Photo Language ®

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Introduction:

Photolanguage is a mediation technique invented by psychologists and psycho-sociologists from Lyon in 1965. The point is to use pictures to ease public speaking.

Equipment, preparation:

According to each topic, you will need an appropriate amount of pictures. You will need to prepare 3 times more pictures than there are participants. Ideally, the group is never larger than 12 people. At first, the facilitator thinks about the question the group needs to work on. The question must be wide enough to allow different interpretations. It can be formulated as: "chose the picture that most represents XXX".

Method:

There are 3 main rules that the facilitator will need to properly explain:
1- The confidentiality rule : everything said within the group, stays in the group
2- The benevolence rule : no judgment is to be held on the choice of picture and the explanation given by any participant
3- The truth rule: everyone must carefully and spontaneously choose their picture, then, speak as freely as possible. If one picture is selected by 2 participants, they can both use it.

Then, the session is divided into 2 parts:

1st part: choosing a picture:

After the facilitator asks the question, (e.g "with the help of one of those pictures, express what it means for you to separate / to reunite"). The pictures are laid out on a table. Every group member will individually chose the picture that is the most meaningful to them. The participants chose their picture in silence, only by looking. One of the specificity of this game, is that the facilitator also choses a picture. There are 2 reasons for that: on the one hand, the participants feel that this process is safe, on the other hand, it fosters the identification with the participants.

2nd part: exchanges in group or in pairs:

The first volunteer will speak to the group (or her partner) about her picture. Listening skills are crucial for this part. Then, she will listen to what other participants (those who want to speak) have to say about her choice of picture. One of the specificity of photolanguage is that it is a source of enjoyment: joy in sharing, joy to be in a group.
Then, it is possible to take notes on what is said through the pictures, and have a brainstorming session around the initial question.