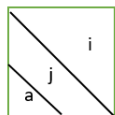
How to prepare envelopes:

Envelope A: j, h, e
Envelope B: a, a, a, c
Envelope C: a, i E
Envelope D: d, f
Envelope E: g, b, f, c

⬚ This is for one group, repeat the same for each group

DESCRIPTION:
Divide participants into groups of 5. Each person will have an envelope containing pieces for forming squares. The task of the group is to form 5 squares of equal size. The task is not completed until everyone in the group has a perfect square and all the squares are the same size.
Rules:
1. The game must be played in complete silence.
2. You may not point or signal other players with your hands or in any other way.
3. You may not take a puzzle piece from another player.
4. You may not place a puzzle piece next to another player's puzzle piece(s) that they are using to try and construct a square.
5. You may not fold a puzzle or overlap pieces to complete a square.
6. The parts you don't need put in the centre of the table so that other participants can take it
7. The game is finished when everyone in the group has a perfect square and all the squares are the same size.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How did you feel when someone held a piece and did not see the solution?

What was your reaction when someone finished a square and then sat back without seeing whether his or her solution prevented others from solving the problem?

What were your feelings once you finished your square and then began to realize that you would have to break it up and give a piece away?

How did you feel about the person who was slow to see a solution? If you were the slow person, how did you feel?

How did you feel when someone gave you a part you needed?

Was there a climate of helping or hindering?

What is the value of this exercise?

FOUR ASSUMPTIONS (ICEBREAKER)

TARGET GROUP:
15+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
5-20

DURATION
30 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
assumptions, critical thinking

OBJECTIVES

- Thinking about what we assume when we meet people for the first time and why
- Talking about similarities/differences between assumptions and reality
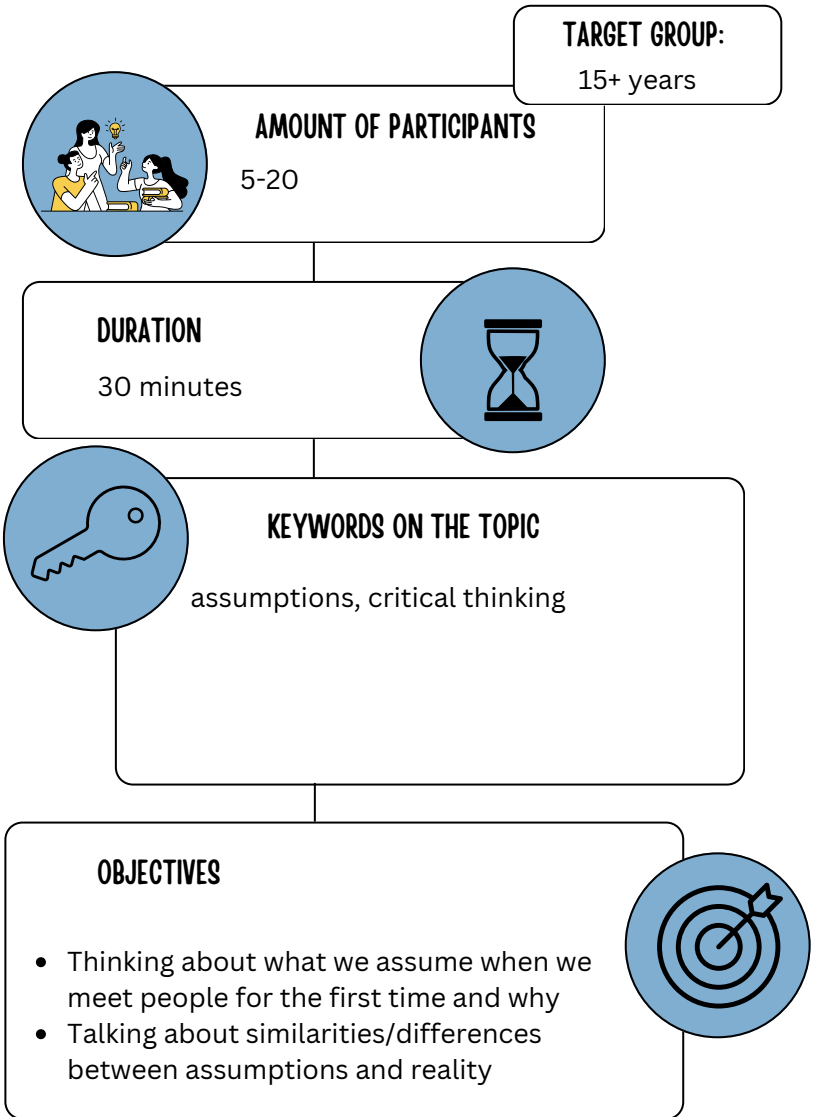
PREPARATION:

Photocopy assumption sheets

Set up a double circle of chairs, with an equal number of chairs facing each other

Materials:

 Prepare one assumption sheet and one pen for every participant.

Assumption sheet:

Name: ...

He/she is from···

His/her studies/professions are···

His/her interests are···

He/she has come to this course because···

DESCRIPTION:

Begin by arranging the participants in two circles of chairs, facing each other. Distribute assumption sheets and pens to everyone. Explain that we will be trying to guess the answers based on the impressions of other participants. Each participant should write their name on the sheet and then pass it to the person in front of them. They will have 5 minutes to complete the assumption sheet for the other participant. Once the assumption sheets are finished, it's time for a brief "interview" to learn the reality of the participants and compare it to the assumptions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How do you feel about answering questions about people you just met?

Did you get many of them right?

What were your assumptions based on?

What do you think about the things others have assumed about you?

Can you connect this experience with similar situations in daily life? Which ones?

THE BEAR THAT WASN'T

TARGET GROUP:
14+ years
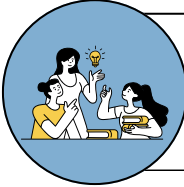
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
20

DURATION
30 minutes
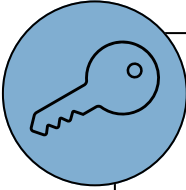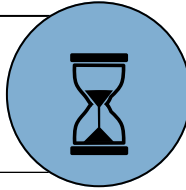
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

critical thinking, identity, stereotypes, labeling, conformity, authority, human rights, perceptions

OBJECTIVES

- Explore identity, conformity, and authority

- Learn about what defines us, what differentiates us and what brings us together
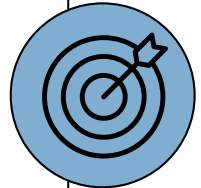
PREPARATION:

laptop, internet (or the short film downloaded), chart, paper for participants to draw a chart, pencils

DESCRIPTION:

1. Watch the short film called <u>The Bear That Wasn't.</u>

2. Ask participants to create an identity chart for the bear. Which labels on the chart represent how he sees his own identity?

3. Why do you think Frank Tashlin titled his story like this? Why did it become harder and harder for the Bear to maintain his identity as he moved through the bureaucracy of the factory?

4. What were the consequences for the Bear of the way others defined his identity?

5. What is identity?

6. What shapes our identity?

7. Draw your own identity chart, then in groups of 4 or 5, discuss what differentiates us and what brings us together. (It's up to you to decide how deeply you go into revealing things about yourself)

Recommendation: The youth worker will make sure all participants are comfortable with the notions discussed.

- This game can be adapted when discussing different topics such as minorities.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Whose opinions and beliefs have the greatest effect on how you think about your own identity?

How does our need to be part of a group affect our actions? Why is it so difficult for a person to go against a group?

What are the external factors shaping the Bears' s activity? What about you? (society, family, media, self- doubt, confidence, fashion choices, etc)

COGNİTİVE BİASES 1

TARGET GROUP:

10+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

5-25

DURATION

1h 30 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

cognitive biases, critical thinking

OBJECTIVES

to become aware of their own biases and how biases affect unconscious decision making processes, whether on purpose or not.
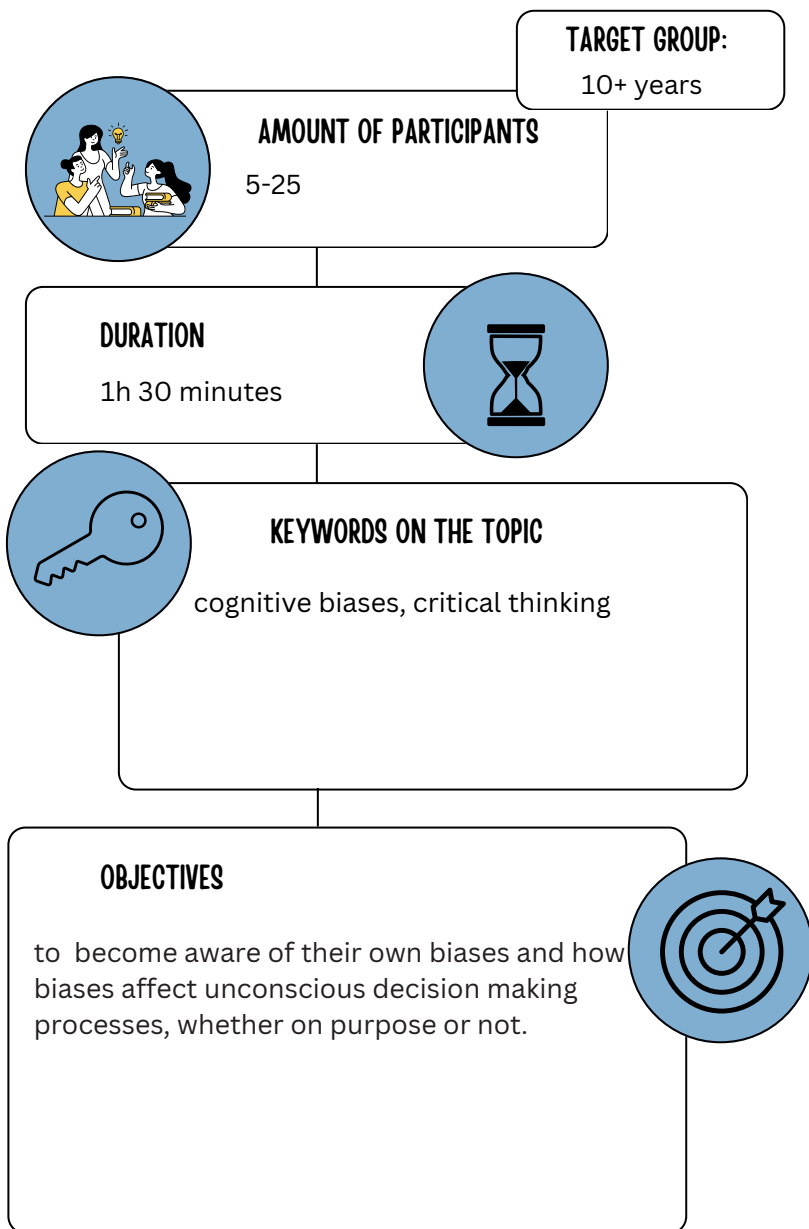
PREPARATION:

Materials:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vxipSJGs93ge5sNDNpUtJIrsVjvtV-rZ/view?usp=drive_link

Location: Inside (tables and chairs)/Outdoor on the grass.

DESCRIPTION:

This activity will be played with five different stations/islands in rotation

Round 1: 20 min

- Youngsters/Youth workers gather around the table and form groups of 5 (ideally 5, if not a bit smaller).
- Let each member of the group choose one color (= bias category)
- Each station contains one stack of cards corresponding to a colour.
- After all groups have reached a station with a specific colour, all participants read the main card (the fully coloured one) explaining the colour category. Each participant chooses one of the cards mentally (all cards remain displayed for all to see on the table) and tells a story regarding the bias from their own experience, the other group members have to guess the bias··· then give the correct answer later.

Round 2: 15 min. The youth worker will make participants rotate to the next station.

Round 3: 15 min The youth worker will make participants rotate to the next station.

Round 4: 15 min The youth worker will make participants rotate to the next station.

Round 5: 15 min The youth worker will make participants rotate to the final station.

By the end of the activity, all participants will have experienced all 5 colours/cognitive biases categories.

Recommendation:

The youth worker will make sure all participants are comfortable with the notions discussed.

- This game can be adapted when discussing different topics such as for instance: media, decolonisation, education etc

Recommendation for implementation: Extend the time slot to your discretion if you have more or less than 5 participants per station.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How did you feel during the activity?

How was the process for you?

Did the activity make you more aware about your own cognitive biases?

Were you aware of cognitive biases in the first place?

How useful was it?

What could be improved?(this question is more relevant in the event the game is played with youth workers)

How much did you know about the topic before we started?

COGNITIVE BIASES 2

TARGET GROUP:
15+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
20-25

DURATION
45 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

cognitive bias, critical thinking, prejudice, cognition, diversity awareness

OBJECTIVES

- Detecting your own cognitive biases and better understanding of the way people think.
- Identifying what influences people to have prejudice, misconceptions, or to discriminate
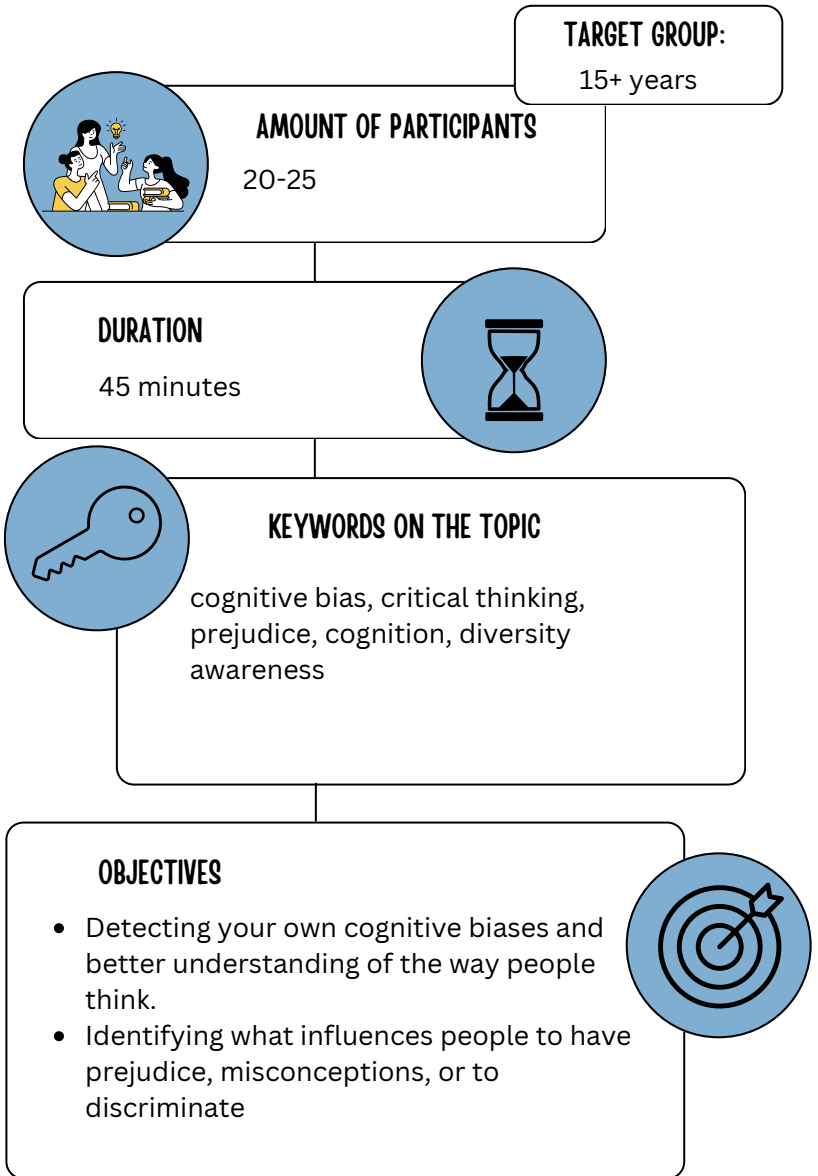
PREPARATION:

You will need a flip-chart, markers, CB cognitive distortion list.

DESCRIPTION:

1. Describe CB theory - Explain on a flip-chart what cognitive bias represents. A cognitive bias is a systematic error in thinking that occurs when people are processing and interpreting information in the world around them and affects the decisions and judgments that they make. Many of these biases serve an adaptive purpose: They allow us to reach decisions quickly. This can be vital if we are facing a dangerous or threatening situation. The human brain is powerful but subject to limitations. Cognitive biases are often a result of your brain's attempt to simplify information processing. Biases often work as rules of thumb that help you make sense of the world and reach decisions with relative speed. A cognitive bias is rooted in thought-processing errors often arising from problems with memory, attention, attribution, and other mental mistakes.

2. Take the list the list of distortion types in relation to CB (see Appendix: List of cognitive distortions). The list has two columns. One is the name of cognitive distortion and the other is its description. Cut the list so that you get individual pieces of names for each cognitive distortion type and its description separately. Deal those pieces to 5 groups (5 lists) so that they can put the pieces together (name + description). After that, they are to discuss it by giving personal examples.

4. Bring all participants together to finalize the workshop with the reflection.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What type of bias do you think you experience the most?

Which one is the hardest for you to detect (or easiest)?

In what situations are cognitive biases useful/harmful?

Cognitive distortion	Description
All-or-Nothing Thinking	Perceiving the world as a binary — a pair of opposites. Also known as polarized, dichotomous, or black-and-white thinking, it's the tendency to **see things as "either/or."**
Catastrophizing/Minimizing	Exaggerating or minimizing the meaning, importance, or likelihood of things.
Mental Filter	The mental filter distortion focuses on a single **negative piece** of information and excludes all the positive ones.
Jumping to Conclusions (Mind-Reading/ Fortune-Telling)	You make assumptions about **what someone else is thinking**. Making conclusions based on assumptions.
Emotional Reasoning	Refers to the acceptance of one's **emotions as fact.** It can be described as "*I feel it, therefore it must be true.*" Just because we feel something doesn't mean it is true; for example, we may become jealous and think our partner has feelings for someone else, but that doesn't make it true.
Overgeneralization	This sneaky distortion takes one instance or example and generalizes it to an overall pattern. For example, a student may receive a C on one test and conclude that she is stupid and a failure. Overgeneralizing can lead to overly negative thoughts about yourself and your environment based on only one or two experiences.
Should Statements	Statements that you make to yourself about what you **"should"** do, what you **"ought"** to do, or what you **"must"** do. They can also be applied to others, imposing a set of expectations that will likely not be met. When we hang on too tightly to our "should" statements about ourselves, the result is often **guilt** that we cannot live up to them. When we cling to our "should" statements about others, we are generally **disappointed** by their failure to meet our expectations, leading to anger and resentment.
Personalization	Taking everything personally or assigning blame to yourself without any logical reason to believe you are to blame.

CREATİVE STATUES

TARGET GROUP:

10+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

8-25

DURATION

40 - 90 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

cognitive biases, critical thinking

OBJECTIVES

Participants and observers can become aware of how their perceptions are created and how their thinking processes work.
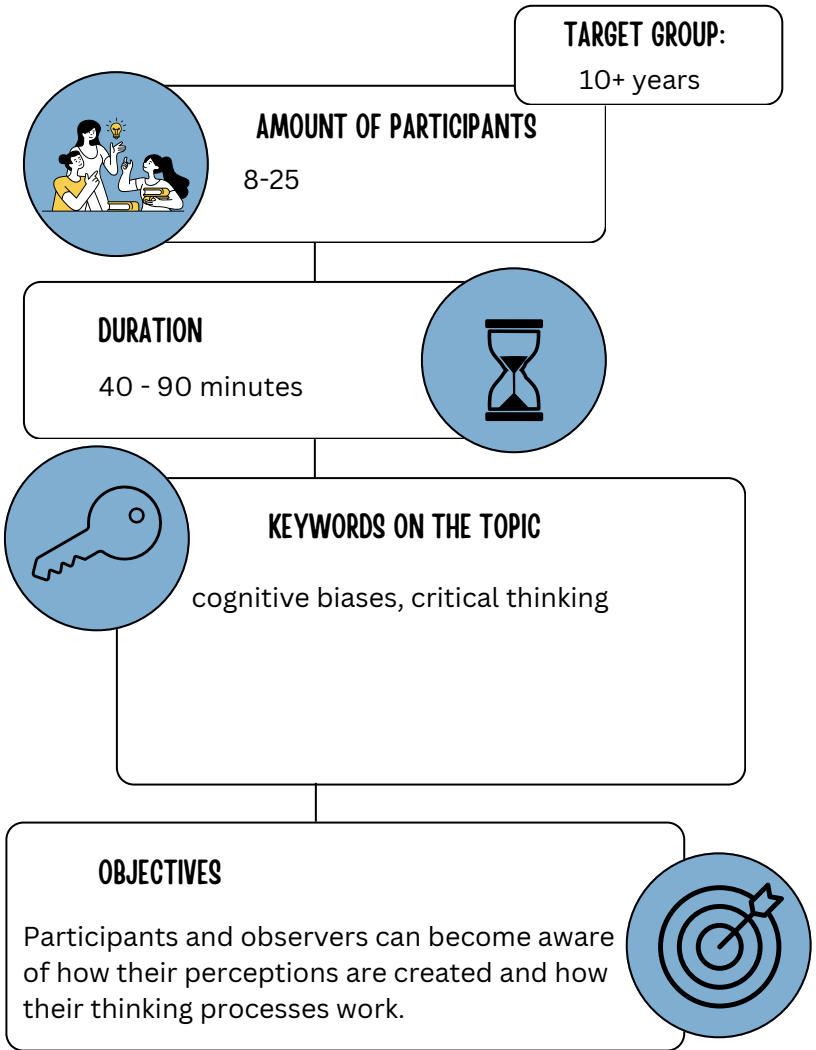
PREPARATION:

Materials: chairs, paper, pen

Location: Inside (tables and chairs)/Outdoor on the grass.

DESCRIPTION:

This activity will be played in one group of 5 "performers" and a flexible number of people in the "audience". The facilitator gives one word to the performers, who are facing the back of the stage in one line. The moment the facilitator gives them the word or expression, the performers have to turn to the audience within 1-2 seconds maximum, each individual with their physical interpretation of that word/expression in a static way.

Round 1:

- 1st word/expression is given to the performers in a written way so that the audience does not know about it.
- In 1-2 seconds, the facilitator gives the GO that the performers turn to face the audience with their image of the word/expression
- Performers need to stay in the same position for around 30 seconds to give the audience the time to critically think about the word/expression.
- The facilitator asks the audience to guess the word/expression: they start giving their opinions and why they think so.
- The facilitator reveals the word/expression and after that, each performer starts sharing their thought process and that is the starting point for a discussion. Each round can be repeated for each word/expression that the facilitator has listed.

Recommendation:

For questions on discussion moderation (around 10 minutes per word/expression), the youth worker will ensure that all participants are comfortable with the words and expressions being discussed.

This exercise can be adapted for discussing various topics such as media, education, and human rights, etc.

1. Regardless of whether your guess was right or wrong, what influenced your decision based on your personal observations? (For the audience)

2. Which of the images do you feel best represents your own understanding of the word/expression? (For the audience)

3. What led you to depict the word/expression the way you did? (For the performers)

4. How would you depict the word/expression if you were the performer? (For the audience)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How did you feel during the activity?

How was the process for you?

For both performers and audience: Did the activity make you more aware of your own cognitive biases?

For the audience: Were you aware of your cognitive biases before?

IMAGE SNAPSHOT
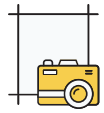
TARGET GROUP:

15+ years
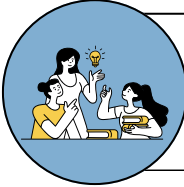
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

10 minimum

DURATION

35-45 minutes
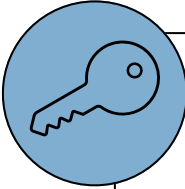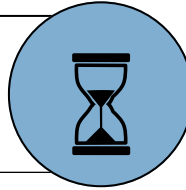
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

body language, critical thinking skills, understanding stereotypes, biases and cultural differences in gestures

OBJECTIVES

Enhance participants' critical thinking skills by analyzing nonverbal communication and challenging their beliefs about the connection between nonverbal cues and values/characteristics.
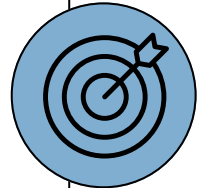
PREPARATION:

Two rooms – chairs or sitting area is optional. Activity can be done while standing.

Flipchart paper and coloured markers for trainer's notes (optional)

Timer to keep track of each group's work (optional)

DESCRIPTION:

Divide participants into smaller groups.

Each group receives an index card containing a value or characteristic.

Ask each group to work as a team by using only their bodies (position, movement, etc.) to build a group statue/ image snapshot that reflects the value or characteristic.

After 10–15 minutes, each group presents their structure/ image snapshot to the other group who has to guess the value or characteristic it represents.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What signs or actions did you use to guess the values or qualities? Were you confident in your guesses?

How do differences in culture affect how we understand signs or actions related to values or qualities? Can you give examples?

Have you ever seen signs or actions that were confusing or misunderstood by others? Can you tell us about a time this happened to you?

When your group was thinking of signs or actions for a certain value or quality, did you ever disagree? How did you work it out?

How does previous knowledge about someone affect how we see their signs or actions? Can you share a time when this knowledge made you misinterpret someone?

Why is it important to consider the situation when we look at signs or actions?

How can the same sign or action mean different things in different situations?

How can our feelings change how well we understand signs or actions?

When you were matching values or qualities with signs or actions, were there any that were especially hard to connect? Why do you think that happened?

DRAWING UNDER PRESSURE

TARGET GROUP:
10+ years
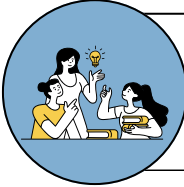
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
15-25

DURATION
40 minutes
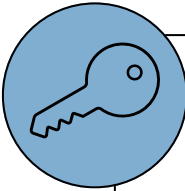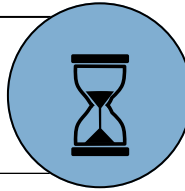
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

cognitive biases, critical thinking, critical thinking under stress, problem solving, decision making, team working

OBJECTIVES

- enhance critical thinking abilities, particularly under stressful conditions.
- identify and understand cognitive biases that can affect decision-making
- practice asking insightful questions to uncover hidden perspectives
- foster a deeper awareness of their decision-making processes.
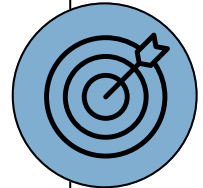
PREPARATION:

Gather drawing materials such as sketchbooks, pencils, markers, and erasers.

Prepare a list of real-world scenarios or dilemmas that may induce stress.

Create discussion prompts or questions related to cognitive biases.

Arrange the seating in a circle or semicircle for group discussions

Materials: Drawing materials (sketchbooks, pencils, markers, erasers). Number of scenarios is equal to number of group members.

DESCRIPTION:

This activity will be played with five different stations/islands in rotation

Step 1: Introduction

Welcome participants and explain the purpose of the activity: to explore critical thinking under stress through drawing.

Discuss the importance of recognizing and critical thinking in decision-making.

Explain the scenarios and what is expected from participants.

Step 2: Group Selection and Drawing Section

After creating groups of 4 people, give 4 different worksheets which include the scenarios with a title. For example: "There is an emergency about zombies. Before they come, you have a limited amount of time to decide what you will take with you from a store". Ask each participant to draw some items in 1 minute and pass the scenario to the next person in the group. And repeat until everyone draws something on the paper. When each member of the group draws for each scenario, finish step 2. Participants also have a short and limited amount of time to think and draw, so they experience thinking and acting under stress.

Step 3: Collecting the Papers and Debating the Results by comparing them.

Recommendation:

Create more scenarios similar to the example given before. Scenario numbers should be equal with the number of members of each group.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How did this activity challenge your critical thinking under stress ?

How did asking questions help you explore alternative perspectives and potential solutions?

How easy did you find it to think critically under pressure ?

THINK LIKE···

TARGET GROUP:
15-19 years
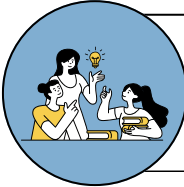
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
10 minimum

DURATION
30 minutes
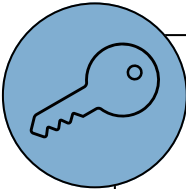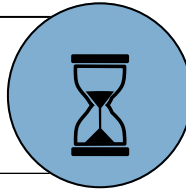
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
critical thinking, role-play, collaborative learning

OBJECTIVES
Enhance participants' critical thinking and perspective-taking skills through group discussions from different assigned roles or perspectives.
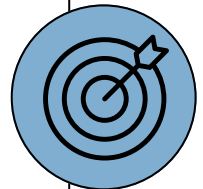
PREPARATION:

Wide working space that can be split into smaller work areas.

Activity can be done while standing, chairs are optional.

Timer to keep track of each group's work (optional).

DESCRIPTION:

Choose a topic of discussion.

Split the participants into smaller groups (min 3 people each)

Split the working space in equally numbered areas (each area has to match the number of the groups) and assign a role: doctor, engineer, poet, scientist etc. or cartoon characters (e.g. Batman) or singers they like

Each group is invited to discuss the topic from the perspective of the assigned role. Then move to the next area to switch perspective and discuss the topic according to the next assigned role.

Timings of the group discussion is adaptable to the size of the group.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How did different roles change how you talked about the topic?

Was there a time when it was hard to think from a certain role's perspective? What made it tough, and how did you handle it?

Did you hear any cool ideas or different thoughts when everyone had different roles? Can you share one?

How did this activity show us that looking at a problem from many angles can be helpful? How could we use this in real life?

How did thinking carefully help us when we were pretending to be different roles?

MAFIA GAME

TARGET GROUP:
15+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
minimum 6

DURATION
30 - 60 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
critical thinking, role-play, collaborative learning

OBJECTIVES
To develop and enhance critical thinking, strategic planning and interpersonal communication skills.
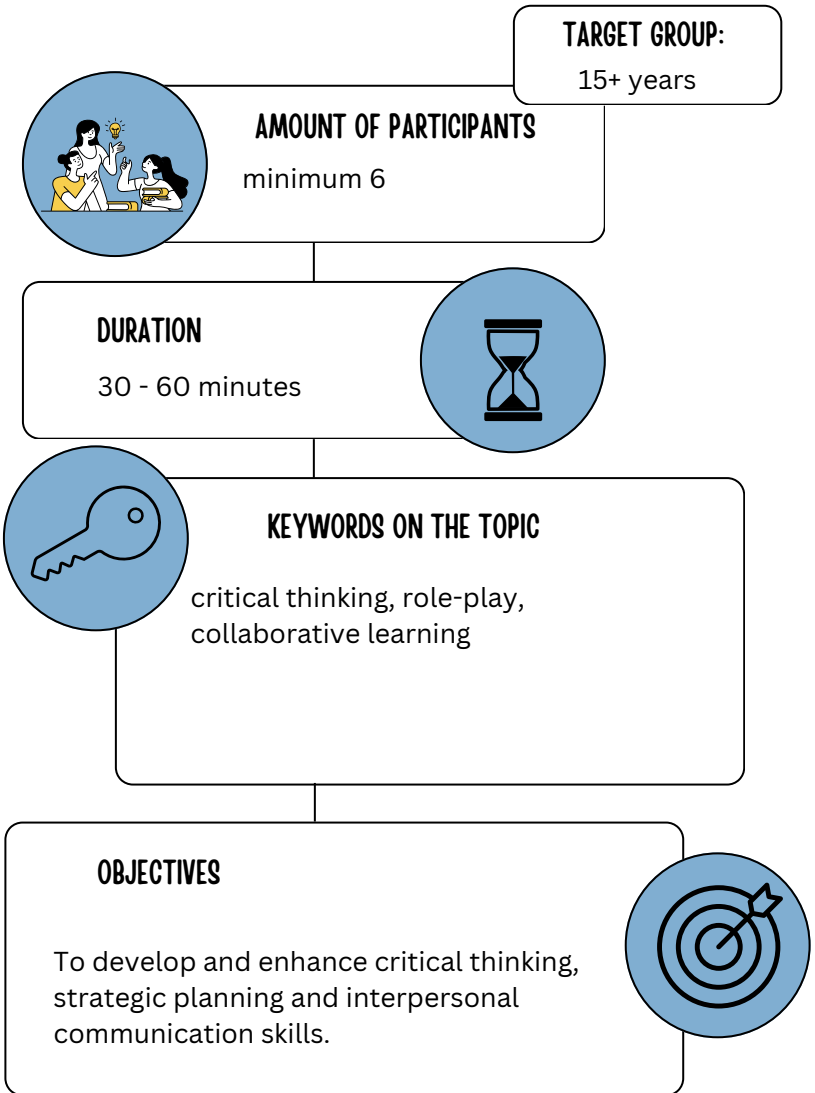
DESCRIPTION:

The Mafia game is a social deduction game that involves hidden roles and strategic thinking.

Roles:

Narrator: in this context, the facilitator of the activity, is responsible for running the game, directing the flow, and announcing day and night phases.

Mafia (1 player or more): their mission is to eliminate all civilians without revealing their identity.

Policeman (1 person): their mission is to kill Mafia

Doctor (1 player): they can save one person or themselves from being killed

Civilians (remaining players): their goal is to identify and vote out the Mafia members.

Setup:

Players sit in a circle facing each other.

The narrator randomly assigns roles to each player by touching designated players of the group while having their eyes closed.

Game Phases:

The game is divided into alternating day and night phases. Here's how each phase works:

Night Phase:

The Narrator instructs everyone to close their eyes.

The Mafia is invited to open their eyes and silently choose one person to eliminate. They should try to do this without drawing attention to themselves.

After the Mafia makes their choice, the moderator instructs the Mafia to close their eyes.

The moderator then asks the Doctor to open their eyes and choose one person to save. The Doctor can choose themselves or someone else. Then the Doctor is invited to close their eyes.

Lastly, the Narrator asks the Policeman to open their eyes and silently point to a person they suspect might be a Mafia member. The Narrator gives a silent signal (nodding or shaking their head) to confirm if the chosen person is Mafia or not.

Day Phase:

The moderator announces that it's daytime, and everyone opens their eyes.

The moderator reveals if anyone was eliminated during the night. If the Doctor successfully saved someone, that person is still in the game; otherwise, they are out.

The players discuss and debate who they think the Mafia members are based on the available information. This involves accusing, defending, and reasoning.

A player can nominate someone they suspect of being Mafia, and another player must second the nomination for a vote to occur.

The group votes on whether to eliminate the nominated player. Majority rules. If the vote passes, the nominated player is out of the game. Their role is revealed.

The game then transitions back to the night phase, and the cycle continues.

Winning:

The Mafia wins when their numbers are equal to or greater than the number of Civilians left.

The Civilians win when they successfully eliminate all Mafia members.

Additional Rules:

Once you are killed or out of the game, then you are allowed to see the identities of all players at night, but keep quiet so you do not reveal information to the other players.

If playing with a large group, you can add more roles like the Doctor and Detective, which adds complexity and strategy to the game.

Players can lie about their roles or intentions during discussions, adding an element of deception and psychology to the game.

The game continues until one of the winning conditions is met, and it often leads to lively debates, accusations, and alliances as players try to outsmart each other. It's important to remember that the Mafia game is a social deduction game, and the fun lies in the interactions and deductions made by players.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Game Strategy: How did you plan your moves in the game? What influenced your decisions during the day and night phases?

Your Role: What role did you have in the game, and how did it affect your actions and decisions?

Information Assessment: How did you judge the information shared in the game, like suspicions or actions of other players? What made you believe or doubt what you heard?

Deception and Mind Games: Can you recall any moments were players tried to trick or confuse others? How did this impact the game?

Teamwork and Accusations: Did you form alliances with other players? How did these alliances affect the game? How did players accuse each other, and what made an accusation convincing?

Risk Management: Think about the decisions you made. How did you decide when to take risks, like accusing someone or choosing to save another player?

Discussion Impact: How did talking and debating with others affect your decisions? Did persuasive arguments or logical reasoning change your mind or the group's decisions?

Adaptation and Learning: Did you change your strategy as the game went on? What made you change your approach or decisions?

Understanding Roles: Think about the different roles in the game. How did each role make the game more interesting, and how did they influence what you did?

Game Outcome: What do you think led to the Mafia's win or the Civilians' victory? If you could go back, what would you do differently to change the game's result?

EMOTIONS AND CRITICAL THINKING

TARGET GROUP:

14+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

5-25

DURATION

45 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

Emotions, Critical Thinking, Perception

OBJECTIVES
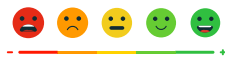
- To understand how emotions affect critical thinking
- To make connection between emotions and critical thinking
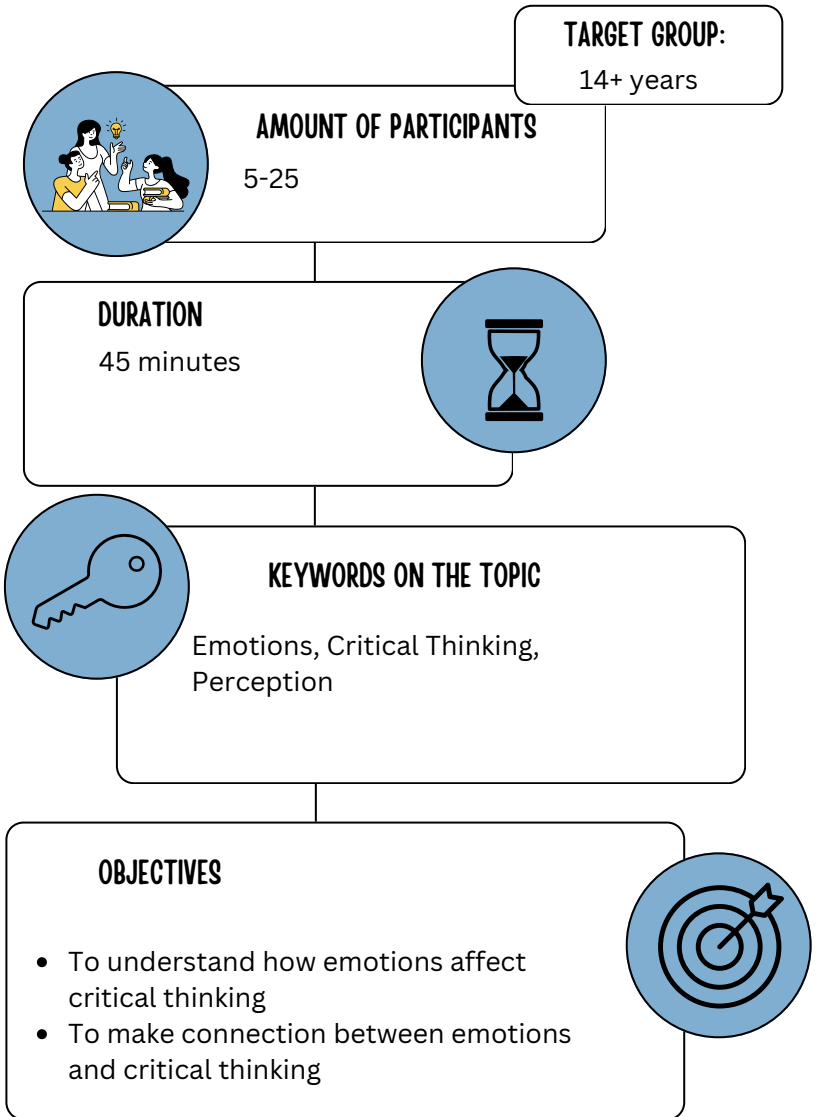
PREPARATION:

For each participant, prepare a paper with an emotion. Each group should have 5 different emotional states (e.g. happiness, sadness, in love, anxiety, anger*).

- Feel free to choose states you prefer.

Prepare topics for discussion.

DESCRIPTION:

Divide participants into groups of 5.

Instructions for participants:

Tell participants that they will receive a paper with a secret role (emotional state). Don't share your role with other participants. Your task is to discuss the given topic according to your role/state.

Give each participant one paper with the emotional state (each participant in a group has a different emotional state; 5 participants – 5 emotional states).

Give participants a topic to discuss. For example: "What do you think about artificial intelligence?"

After 5 minutes of discussion, tell participants to change roles they have with each other. Now every participant has a new role. Continue the discussion with another role.

Recommendation:

You can add new topics to discuss and continue changing roles after 5–10 minutes in the same role.

Before debriefing, shake off all the roles and emotions they may still have. Check with participants if everybody is okay.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What happened? How was the process? What did you notice? How were your arguments influenced by emotions? How are emotions influencing critical thinking? What are the positive and what are the negative influences of emotions on critical thinking?

TALKING CIRCLE

TARGET GROUP:

15+ years
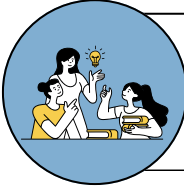
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

5 - 30

DURATION

1 hour
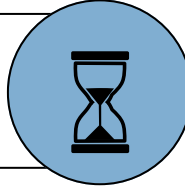
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

Talking circle, sharing circle or Healing circle
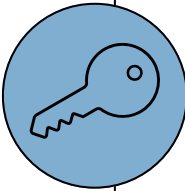
OBJECTIVES

- Create a safe, non-judgmental environment for discussion
- Be open to influence, not persuasion or specific outcomes.
- Practice active, mindful listening and empathy
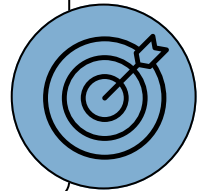
PREPARATION:

Talking stick: The talking stick, stone, or feather symbolizes the connectivity with the land and offers the tool to facilitate the circle.

Clock (timer); notebook; chairs

DESCRIPTION:

Introduction

A. Brief explanation of the significance of the talking circle in Native American tradition (Talking Circles are a traditional way for Native Americans to make common decisions. First Nations people observed that the circle is a dominant symbol in nature. It is the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon, the seasons, and the cycle of life. The circle symbolizes horizontal structure, equality, and infinity.)

B. Description of the roles involved in the talking circle

Facilitator – Importance of setting guidelines and principles for the circle

Timekeeper – Setting the timeframe for the circle

Secretary – Importance of documenting the discussion and creating a report

C. Explanation of the purpose and guidelines of the talking circle

1. The stick is always passed clockwise.

2. Only the person holding the stick talks. The rest actively listen without interruption.

3. Always speak to the spirit of the circle and not to individuals. Speak for yourself and be conscious not to offend or disrespect anyone.

4. Create a safe space for everyone. Respect the views of others and create a space to express ideas without fear of ridicule.

5. Be respectful of time.

6. A person may pass the stick without speaking.

7. Experienced individuals should sit at the start of the circle to set the intention and tone of the circle. Stay on the topic.

8. It's not obligatory to stay in the circle until the end. Be mindful and respectful if you need to leave.

9. When you share your knowledge in the circle, it becomes shared by everyone.

10. The circle is complete when everyone has had a chance to speak.

11. Trust the decision-making process, even if you are not present for the decision-making.

12. The circle is ready to start when everyone can see everyone.

13. Setting the stage for the start of the circle by eliminating distractions and creating a focused environment.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Do you feel that your voice was listened to?

Are there connections between talking circles and critical thinking?

What skills can be enhanced in talking circles and are they necessary for critical thinking?

UNDERSTANDING
PREJUDICES & STEREOTYPES

TARGET GROUP:

12 to 16 y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

15 - 30

DURATION

50 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

Gender stereotypes, prejudices, critical thinking

OBJECTIVES

- To understand how prejudices and stereotypes work and how these can affect our way of living
- To understand the social construction of gender (difference between sex and gender)
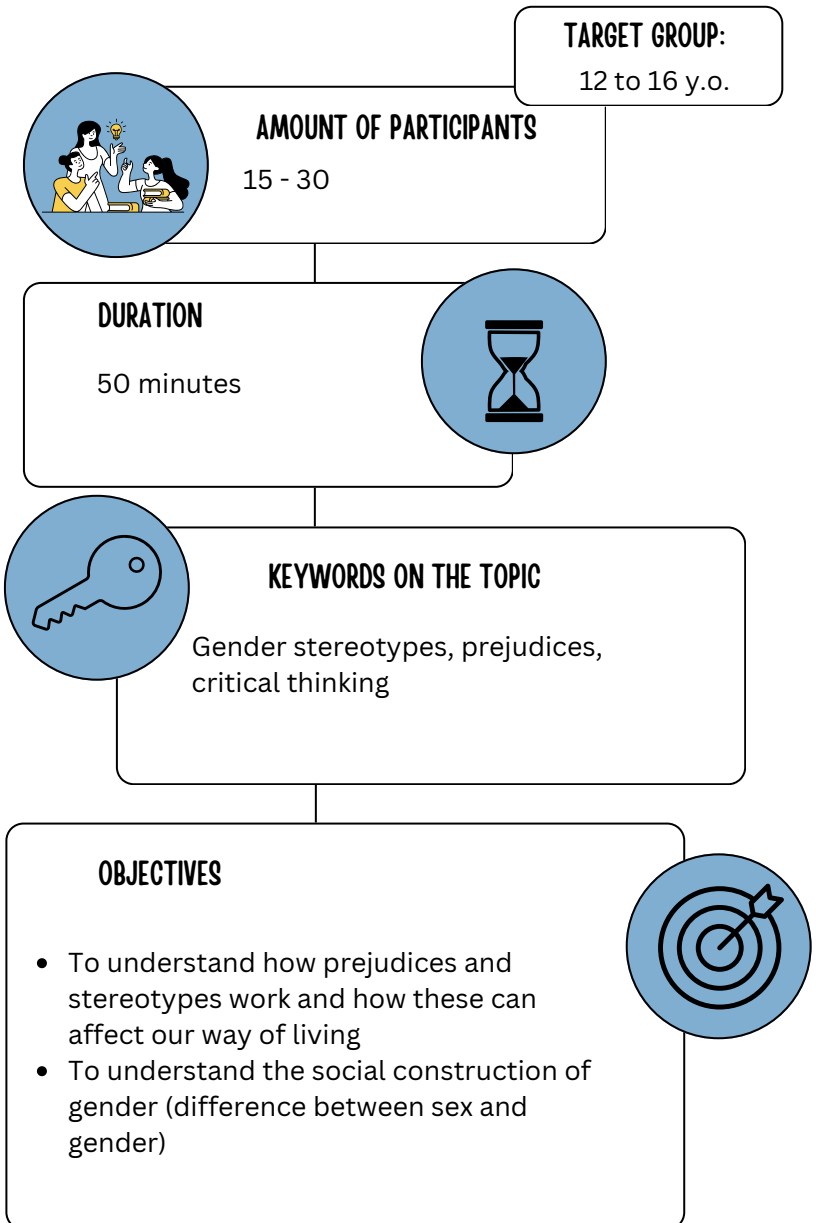
PREPARATION:

Reading about some concepts which may include: gender, binary and non-binary, gender stereotypes, gender socialization

Materials: Paper sheets, pens

DESCRIPTION:

First part – Thinking and drawing

Participants are divided into groups of 4 or 5 people and a paper sheet is distributed for each group, which must draw their idea of a woman and a man (both physical and psychological). They can first talk about the physical characteristics they attribute to both (clothes, accessories, posture, height, gestures, weight, the complexion of the body···) and then think about psychological ones. As each group might not have the same opinions, they are free to do it individually if they prefer. Then it is time to draw and write some characteristics.

Second part – Encouraging discussion

Once they have finished they can share what their drawings/lists are like and discuss the similarities and differences between the groups.

Different questions can be asked to encourage thinking and sharing, for example:

What is sex? What is gender?

Why do you think we did this exercise?

Are there any characteristics generally attributed to one gender or another? Why?

Do you think the interiorisation of some prejudices can affect us? How?

Do you think ideas about women and men are the same in every culture?

They will then be asked to draw a non-binary person and repeat the previous process, fostering debate groups about genders and stereotypes.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What did you learn about this activity? Have you thought about it before?

How do you feel after the activity? Can you think about other stereotypes and how they can affect us in daily life?

MEDİA – FAKE NEWS

TARGET GROUP:

12+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

3 - 30

DURATION

2 hours

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

Fake news, propaganda, manipulation, misinformation, disinformation, fact checking, journalism, media, critical thinking.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage critical thinking to spot fake news
- Educate on media analysis
- Create a safe space for sharing diverse opinions and promote open-mindedness

PREPARATION:

Different types of news, both true and false, from different sources. (official and non-official websites)

Document with fake and real articles screenshots, also from different sources.

Whiteboard and marker or PowerPoint and projector.

DESCRIPTION:

This session will have 3 different stages.

1. Present a series of 3 different pieces of information to the group. They will have to choose between those three to find which one is a lie. Two of them are going to be true and one is going to be false. The group will be divided into three lines (a,b,c) considering which information is a lie for them. They will have to move and place themselves in the line if they think the information is false. After that, they will present arguments to explain why they made that decision and they will listen to others opinions, line after line. With this information, they will have the possibility to change their opinions and move to another line.

2. Divide the group into subgroups of 4-5 people and give each group a document with 6 or 7 screenshots of different kinds of news, both, true and fake from different kinds of sources. They will have to discuss and decide which news is fake and which ones is real. The screenshots should contain different elements of news, such as title, images, website, date, author··· After going through all the articles and once all the group finished making their decisions, everyone discussed their decisions in the big group.

3. Theoretical part about critical thinking in media, discussing topics such as Misinformation / Disinformation, Facts vs. opinions, and criteria for How to spot fake news (source)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Reflection question about exercise 1:

Why did you think it is a lie (share arguments)? After listening to all the arguments, do you want to change your decision?

Reflection question about exercise 2:

Which was your criteria for deciding if a piece of news is true or not?

General reflection question:

Why fake news? Is it easy to detect them? How can we be better at detecting fake news?

SOCIAL MEDIA

TARGET GROUP:
12+ years

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
10-30

DURATION
90 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
social media, informations, critical thinking

OBJECTIVES
- To use critical thinking to rethink social media content
- To empathise with youth
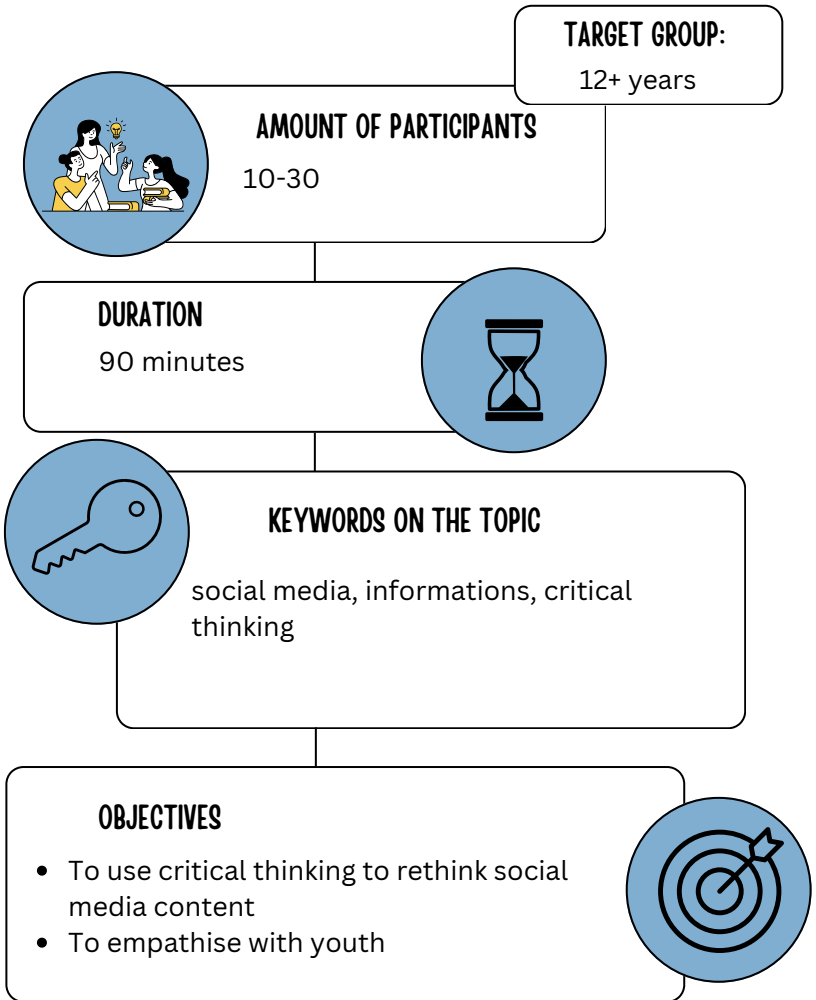
PREPARATION:
Identify the most popular social media influencer at the moment on platforms like TikTok or Instagram.

DESCRIPTION:
Commence the activity by determining which participants are active on social media.

1) Divide participants into small groups of 3 to 5 members. Instruct them to examine the profiles and content of the top 3 social media influencers currently. (10 minutes) Then, have a group discussion: what kind of content do they produce? How do they impact others? Why do you think they have the most followers? (10 minutes)

2) Reconvene in small groups and create lists of the benefits and drawbacks of social media. (15 minutes)

3) In small groups, produce a short group video (maximum 1 minute) to raise awareness about the issues with social media. Try to make it enjoyable and engaging, with the aim of influencing young people. (40 minutes)

4) Share the videos with all participants and watch them together. (10 minutes)

5) Reflection. (15 minutes)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: How was the process of creating the video (from brainstorming to editing)? What did you learn? What did you observe? Do you think critical thinking was employed in the process?
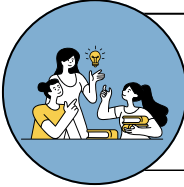
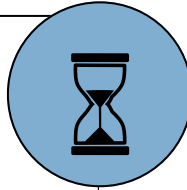# DRAWING BY INSTRUCTIONS

TARGET GROUP:
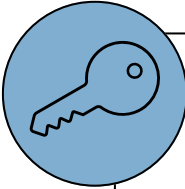5+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
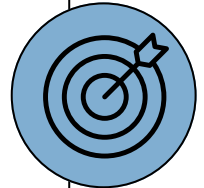6-30

DURATION
50 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
active listening, communication skills, creativity, instructional clarity

OBJECTIVES

- understand the importance of sending and receiving messages in communication and its importance for critical thinking

PREPARATION:

One piece of paper and pen for each participant.

Tables and chairs for the participants to comfortably draw.

One drawing with a few objects and symbols (the complexity of the drawing should be suitable for the age of the group).

DESCRIPTION: During this drawing activity, one person will act as a describer while the rest of the group will be tasked with drawing based solely on the instructions given by the describer. The describer will provide verbal instructions, describing an image or a scene, while the other participants will attempt to recreate the described image through drawing. While the describer is giving instructions, the group cannot ask questions, and the describer can describe the object or symbol only once and in only one way (no repeating or explaining in multiple different ways). The goal of the activity is for the group to draw and interpret the instructions as accurately as possible.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How did you feel when you were the describer? Were you able to effectively communicate your ideas to the group? If not, what could you have done differently to improve your communication?

2. As a drawer, did you find it challenging to translate the descriptions into a visual representation? How did you overcome any difficulties?

3. Looking back, what do you think was the most valuable aspect of this activity in terms of enhancing communication skills? How did it help you develop your ability to convey information effectively?

SCULPTING IN PAIRS

TARGET GROUP:
12+ y.o.
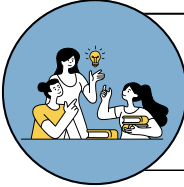
AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

6-30

DURATION

30-60 minutes
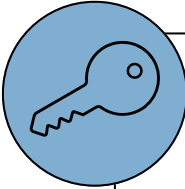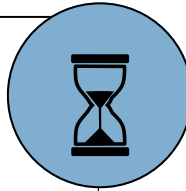
KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

active listening, nonverbal communication, interpretation, empathy, understanding, creative expression

OBJECTIVES

- enhance active listening skills
- develop nonverbal communication abilities
- foster empathy and understanding
- encourage interpretation and creative expression
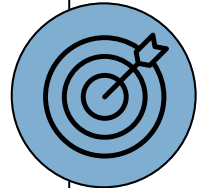
PREPARATION:
Make sure there is enough space for all participants to move freely.

DESCRIPTION:
 Step 1: Divide the participants into pairs with one person as the listener and the other as the storyteller.
Step 2: The storyteller answers an open question, such as "what is your dream life?" while the listener listens without interrupting or asking questions.
Step 3: The listener then becomes an artist and physically sculpts a representation of the story told by the talker.
Step 4: Artists navigate the "gallery" of sculptures, observing and trying to guess the main idea of each story.
 Step 5: Artists and sculptures reflect on the process; first, the artists explain how they interpreted the story, then the sculptures provide feedback.
Step 6: Roles are switched, and the process is repeated.

*During the activity, ensure that everyone is comfortable with being touched and agrees to it. It's okay if a person doesn't want to be touched — the artist can explain how they would like the sculpture to look.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:
Questions for the artist: How did you interpret the story, and what do you think the main idea was? Was it challenging for you to listen without asking questions? How did you feel during the process?

Questions for the storyteller: Do you think the artist understood your story? Did the sculpture represent your story accurately? Would you do anything differently? How did you feel during the process?

BUILDING BLOCKS

TARGET GROUP:
14+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

1-20

DURATION

5-45 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

managing complexity, decision-making, materialise thoughts for better critical thinking, managing conflict, grow coaching skills, develop meta-cognition

OBJECTIVES

Map out thoughts and feelings, cultivate detachment from critique and develop critical thinking for better decision making.

PREPARATION:

Wooden building blocks

Alternative to building blocks, you can use legos or any other type of props, however creative: small objects, various stationery materials, etc.

Any horizontal surface — space on the floor, a table

The activity can be run outdoors too, in which case you need to adapt accordingly.

DESCRIPTION:

Origin: a methodological instrument for mapping out ideas and creating solutions, also used in the various change client process and transformations

* source: This practice is based on observations of Polish-American scholar Alfred Korzybski, founder of the field of General Semantics, from its book "Science and Sanity" regarding the externalizing of the internal experiences. The use of building blocks is an application of this principle applied in the neurolinguistic process and transformation initiated by Austrian Training Center for NLP/ NLPt, then further developed by Catalin Zaharia (Mind Master Romania).

Building Blocks can be used anyhow the context requires, either as a facilitator or for yourself. It can be to encourage critical thinking, externalize conflicting ideas, help decision-making, or analyze processes.

Examples of activities and how to use the building blocks:

1. Topic Mapping for Debate:

- Choose a controversial topic relevant to your curriculum or current events.
- Provide each student or group with two building blocks of different colors.
- Instruct students to place one block representing one viewpoint and the other block representing the opposing viewpoint on a table or the floor.
- Encourage students to discuss the arguments associated with each viewpoint without feeling attached to any particular opinion.

2. Internal Conflict Resolution:
- Ask students to think about a personal or academic dilemma they are currently facing.
- Provide them with building blocks and instruct them to choose a block to represent each conflicting thought.
- Have students externalize their thoughts by placing the blocks representing their conflicting ideas side by side.
- Guide them in detaching from their thoughts and gaining perspective by viewing their conflicting ideas externally.

3. Decision-Making:
- Present a decision-making scenario, such as choosing a field trip destination.
- Provide building blocks to represent each potential choice.
- Instruct students to map out the pros and cons of each choice by arranging the blocks accordingly.
- Encourage reflection and discussion outside the frame of the problem by using the building blocks to simplify the understanding of each choice.

4. Analyzing Processes:
- Choose a process relevant to your subject area, such as the scientific method or a historical event.
- Provide building blocks to represent each step of the process.
- Instruct students to map out the process by arranging the blocks in sequential order.
- Facilitate discussion on the progress and identify any missing steps or elements by visualizing the process with the building blocks.

KNOWONDER

TARGET GROUP:
16+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

1-20

DURATION

30-45 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

critical thinking, decision-making, manage the unknown, discover possibilities

OBJECTIVES

- data gathering (separate fact from opinion)
- generate questions in an ideation session
- establish a research agenda when working on a project
- define problems and opportunities
- identify variables in a situation

PREPARATION:

Origin: KnoWonder Tool was developed in the 1980s by Canadian writer, speaker and productive thinking consultant Tim Hurson, author of the book "Think Better" (demo here)

* source: Tim developed KnowWonder Tool after observing how even the smallest group of people in one meeting room may have various levels of understanding of the same topic in discussion, leading to out of sync communication and unproductive conversations. So, he build this simple yet effective tool to facilitate communication for better critical thinking and team alignment towards a common result. KnowWonder can be used either in learning and education, business settings or for yourself, individually.

DESCRIPTION:

1. Draw the letter T on your paper. Write down KNOW on the left hand-side of the paper, above the line. Then on the right hand-side write WONDER. See illustration on page 1 for reference.
2. Select a topic of discussion
3. On the left side of the page, list all things you know about the issue without any argument/ discussion about it. On the right side, put down all the things you don't know or wonder about and that can be useful to know. There is no parallel between the two lists.

Important! At this point you can notice how people agree or disagree on things. This step allows you to get people literally on the same page. The question "I wonder what would happen if···" helps participants move from what they know to the land of possibility. From knowing to wondering.

4. After filling in the two columns, ask the group which elements are most important from the list and mark them. This allows you to focus the group discussion only on the relevant topics.

5. Start working around the selected issues with the group however you consider necessary – group think, debate, small group sharing – depending on your objective (see the list of possible objectives above).
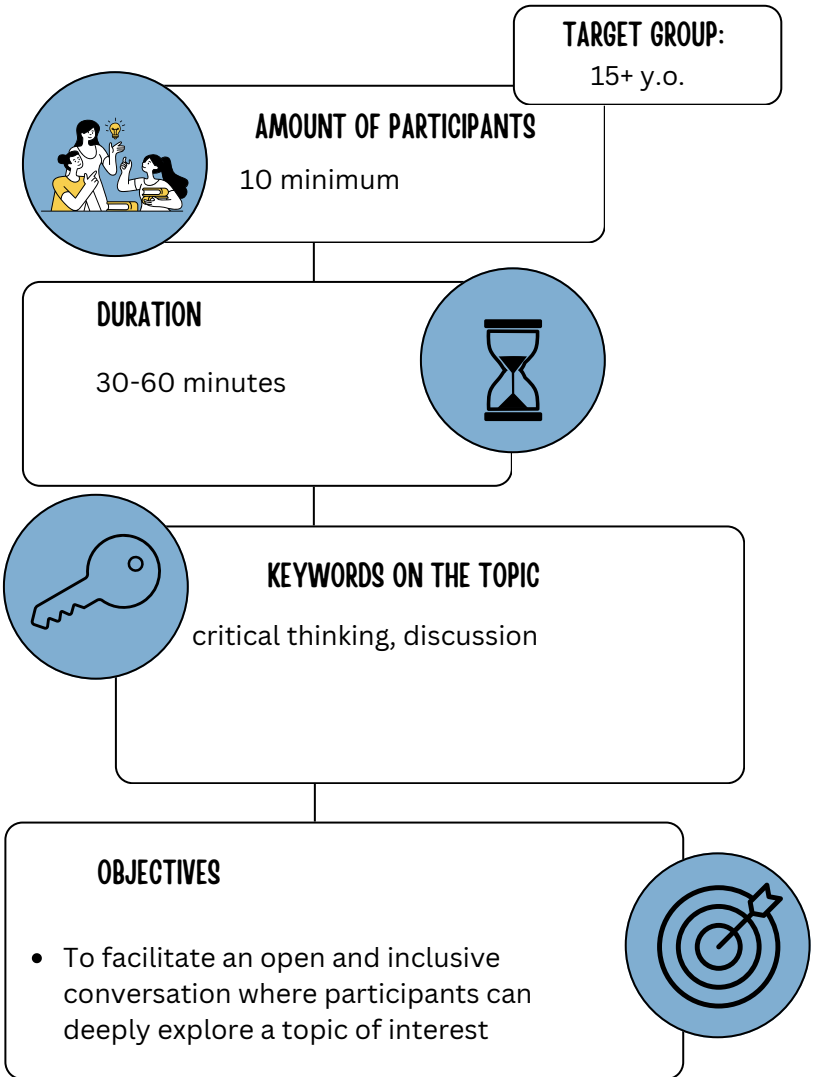
Example how KnowWonder can be applied in education by a school teacher:

After your class is over, you can ask students to individually write down everything they remember about the subject you discussed. Then, on the right column to write down their questions or further curiosities. Even if their questions have no answer yet, writing them down sets an intention to actively look for an answer, also reinforcing learning. It also helps students become aware about the gained knowledge and where they can direct their learning next. KnowWonder tool also helps you, as a teacher, discover what information was assimilated by the students and how to plan your next class, based on their wonders and curiosities further.

KNOW   **WONDER**

KnoWonder Tool developed by Tim Hurson

FISHBOWL DISCUSSION

TARGET GROUP:
15+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

10 minimum

DURATION

30-60 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

critical thinking, discussion

OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate an open and inclusive conversation where participants can deeply explore a topic of interest

DESCRIPTION:

The fishbowl is a discussion format that allows all individuals involved to participate. It is especially useful for larger groups. This type of discussion allows everyone to contribute and observe.

Steps:

1. Define a debatable topic (ex. Are critical thinking skills declining in society and especially among the youth?)

2. Select a small group of active participants and a larger group of observers.

3. Arrange the seating in a fishbowl formation as shown in the picture.

Source:Fishbowl with method: Discuss with all | C³EIMZEIT (ceimzeit.de)

4. Explain the rules. These rules may include guidelines on respectful communication, time limits for speaking, and any specific format you want to follow (e.g., opening statements, rebuttals, etc.).

5. Start with opening statements from active participants in the inner circle.

6. Engage in a discussion, addressing arguments, counterarguments, and evidence.

7. Rotate participants: After a certain amount of time, you can rotate participants between the inner and outer circles so that everybody can be involved in the debate.

8. Moderate the debate, ensuring focus and respectful engagement.

9. Conclude the debate: Once sufficient time has been allocated for discussion, bring the debate to a close.
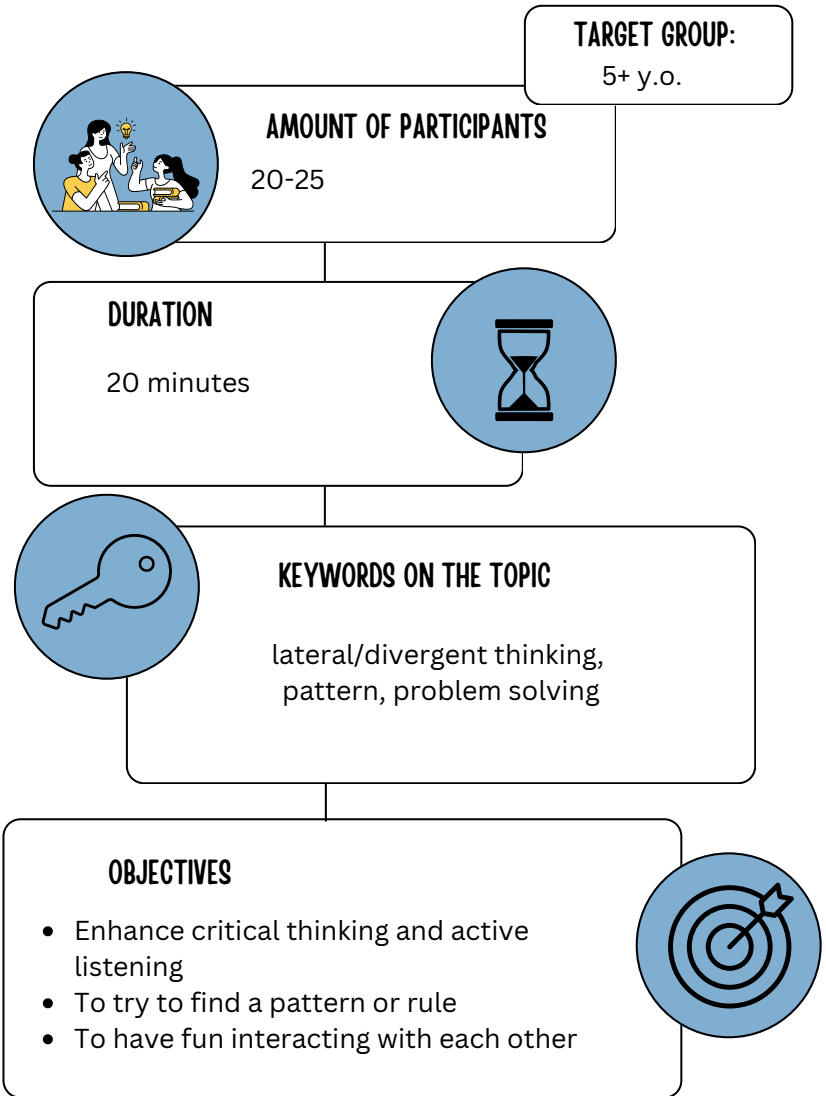
10. Reflect and discuss: After the debate, facilitate a reflection session where participants can share their thoughts and experiences.

NB: The fishbowl method can be conducted in several ways.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How has the discussion influenced your understanding of the topic? Did it challenge any preconceived notions or expand your perspective? What were the key insights or arguments presented?

İMAGİNARY PARTY

TARGET GROUP:
5+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
20-25

DURATION
20 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
lateral/divergent thinking, pattern, problem solving

OBJECTIVES
- Enhance critical thinking and active listening
- To try to find a pattern or rule
- To have fun interacting with each other

DESCRIPTION:

A facilitator is telling the group that s/he is hosting a party that night and they are invited to attend by each bringing something. Depending on a pre-established pattern or rule, they will be able to attend or not.

For example:

The host of the party starts by giving an example of an item that s/he will bring. "I will bring apples. What are you going to bring?"

Participants are asked to state what they are going to bring, and based on their answer the host will tell them if they can attend or not.

Participants come out with answers and try to guess the rule by paying attention to what the host rejects or accepts.

In the example, the pattern of the rule was to say a word that contains a double letter, in order to be able to attend the party. Those that mentioned 'strawberries, waffles, marshmallows, cigarettes, gummy bears, tree, beer··· were accepted, while those that mentioned words like violin, dog, body, friend were asked to try again in the next round.

Some other examples of patterns that can be applied are:

· alphabetical order of the words;

· things that belong to the same category;

· personalising the answer ("I will bring ····.").

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

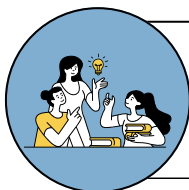What pattern do you think that is applied?

Was it difficult to guess the pattern?
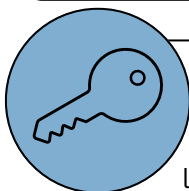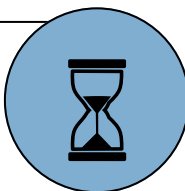
LATERAL THINKING

TARGET GROUP:
5+ y.o.

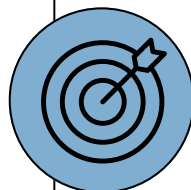**AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS**
20-25

DURATION
30 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
lateral thinking, creativity, problem solving, team building, finding alternatives

OBJECTIVES
- think outside the box
- create new practical ideas of using an object for a purpose different to the primary use
- be creative

PREPARATION:

Materials: pen and paper

DESCRIPTION:

The group is divided into smaller groups and each group has to come out with as many usages besides the primary or basic usage of a particular object. After 5-10 minutes of brainstorming, each group shares with the other groups the uses they could think of.

Example 1: bottle of water

The answers that arose were: musical instrument, bake rolling, toy, toilet, bong, weight, bowl, vacuum, heater or cooler, brick, smoking pipe, shower, stress release object, game prompt, sculpture, grounding bowls, hat, funnel, birdhouse, sexual toy, food for cats, spinning game···
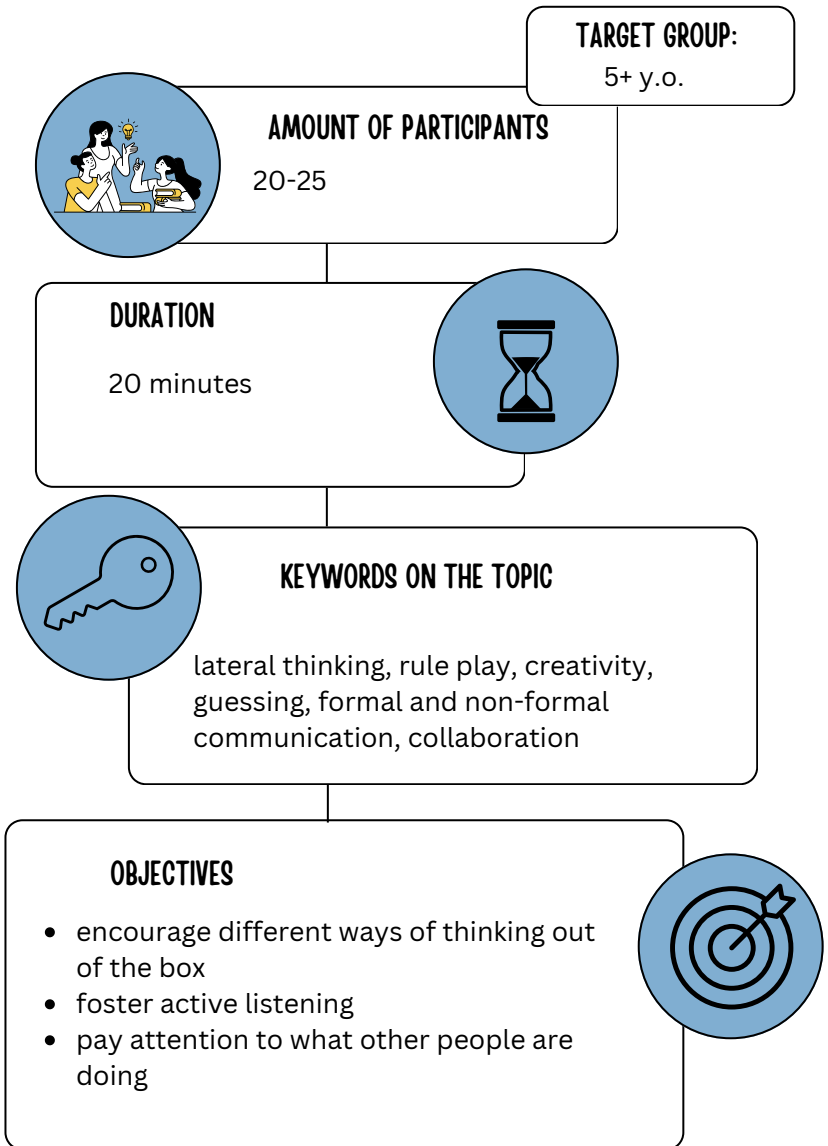
Example 2: a tablecloth

The answers that arose were: blanket, curtains, parachute, sun umbrella, bag, ghost costume, flag, a piece of paper, paint on it, carpet, use it as fuel, tent, whip, tie someone, hammock, bandage, trampoline, puzzle if you cut it, kite, sawing tools, baby sling...

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Was it hard to find new uses for the items?

Did you realise something new?

THE SECRET RULE

Shh

TARGET GROUP:
5+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS

20-25

DURATION

20 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC

lateral thinking, rule play, creativity,
guessing, formal and non-formal
communication, collaboration

OBJECTIVES

- encourage different ways of thinking out
  of the box
- foster active listening
- pay attention to what other people are
  doing

DESCRIPTION:

The group is divided into smaller groups and two people from each group are given a different secret rule/pattern. The two people have to perform the rule and the others have to guess the rule within their own groups.
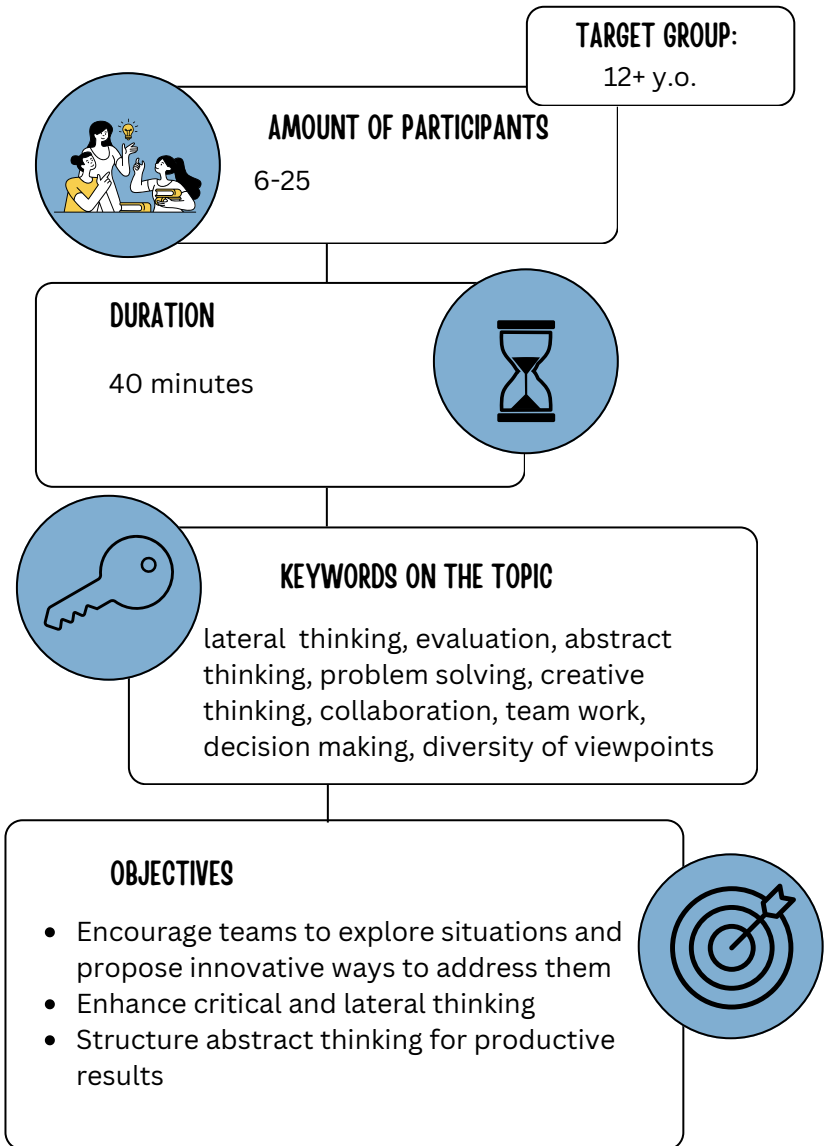
For example:

- taking as many pictures of the group as possible without being noticed while talking;
- including movie titles in their sentences;
- mispronouncing the names of other people in the group;
- exaggeratedly blinking when hearing a verb;
- answering by using a rhyme for the last word in the question.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Was it easy to find out the hidden rule?

Was it difficult to perform the rule in order to make others discover it?

SİX THİNKİNG HATS METHOD (BY E. DE BONO)

TARGET GROUP:
12+ y.o.

AMOUNT OF PARTICIPANTS
6-25

DURATION
40 minutes

KEYWORDS ON THE TOPIC
lateral thinking, evaluation, abstract thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, collaboration, team work, decision making, diversity of viewpoints

OBJECTIVES
- Encourage teams to explore situations and propose innovative ways to address them
- Enhance critical and lateral thinking
- Structure abstract thinking for productive results

PREPARATION:
Materials: pen and paper

DESCRIPTION:
The 'Six Hats' method is used to organize personal and group thinking developed by Edward de Bono. The method is used for problem-solving by favoring critical thinking and avoiding censorship of new, unusual, and disturbing ideas. In order to do this, each participant must use the mode of thinking linked to his/her 'hat' when talking about a chosen topic. The goal is to mobilize a simple and efficient process of parallel thinking which is helping people to think out of the box and to leave behind fixed positions and unidirectional thoughts.

Each thinking style is represented by a different hat:
- Blue hat: Organisation and management (ensuring the roles of the hats have been observed)
- Green hat: Creativity (creative thinking)
- Red hat: Emotional criticism (feelings and instincts)
- Yellow hat: Positive criticism (benefits and values)
- Black hat: Negative criticism (difficulties and dangers)
- White hat: Neutrality (the facts, information gathering)

Hat	Role	Focus
	Logic	The facts
	Optimism	The value and the benefits
	Devil's advocate	The difficulties and dangers
	Emotion	Feelings and intuitions
	Creativity	Possibilities and new ideas
	Management	Ensuring the rules of the hats are observed

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:
Was it difficult to maintain the role? Have you been able to think about solutions to a problem that arose?