EXERCISE: ACQUAINTANCE

Estimated time: 15 minutes

Purpose:
• To give participants an opportunity to introduce themselves and become acquainted with each other in a non-threatening manner.
• To increase participants’ comfort level.
• To establish an unconstrained atmosphere for discussion and group cohesion.

Group Circle Activity

Task: Let's introduce ourselves. Let us all say our names and a few words about what we do. We need a volunteer to begin, and then everyone follows in turn.

Brief discussion: Why did we introduce ourselves in this manner? What do you think was the purpose?

Variation: Facilitator divides the group into pairs and assigns each pair to interview one another. Then each individual introduces her/his counterpart. One pair volunteers to begin, and the others follow.

Possible questions for the interview:
• Introduce yourself and talk about your successes and challenges.
• In an ideal situation, where money and training were not a problem, what would you be doing?
• Three words I would like to be remembered by are...

Discuss in the group:
• What did you feel when your counterpart introduced you?
• What is easier: to talk about yourself or to hear it from others?
• Was it an easy task to talk about your successes/positive characteristics?

Facilitator’s commentary: Each of us has introduced her/himself. Perhaps this was an unusual introduction, however this training activity gave us an opportunity to get acquainted with one another in a non-threatening, informal way, and it established a more comfortable atmosphere for the initial communication in the group. This activity is called an “ice-breaker” because it figuratively breaks the ice or releases the initial tension which is often present in situations when people first meet one another. It will help to set a tone for the time we will spend working as a team that has come together to tackle some complex issues.


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