

Learning Activity 6.3

Using theatre and role-plays to identify sexual harassment

Overview

IMPORTANT: *This activity makes use of specialized techniques which enable participants to effectively identify and deal with forms of gender-based violence. This exercise is proposed here as a practical example of how theatre can be used to raise awareness of critical issues. However, psychological, psychosomatic and kinesthetic aspects need to be taken carefully into account when proposing this activity. Trainers are encouraged to avail themselves of specialized experts when trying out this exercise for the first time.*

This activity should be preceded by other activities to break the ice among participants and create a climate of trust. Also, various techniques can be used to ensure that participants adopt an open mind to accepting other people's views and to expressing their own feelings or experiences.

Suggested time

90 minutes minimum

Target group

Representatives from:

- Employers' organizations and trade unions at local, national and international level.
- Trainers of managers and workers in factories and farms in global supply chains.
- Local trade unions and NGOs supporting worker education.
- Legal and government agencies, and victim advisers.

Aims

- Develop an understanding of sexual harassment, and how to identify it, through experiencing it in role-play.
- Appreciate how other people experience this sort of situations and propose possible solutions.

Preparation

- Prepare the activity by collecting sources of information for the group work session.
- Provide contextual information and tips about the issues that can be discussed.
- Elaborate a version of the scenario in the hand-out which may be appropriate to the group, then prepare cards for the different roles, as detailed below.

Setting

Any setting where a role-play for the proposed scenario may be easily carried out. Large room, with possibility to move chairs and desks aside.

Materials

Scenario and role-play cards

Time/Steps

Step 1: Small group role plays (suggested time: 30 minutes)

Divide the group into small groups. Ask each group to develop a short scene (2 to 5' max) to show ways in which sexual harassment can happen in the workplace. In a mixed group it will be most effective if men play women and vice-versa, encouraging participants to learn experientially what being sexually harassed feels like.

Step 2: Plenary presentation (suggested time: 30 minutes)

Present these role-plays to the whole group. After the scene has been shown, ask the characters to stay in role for a few minutes while the rest of the group are invited to ask the characters questions. The characters should answer these in role.

The following are a sample of questions that can be asked:

- How does the woman feel and what does she fear?
- Why does he do this? How does he feel?
- Who else is there? Who witnesses it?
- Who is involved in it? How do they feel?
- What does the woman do? Why does she respond in this way?
- What do the other people do? Why do they act in these ways?
- What can a worker do to help him/herself when he or she experiences such problems?

Step 3: Re-play (suggested time: 30 minutes)

Re-play the role-play showing some of these strategies. At the end carry out a de-briefing by asking each participant to say their name and make a statement about themselves from real life.

How to adapt it

- The role-play can be adapted to reflect different and specific workplace problems that may create further risks for women, for example, around production deadlines, working late or forced overtime.

Tips

- Encourage participants to play unfamiliar roles, opposite of their own role, (e.g. the trade unionist plays the employer, men role-play being a woman being sexually harassed etc).

More on this technique: <http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en/index.php?useFlash=0>