

GROUP GAME



Understanding the experience of being a refugee

The purpose of this game is to help people who have not experienced the life of a refugee, to understand this experience better. Once you complete this game with someone from your community, they should have valuable insight into what refugees go through and how they feel.

WHY A GAME?

Games are one of the best methods to help people understand phenomena which are complex and far removed from their everyday lives. A game allows participants to experience emotions in a very personal and enduring manner, but on a smaller scale than in real life.

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THE GAME

The notion of time

- Sit down in a place where you will not be disturbed and blindfold yourself.
- Stay there for 5 minutes; do not count or use any artificial means of telling time. Use your own judgement and intuition.
- Take off the blindfold and check your watch.
- Think about how you felt with the blindfold on and write it down. How does it feel to sit in the dark, with no way to measure time and nothing to do but wait?

The point of this exercise: A refugee may have to spend several hours hidden in darkness, afraid of being discovered and killed. Unlike you, who have undergone this experience voluntarily, he/she is terrorized by a situation that has been forced on him/her.

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Taking orders

- Imagine that you are deprived of your autonomy. In other words, you are no longer allowed to make decisions for yourself. Your right to come and go, and to take care of your most basic needs, are all subject to someone else's authorization (standing up, walking, going to the toilet, drinking, eating, talking, etc.).
- Try to feel what it might be like to be restricted in this way. Imagine how you would react. Not only has your freedom been taken away but people are constantly giving you orders, making you work, pushing you around, interrupting you ... and no one listens to you.

The point of this exercise: To help you understand the stress that a refugee feels during his or her flight and to make you aware of the stress that your actions and attitudes may provoke among the players during the simulation game.

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Loss

Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit. Equip yourself with a pen and paper.

- Try to remember a situation when you experienced a feeling of loss. Perhaps it was a cherished object, a place you loved to visit, a favourite pet or a loved one
- Let all the memories and emotions associated with the loss come back to you. Write them down, so that later you can reread what you were feeling and evaluate the importance of these personal experiences.
- Think over your own experience of loss and consider how it must feel to be deprived of all those things or people to which or to whom you attach great importance.

The point of this exercise: Many refugees lose absolutely everything: their country, their home, their friends, their family. Try to understand the pain they must feel.

Take notes on all the above games. What did you learn, what did the player learn? Did something change in the way they understand who refugees are?

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Shackled

- Having to obey orders all the time is like being shackled. You are forced to do things without knowing why. Walk around for 2 or 3 minutes holding your right ear with your left hand and your left ankle with your right hand.
- How does it feel to be forced to do this?

The point of this exercise: Think about what you have just experienced for these few minutes. Refugees live under this kind of constraint for hours, months, even years.