



3 GROWING UP - REFLECTING ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

OBJECTIVE:

To encourage people to reflect on their own experiences when growing up and see how this compares to the experiences of young people today.

PLEASE NOTE:

The exercises outlined below ask people to disclose some of their memories when growing up. For some people this period may have been a painful and traumatic time and it is important for the trainer to be sensitive to this. Inform people that it is up to them what they share with others.

METHODS:

i) Instant Memories

PREPARATION:

Write the four statements below on a piece of newsprint or on a blackboard.

TIMING:

The exercise will take about 35 minutes.

WHAT TO DO:

Ask people to form into pairs and take 10 minutes each to discuss their conclusions to the following:

As a teenager -

- a) I enjoyed
- b) The person who influenced me most was
- c) The three things I liked were
- d) The three things I would have changed were

“...ask people to
disclose some of
their memories
when growing
up...”

(You could vary the statements and/or decide to focus on a specific age.)

Bring everyone back together in a circle and ask for some feed-back. Take a few points on each of the statements and then ask people if they think today's young people enjoy similar things and share the same concerns.

ii) What Was It Like Growing Up?

PREPARATION:

Newsprint and pens should be available.

TIMING:

The exercise will take 50 minutes approximately.

WHAT TO DO:

Ask people to get into groups of 4-5 people. Each group will need three sheets of newsprint and some pens.

Each piece of newsprint should be headed with a different age range, e.g. 5-10, 11-15, 16-20. Choose the age range according to your own society, for example if primary schooling finishes at 11 and compulsory secondary school finishes at 16, you could choose 5-11, 12-16, 17-21 as the three categories.

In their groups people should be asked to think back to when they were that age and discuss

- what they were like
- what they enjoyed
- what they didn't enjoy

These points should be noted down on newsprint.

Bring the group back together and ask one person from each group to summarise the discussions. Ask people for the similarities and differences within their groups. Did they all share the same experiences, was growing up the same for girls as for boys, did people grow up in different eras, if so what difference did this make, etc.

iii) Guided Memories

PREPARATION:

You need to have a script prepared. This will give you the main headings you will use to trigger people's memories. An example of this is provided.

TIMING:

The exercise will take 40 minutes approx.

WHAT TO DO:

Ask people to get into a comfortable and relaxed position. Tell them that you are going to try to get them to remember what it was like for them growing up. You are going to do this by suggesting that they remember certain people and events in their lives. Ask people to close their eyes and you should start reading through your script - try to use a quiet and relaxed tone of voice.

After you have done this ask people to pair up with someone and spend a few minutes chatting about the memories that come back to them.

Bring the whole group back together and ask for some examples of what came to mind and then ask people if they think today's young people would share similar experiences.

GUIDED MEMORIES -

An Example Of A Script

I'm going to ask you to think back to some memories of growing up. What is your earliest memory pause is it about you on your own, or with parents pause other relations pause friends stop for a few seconds.

Do you remember your first day at school pause were you happy sad did you know anyone at the school.

What about your teachers in that first school what were they like and your friends can you remember a game that you liked playing in the playground at home

Now you're a bit older do you have the same friends like to do the same things did you spend more time at home or with friends perhaps you developed a hobby or interest what adults were important in your life what did you think of them was there anyone you particularly admired who was it why did you like them.

At 14/15 what were you like can you remember a time you particularly enjoyed what happened were you ever worried about anything or angry about anything

When did you feel you had 'grown up' when did you feel you were an adult did you think young people today go through similar things to you

OK, you're back to the present now, can you open your eyes, get up and stretch and wander round the room a bit.