

MODULE 3: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Content and Relevance

We have selected four themes from the needs analysis: A first theme concerns the concept of diversity and the recognition of cultural differences. The module works on the recognition of diversity and the development of an awareness of one's own and other's diversity, both cultural and personal (the multiple differences). Differences must be first recognised in order to be accepted or rejected, even to avoid pre-judgement. Recognizing cultural differences is a necessary step to improve intercultural encounters and dialogue. A second theme introduces the concept of multicultural societies and the different models of welcome and integration. The module aims at (1) gaining new knowledge on the concept of multicultural society; (2) expanding the concepts of society, borders, encounters and clashes between cultures; and (3) developing the meanings of the terms insiders and outsiders.

A third theme concerns the intercultural meeting and plans to build the idea of a relational environment. The module works on the ability to empathise with the other, to create a third environment of safe meeting based on trust (holding), where it is possible to express without fear, or where fears can be expressed without awe of the right pre-judgement of one's own and others.

A fourth theme faces the prejudice as a precursor to discrimination and exclusion. It will be a cross-cutting theme within the module.



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Educational goals

1. Exploring and recognising the diversity between cultural and social systems, understanding the dimensions of social and cultural diversity by deepening the knowledge of the migration phenomenon and the concept of foreigner (identity/culture) and outsider (proximity/distance).
2. Educating to multicultural society by deepening the models of welcome and integration and stimulating reflection on the concepts of ethnocentrism, ethno-relativism, membership groups, systems, and organisational cultures, openness/closure to diversity to make visible barriers to acceptance of diversity (cultural dimensions and stereotypes).
3. Supporting the development of intercultural relational skills by exercising active listening and stimulating empathy and awareness of each other's emotions and needs, supporting the ability to take the other's point of view, and facilitating cognitive and behavioural flexibility to develop mediation skills.
4. Stimulating awareness of the mechanisms of discrimination and prejudice by fostering in-depth knowledge of the concepts of stereotype, prejudice, ethnocentrism, victim-blaming, discrimination, harassment, stigma, and stimulating the analysis of the concept of conflict in an intercultural key with reference to the observation of group dynamics such as exclusion and stigmatisation versus inclusion and integration.

Theoretical background

The systemic relational model (Bateson 1977, Von Foerster 1984, Maturana & Varela 2001) is the underlying theoretical foundation that supports and orients the methodology proposed in the exercises since:

- It considers the individual and each social group understood in relation to each other, as subsystems of various different contextual systems that influence each other.
- It favours a shared definition of the issue from different formulations (multiplicity of vantage points and narratives).
- It promotes the activation of integrative processes of the *differences* present in the individual, in the group, in relational networks, with an open and constructive vision.
- It activates collaborative and evolutionary relational resources through the recognition and enhancement of resource and resilience aspects for change.
- It also supports the centrality of an ethical position and cultural sensitivity, the recognition and respect of personal, cultural, and religious diversity, as well as the maintenance of a relational position free from value judgements.
- It recognises the importance of a continuous self-reflection on perceptions and prejudices.

The key concept of systemic intervention in human organisation is that, in addition to the content of the intervention itself, there is a level of analysis that concerns the observation of the meanings and quality of communication and relationship, which is fundamental for achieving the objectives of change. Today's increasingly globalised society requires us to change and broaden our points of view and acquire an intercultural competence, which is essential to understanding the codes of conduct and the ways generally accepted in different societies and environments. Intercultural competence can be defined as complex skills that are required to interact effectively and appropriately with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself (Fantini, 2009).

The module intends to work towards intercultural learning according to the three categories of learning: knowledge, skills, and attitudes (European Parliament and Council of 23 April 2008) defined by UNESCO (2009) as understanding and respect of the different cultural groups and dialogue between different cultural groups.

In both Deardoff's (2006) models of intercultural competence (pyramidal and procedural) knowledge concerns cultural self-awareness and understanding of the influence of contexts in worldviews (the lens through which each of us sees the world), specific cultural knowledge, socio-linguistic knowledge, assimilation of global themes, and trends. The skills to be developed consist of listening, observing, considering the world from the perspectives of others (viewing how perspectives are similar and different), evaluating, and creating links. The attitudes to be developed relate to curiosity, openness, respect (valorisation of others), and discovery, tolerance of ambiguity, and cultural humility (combining respect with self-awareness). Orchestrated together, these components produce internal effects, i.e. the development of flexibility, adaptability (being able to temporarily move to another perspective), ethno-relative vision, and empathy. In turn, the inner effects determine external effects that correspond to behaviour, like building relationships (creating lasting intercultural personal bonds) and communicating effectively and appropriately during an intercultural interaction (visible part of the competence).

The skills most directly relevant to fostering intercultural competence according to Portera (2013a) are: observation, listening, evaluation, analysis, interpretation, relating, adaptability, non-judgement, stress management, metacommunication, and creative problem solving. Attitudes include respect, empathy, open-mindedness, curiosity, risk-taking, flexibility, and environmental tolerance. The acquisition of intercultural competence is a complex process that "includes cognitive aspects, language and social skills, motivation and positive attitudes in a double sense (individual/social), as well as a meta-reflective and meta-strategic level that regulates the process and presumably implements it indefinitely" (De Angelis, 2011).

Also important are the relational and dialogue dimensions: "where the other is not only observed, described and known, but becomes part of a dynamic and interactive relationship" (Portera, 2013b). To achieve this, we need to build a *third space* of mutual trust and transformation in which everyone can be available for mutual change, promote interactions that consider the other's point of view, so that exchanges are based on empathic authenticity, trust and mutual respect. Only then can otherness become the vehicle for our expansion, because it is only by understanding the *other* within me that I can expand. This means promoting interactions that consider the other's point of view, so that exchanges are based on empathetic authenticity, trust, and mutual respect (Bennet, 1993).

Among the intercultural skills to be acquired, according to Franca Pinto Minerva (2002) communication competence is not reduced to pure linguistic competence. Rather, it is a socio- psychological competence in approaching the stranger, in overcoming one's fear of coming into contact with others and agreeing something with them.

It is related to language mediation, dialogue, and the art of listening. Learning to listen to the stories of others

contributes to enriching our visions of life, to deepen the meaning of our existence, to allow on our way through emotions and reflections that end up bringing out the pregnancies and, at the same time, the complexity of their own history, to make themselves permeable to others in order to bring to light the inexhaustible richness of one's plural identity (Pinto Minerva, 2002).

Decentralisation and empathy then become fundamental pillars (skills) of the authentically intercultural relationship, and by empathy we mean “the ability to understand the person with whom one is interacting, (the) attempt to empathise, to put oneself in the shoes of others, to fall into the other possibly without preconceptual attitudes or stereotypes” (Portera, 1997). Through active and non-judgemental listening, empathy, abstention from judgements, openness towards other people, positive management of conflicts will become possible. Since the latter – especially in a pluralistic and multicultural context – are inescapable, it is essential to develop mediation, negotiation, and cooperation skills by learning to recognise them (distinguishing the specific problem from the person in front of you) and manage them appropriately.

Recognising the *other* through the ability to communicate, dialogue, and resolving conflicts then implies that one understands it and understanding is generated by knowledge. A qualifying point in the process of intercultural understanding is critical verification, which tends to neutralise the influence of one's own point of view in the perception of the culture of others. This requires an ongoing effort to explore and understand not only other cultures but also the hidden mechanisms of one's own culture (Milani, 2015).

Exercise I – Migration background and family histories⁴

Introduction & Methodology

To explore and recognise diversity, we decided to start with an exercise based on the genogram, a schematic family tree drawn with a minimum of two or three generations. This technique allows us to observe family histories from multiple points of view. The encounter with diversity (mixed couples, adoption) among which the event of migration (internal or external, outgoing or incoming) is frequent. The exercise, in addition to storytelling and knowledge, allows the comparison of migration stories of different families, times, and cultures. We want to focus on how migration movements are still current and cannot be placed only in geo-historical moments.

The projects and meanings attributed to migration are multiple and elaborated differently by families. Exploring the wealth of stories and sharing them within the group becomes paradigmatic of how diversity is close to us, within the family stories of everyone. This exercise therefore aims to broaden the concept of diversity by beginning to stimulate the exploration of what is most intimate to all of us: our own family history. By allowing a comparison between the personal dimension, the family history with respect to migration, and the social dimension, understanding one's cultural background becomes a starting point for the development of intercultural competences (Lustig & Koester, 2013, p. 272).



The experience of this exercise in a group results in the continuous reworking of knowledge, attitudes, and experiences, and thus can be of transformative value. It is with the help of the group that one can better grasp the repetitions, redundancies, connections, wounds, and resources within family histories. In this exercise, the group must be supported to respectfully approach each other through the experiences of listening, participating, confronting, and reflecting, and then developing the ability to connect with one another.

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4 An impression of the exercise from the accompanying [online tutorial](https://tinyurl.com/yckw7j6k): <https://tinyurl.com/yckw7j6k>

This exercise allows participants to develop empathy, to put oneself in someone else's place, and to understand the emotions that accompany family histories. Besides, it stimulates the understanding that some processes are both vertical, that is, recurring in the temporal dimension of generations, and horizontal, that is, belonging to numerous family histories, sometimes even across cultures. This experience of similarities and differences enriches one's point of view and improves understanding. The multiplicity of belonging is amplified.

The genogram is an active non-verbal technique (Bowen, 1979), a diagram that organises family stories through two or three generations (McGoldrick, Giordano & Garci-Preto, 2005; Mc Goldrick & Gerson, 1985). The technique promotes greater exploration of family histories by allowing to focus on events or relationships even from the past, possibly extrapolating rules and myths, roles, rituals, values, communication, languages, relationships, thoughts, beliefs, practices, customs, ways of interacting, and expected behaviours. The use of this exercise allows us to exploit different levels of application: the level of behaviours enacted *hic et nunc* and the diachronic level of history and its meanings; the phenomenology of current communicative transactions and family myths; the originality of the individual and the characteristics of the systems of belonging (Chianura & Iacoella, 2003).

Through the genogram it is possible to highlight how individuals and family systems carry their roots of identity, built through a multigenerational maturation process involving genetics, culture, affective life, and other individuals, relational and socio-affective factors. With this in mind, a person's individuality emerges as a *relationship story*.



Target group(s)

- Teaching & administrative staff
- Students from host & refugee contexts



Duration

- 120 min



Requirements / needed material

- DIN-A-3 sheets
- Coloured markers
- PC & projector
- Genogram example

Learning outcomes

- Comparing the different histories and coping strategies of the migration events among families.
- Analysing migration-related experiences such as: difficulties, fears, wounds, and trauma, language and cultural barriers, resources, resilience, benefits, contamination.
- Applying transversal skills, especially relational and communication skills: knowing how to ask questions, knowing how to listen, knowing how to make connections.
- Integrating active and empathic listening with attitudes of respect and curiosity.
- Improving intercultural sensitivity.
- Developing the ability to interconnect multiple levels of observation of the different relationships in which each individual is immersed.
- Developing the capacity for self-reflection (the ability to see oneself while interacting with others).
- Recognising the specificities of and differences between groups.
- Improving the ability to work in groups.

Instructions

1. The facilitator starts with introductions, explains and agrees on the rules of communication, with appropriate instructions about questions (open, closed, circular⁵) and how to ask them (see methodological note), and introduces the theme of the exercise. An [introductory video](#)⁶ on migrant DNA is offered as a starting point (can also be proposed at the end to consolidate learning). Participants can be asked to bring photos and/or documents related to characters and events, related to migration and/or stories of diversity.
2. The facilitator provides the graphic-symbolic elements on the board, showing an example of a completed genogram. All participants proceed to the phase of graphic reconstruction of the individual genogram (max. 15 min). Sitting in a semicircle, in front of a table, and with a sheet of paper with coloured markers, they represent their family tree, inserting information such as names, origin, age. The graphic representation includes the oldest generation in the highest part, and the matrimony ties in parallel (see genogram symbols below).
3. According to the time available, some participants will be asked to present their genogram to the group, selecting the maps with stories of migration and suggestions related to the encounter with diversity, conflict events between family groups and identity reconstruction related to culture (it is not important that the memory is precise).

The facilitator makes the selected participant proceed to the narration, and then asks questions aimed at highlighting the salient details of the genogram, in order to expand and relate the significant events, the multiple affiliations, and the possible differences even between the stories, trying to enhance the modes of adaptation and the possible hybridisation.

Significant events related to the historical, social, and cultural context concern roles, communication, values, beliefs, practices, customs, rituals, thinking, ways of interacting, relationships, and expected behaviours also related to culture.

While empathetically supporting the person presenting the genogram, the facilitator should also actively involve as many participants as possible in the discussion, allowing them to ask questions for clarification, insights or connections (20 min), and to provide final feedback.

4. Sample questions on cultural transmission:
 - » Which cultural values do you see that have shaped your family and its members?
 - » How have they formed you?
 - » Is there a national or ethnic culture that has had a particular influence on you and your family?
 - » How does it manifest itself in your life?
5. The activity concludes (10 min) with a group reflection on the themes that emerged:
 - » Phenomenon of migration as an unplanned event of the family
 - » Concept of *foreigner* (identity/culture)
 - » Diversity of social and cultural dimensions
 - » Multiple belonging in relation to social and cultural values
 - » One's limits and capacity for openness
 - » Evaluation on: what aspects were considered positive and what were considered negative? What can be said to have been learned or otherwise understood in the new situation?

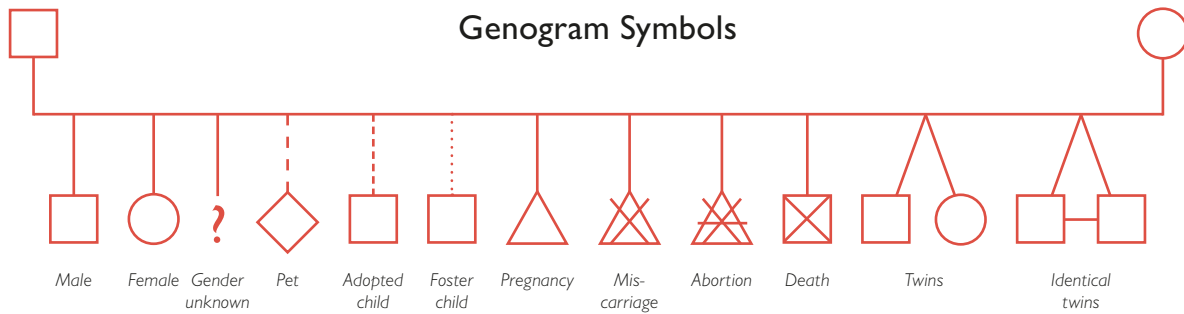
Suggestion for debriefing: a symbolic donation, by each group participant, of a metaphorical object, a phrase, a word, for the person who brought the story.

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5 Circular questions are a conversational technique that puts each person in the position of an observer of the thoughts, emotions, and behaviours of others, thus creating a community of observers. Asking a person to express his or her views on the relationship and differences between other members (family members for example), clarifies the structure of relationships in the system, beyond the meanings attributed to behaviours. The circular interview fosters the process of hypothesising, because it forces everyone to engage in alternative readings, to question premises considered fundamental and to imagine new possible paths.

6 <https://tinyurl.com/38rs27rw>

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

Delve into some questions about cultural factors. What is more important to a culture than time: the past, the present, or the future? What is the attitude towards risk and uncertainty? How important is individual versus group success? How should power be equitably distributed and how should subordinates treat the decisions of those in power? What is more important to the culture: competitiveness or warm personal relationships? Is there congruence between the parent culture and the receiving culture? How many differences between the cultures are highlighted, how many similarities? (Hofstede, 1984).



Genogram symbols legend⁷

Exercise 2 – With the luggage at the border

Introduction & Methodology

In order to gain new knowledge about cultural diversity, a role-play on the value of welcoming is proposed. Participants can actively experience the possible intercultural conflicts and the different models of welcoming between groups and societies. In this exercise, the dynamics have three points of observation: from the us group (the insiders), from the others group (the outsiders), and from the third external observation group.

The groups are micro-societies with their own rules, languages, and rituals. These micro-societies have physical or symbolic boundaries dictated by laws or regulations, with their own culture that perpetuates a sense of belonging to the society itself. The exercise aims to reflect on the boundaries that the group tends to create and how they influence welcoming practices. The focus of this exercise is also on the migrant's experience: the reasons of migration, motivations, expectations, culture shock, social distance, fears, barriers (linguistic, cultural, bureaucratic etc.), styles of adaptation, feelings of exclusion, inclusion strategies, and socio-cultural resources.

Among the techniques based on an experiential methodology, role-playing, simulation, and psychodrama have been evaluated as promising tools for the development of intercultural competences (Hiller, 2010). Role-playing aims to the appropriation and autonomous production of models from experience, allowing empathy to trigger possible changes in behaviour. The less structured the role-play is, the more room is left for decision-making and creativity of the participants. Participants face unknown terrain and are forced to adapt to the context, to operate even without knowing all the answers, to manage ambiguous situations, or to confront more familiar activities while managing and processing them from different points of view.

The goal is to bring out the states of mind and bring them to life through the recitation of attitudes or behaviours. The technique can help to develop empathy, attitudes of respect and adaptability, to gain knowledge about similarities and differences, assumptions and biases, conventions of verbal and non-verbal communication. Through concrete and direct experience, together with questions and reflections, participants can acquire different attitudes and greater flexibility (e.g. openness and understanding) and develop intercultural skills.



Image: Freepik.com

⁷ Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ypax56zb>

The possibility of facing a realistic situation during a simulation and therefore a protected context which is potentially anxiety-provoking can teach one to react. The exercise promotes participants' empathy with a different situation by helping to dismantle stereotypes and showing how people tend to reproduce themselves.



Target group(s)

- Teaching & administrative staff
- 12 - 20 people



Duration

- 120 min



Requirements / needed material

- Coloured paper (3-4 different colours)
- Large & very long tape (borders)
- Photographs & newspaper articles
- Computer & projector
- Example stories as case studies

Learning outcomes

- Recognising the concept of group identity and boundaries between groups.
- Comprehending differences between groups and the dynamics that generate acceptance.
- Becoming aware of prejudices and stereotypes about gender, religion, background.
- Understanding the stages of acceptance and marginalisation.
- Knowing the different levels of intercultural sensitivity.
- Identifying empathetic attitudes, respect, and curiosity.
- Highlighting the value of diversity.
- Recognising group, role, and belonging dynamics.
- Using the ability to work creatively in groups.

Instructions

1. Randomly divide the group into three or four subgroups: one or two receiving companies, one family group, one observer group. The exercise consists of three phases: (1) the initial phase of introduction, presentation, warm-up and explanation of the game with instructions and the preparatory phase of the groups (about 30 min); (2) the actual game (about 40 min); (3) the final phase with open discussion, observations, and concluding reflections (about 30 min).
2. Facilitator and participants briefly introduce themselves. The facilitator gives the instructions to the groups separately.
3. Preparatory phase (20 min): each group or society builds up a national identity (name, colours, language, laws, rules with respect to borders, reception methods, a political-administrative identity with respect to migration). [In alternative the facilitator can provide cards with role statements and instructions].
4. The participants in the family group build a family identity and story, defining the characters through the creation of names and roles, the cultural and socio-political background, the reasons for migration and the migration project.
In order to make the participants identify with the migrant's/refugee's journey, the choices s/he has to make, the losses s/he suffers, the feeling of courage or fear, and the experience of belonging, the pressures suffered (family, social, political) can be introduced through some real stories of immigration (slides, prints, newspapers).
5. The actual game phase is divided into: (1) the departure (10 min), (2) the journey (10 min), and (3) the arrival (20 min). At the start, a perimeter is drawn on the ground with adhesive tape: the house.
The family gathers their things in a suitcase before the trip that could be useful for the trip and in the new society: 10 concrete, abstract and/or symbolic (like a song) or metaphorical objects (each object can be written/drawn on an A5 sheet). The journey begins by asking the family to tell what they are leaving behind and the reasons for the move.
Then the facilitator informs the participants that many people are leaving the country at the same time, that the roads are too crowded, and that they cannot continue by car. The journey continues on foot and 2 items must be left behind. During the

journey, the family encounters obstacles like a refugee camp, a boat, a reception centre (draw the route by taking pieces of tape and using flattened newspaper to make dots). Family members are forced to leave something behind, review the contents of the suitcase, and get rid of other items. Theft and violence may be experienced, with the facilitator acting as the narrator.

6. In the arrival phase, the family is faced with two companies (if the size of the group allows it) from which they can choose to be accepted, to which they propose their request for entry, considering what is needed to be accepted (documents, visa, payment, exchange of information, request for asylum). Participants in the role of family members must act to be accepted and convincing to enter the group, they can activate different resources, means or skills.

Insiders and outsiders of society must be able to communicate by talking at the border, actors must decide and mediate with respect to the needs of the spaces and contexts of insertion (work, home, school, university) and the offer of the hosting group. The request to accept the family, or separate individuals, is the subject of discussion within the group or society.

7. In the final phase (group accepted by one society, rejected by one, or not accepted by both) a reflection on what happened is proposed through an open discussion, using everyone's observations. Starting from the external group, a comment will be asked about everyone's observations with respect to the content and processes, in the other groups and in the relationships between them.
8. Debriefing (see below)

Tips for reflection/deepening the content

- What did you think about during this exercise?
- What is realistic?
- How did you feel about interpreting (...)?
- Fears?
- How important is individual achievement versus group achievement?
- Is the desire to be responsible for others or should we primarily take care of ourselves?
- What does it mean to be outside the circle or inside?
- How much do people within the group have to *mediate* to get their idea accepted?
- How inclusive is the group/society as a whole?
- Did they feel accepted or did they feel rigidity?
- How does this feeling (acceptance or rigidity) affect the experience of acceptance?
- What is the attitude towards risk and uncertainty?
- To what extent do members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations?
- What does inclusion entail?
- How do people perceive the integration of diversity over time?
- What is welcoming?

At the end of the session, the ideas that emerged can be compared with some input from reality.

Exercise 3 – Simulate

Introduction & Methodology

For the objective of supporting the development of intercultural relational competences, the experiential technique of simulation is an adequate activity that allows the participants to get right into the required role and experience the *as if* of the situation that you want to solve, improve, and deepen. The management of real problems is simulated, in various real work contexts, such as those that arise during information and orientation interviews between office staff and foreign students, between teachers and foreign students in the classroom, and dialogues between foreign and native students.

The help of the group of participating observers is crucial at the time of restitution and reflection because it considers and values different points of view allowing for the expansion of positions.

When one has to acquire different ways of relating to others it is important to be able to put oneself in other's shoes. Simulating situations in a protected context can help to learn from the direct experience people can. With the practice of simulated situations, you can experiment in a protected context what has been thought and practised up to that moment on real experiences. The simulations have the purpose of projecting beyond reality but allow you to learn in the *here and now*, because the comparison with the emotions, or reactions, affecting the situation is immediate. The simulated situation is a real and concrete learning experience (Avallone, 1989).

It can be considered that in multicultural organisations the following points have been hierarchically outlined as key problem areas: religious differences, different attitudes toward job duties, money, the opposite sex, differences in worldview, differences in body language, differences in national traditions and lifestyle, different patterns of behaviour (meals, clothing, recreation), differences in national character and its manifestations. In general terms, inadequate cross-cultural competence leads to problems such as: time and time management, psychological differences, different disregard for the role of corporate culture, differences in rank and hierarchical relationships in work situations.



Target group(s)

- Teaching & administrative staff
- 10-15 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Chairs
- Paper
- Scripts for simulation⁸

Learning outcomes

- Recognising cultural differences related to verbal and paraverbal communication.
- Demonstrating the channels and behaviours through which one communicates with others.
- Identifying limitations and strengths (e.g. paraverbal communication skills).
- Recognising experiences inherent in language/cultural barriers.
- Recognising prejudices and stereotypes about gender, religion, background.
- Analysing cross-cultural sensitivity.
- Managing emerging problems and solving them creatively.
- Developing the ability to activate resources and networking.

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⁸ The scripts are either prepared in advance by the facilitator or developed together with the participants.

Instructions

1. Participants form groups of up to five people. Each group, starting from the experiences⁹ of the participants, prepares the staging of a moment of their working life in which communication difficulties emerge (each group agrees on the characteristics of the characters and how they react to the difficult situation) (20 min).
2. Each group enacts its situation (5 minutes for each group) and each performance is followed by a discussion with all participants (silent observer during the performance) who return their point of view, bringing reflections and feelings, trying not to express value judgements on the work of the participants but focusing on what might have influenced the behaviour in the simulated. The facilitator gives space also to the observations of the actors who give their point of view on the experience of the situation: what did they think, how did they find themselves in that role and what did they feel in that situation.
3. The presenter, if s/he considers it useful, can contribute with his/her point of view, and may add further observations to enrich the comparison.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

Thoughtful questions to all participants:

- Has the dialogue been fluid or have there been communication blockades?
- Have the communication goals been met?
- How has the problem solving been handled?

Glossary

- **Stereotypes:** are rigid and impermeable systems of ideas (clichés) that contain the knowledge and expectations that a person has about a certain human group. These ideas can be positive (they love to sing), negative (laziness), or neutral (gesticulating). They are automatic thoughts when meeting or reflecting on the characteristics of a group. They are acquired either during personal experience and (or) social learning, they are often transmitted within a social context. They resemble mental schemes: those who fall into that category will have the characteristics of that category (generalisation) (Benelli & Regazzon, n.d.).
- **Prejudices:** are preconceived opinions, conceived not out of precise and direct knowledge (in the absence of empirical data) of the fact or about the person, but based on common voices and opinions. Tendency to consider in an unjustified unfavourable way people who belong to a particular social group. Prejudices contain beliefs, affects (emotional reactions), and attitudes (they orient behaviour). They refer to opinions and attitudes (Benelli & Regazzon, n.d.).
- **Empathy:** is the ability to feel what the other is feeling, a putting oneself in the other's shoes perceiving emotions and thoughts. It is the ability to see the world as others see it, to be non-judgemental, to understand the feelings of others while keeping them distinct from one's own (Rizzolatti & Gnoli, 2018).
- **Active listening:** means generating effective communication, in which the person speaking has proof that s/he has been heard, understood, and accepted. To create this connection with the other, one must try to grasp every aspect of the message, the posture, and the tone of the voice, the hesitations and the emotions that emerge from what is said. It is an assertive communication technique, based on acceptance and empathy, useful for not only promoting the ability to correctly and effectively express one's emotions or arguments, but also for knowing how to listen and perceive reasons and feelings of others to build a message that the other is able to understand. Attention to listening and suspending one's own judgements, the attempt to acquire the point of view of the other in order to fully understand what one wants to communicate, allow to establish that authentic contact that can become the basis for enriching and effective relationships (Rogers, 2007).
- **Cultural awareness:** means being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value - positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong. A culturally aware person knows about the existence of a multitude of different cultures and the resulting diversity of notions about the world. This knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures and of the cultural identities of others, includes "the will, the ability and the sensitivity necessary to understand people with different backgrounds" (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, 2020).

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⁹ It is also possible to provide tracks to participants.

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