






A safety symbol

 TIME	<p>15 minutes</p>
 No.	<p>Any number of participants</p>
 MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-it, coloured paper; • Scissors; • Pens.
 OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give tools to express one's feelings without having to verbalize them without making the atmosphere "heavy", you can acknowledge needs and boundaries.
 INSTRUCTION S STEP BY STEP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask participants to cut out a shape (a heart, a cat, a circle, etc.) from paper; 2. Invite people to write — on both sides of this paper — what they will need if they are overwhelmed by their emotions (for example: one side: "I need a hug", the other side: "I need to go out for five minutes alone", etc.). Ask them to write down how they want others to act if they feel bad; 3. Each person keeps their symbol with them throughout the upcoming activity or event. Tell participants that they can use their symbols whenever they feel it is necessary. The symbol can be shown at any time if a person wishes to stop participating in an exercise or discussion.

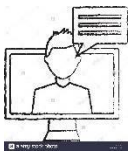


DISCUSSIONS

- To debrief, you can explain how important it is to respect our basic needs for safety (physical, emotional, regarding identity, basic human rights, etc.), literally in every social interaction. To keep or break these rules can be crucial in any kind of social situation. The aim of the exercise is to remind us how easily we tend to forget about our own safety and suppress body signs which tell us: “Watch out, you are crossing your own boundary!”;
- The exercise helps sensitise us to the importance and complexity of the concept of safety, and to become more conscious of how to protect ourselves, notice our own boundaries and respect those of others. In the debriefing, you may want to take the time to name all the possible “ghosts” in the training room, such as diversity (age, gender, nationality, social status, skin colour, etc.), power positions. You may want to mention how your own position as facilitator (identity, roles, responsibilities, power) is present in the room;
- The questions of inequality, power and status differences may or may not come up directly. If you have a diverse group in which you expect that these dimensions will come up, suggest that the group invent some rules that would ensure equality. This can refer to equality of turns (members of lower status groups may be less inclined to speak up in group), but it can also concern expressions of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Explore with your group how you can work together to ensure that learning is possible without putting members of different minorities into uncomfortable situations;
- The aim of ‘Safety Rules’ is to cover everyone’s personal needs and sensitivities and create a democratic, horizontal and inclusive safe space for everyone.



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THEORY

Addressing topics such as intimacy or sexuality can be sensitive, especially if it involves participatory activities where everyone is invited to participate and/or share. Therefore, we propose to create a safe space through three activities: the creation of shared safety rules, an occupy movement and a safety symbol. They can be done separately, but they are even more effective and relevant if they are done one after the other. They ensure that everyone's word is respected during debates/ exchanges.

The safety rules and the meeting gestures will also have the advantage of promoting a horizontal workspace, allowing the creation of common rules. They also allow a better circulation of power: everyone is free to recall the rules established together and to moderate the debates, both participants and facilitators.

