SMILE

A Handbook for support staff

SMILE - Supporting Migrant Inclusion in Lifelong Learning and Education

This handbook has been developed by the following organizations:

Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) is a Maltese non-governmental organization focused on community development, adult education, research and service provision; working with diverse vulnerable third country nationals, including asylum seekers and persons with international protection.

Integration För Alla (IFALL) is a Swedish NGO which works in promoting integration between cultures and counteract violence between cultures in Sweden and in another countries.

The Institute for African Studies (IAS) NGO and think-tank focused on research, migration and integration, diversity, human-trafficking and advocacy through training, seminars, and conferences.

Centre for Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology LTD (CARDET) one of the leading research and development center in the Mediterranean region with global expertise in project design and implementation, capacity building, and e-learning in the fields of education and VET, social justice and integration.

SUPPORTING MIGRANT INCLUSION IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION (SMILE)

Erasmus + Project - Malta, Cyprus, Slovenia, Sweden - 2017-1-MT01-KA204-026966

SMILE is a 2-year Erasmus+ project, started in October 2017, and led by the Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) in Malta, together with Integration for All (IFALL) in Sweden, the Centre for the Advancement of Research and Development in Education Technology (CARDET) in Cyprus, and the Institute for African Studies (IAS) in Slovenia.

The SMILE project is developing information and training resources to support policymakers, teachers, migrant communities, learning support staff and adult education institutes in promoting migrant inclusion in adult education.

All the project resources and information can be found on the project website: http://www.project-smile.eu/en/.

The Supporting Migrant Inclusion in Lifelong Learning and Education (SMILE) project aims to build the capacity of adult educators to improve and increase the knowledge, skills and competences of both teachers and migrants in promoting migrant inclusion in adult education. The project aims to develop resources to support all those who, whether in a formal or a non-formal manner, are supporting migrants to lifelong learning: policymakers, education institutes, teachers, and migrant organizations who can provide good learning environments in the community. These groups have different functions and roles, but they are all part of the education environment, and therefore need to develop competences and skills in order to address barriers to learning, education, and social inclusion, whether in the classroom, in the community or within society in general. In this way the project is supporting recruitment, selection and induction of educators by meeting demands for required cultural and social knowledge and competences required in migrant education.

The Foundation (FSM) is a founder of the Third Country National Support Network in Malta (TSN Malta), and leads this network together with 16 other member organizations from countries like Somalia, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Serbia and Pakistan. Research among these groups shows that migrants experience great difficulties in understanding Maltese culture and navigating the Maltese system of education. These difficulties are harder for those facing high risks of poverty and social exclusion, who struggle to meet their basic needs and usually lack the resources necessary to motivate themselves to learn, often depending on privileged members of their community. Even financially migrants can sometimes experience poor social integration. Their qualifications may be unrecognized, and they may perceive aspects of European culture as superior or inferior. They often face social and cultural pressures from the host community or their own community, that prevents them from experiencing inclusion in Maltese society, as

well as a poor knowledge of migrant adult education pedagogies in the classroom, and the lack of valuable psychosocial support. Additionally, teachers find themselves struggling to deal with the culturally diverse classroom. Although the experience can be enriching, many teachers find they are unexposed, unprepared and unequipped to address the challenges of cultural diversity. Inadequate policies in relation to integration and education of migrants also impedes teachers, educators, school administrators, and migrant communities in finding coordinated, innovative solutions. The project will explore these gaps and develop the tools to address these various needs.

Research among these groups shows that migrants experience great difficulties in understanding Maltese culture and navigating the Maltese system of education. These difficulties are harder for those facing high risks of poverty and social exclusion, who struggle to meet their basic needs and usually lack the resources necessary to motivate themselves to learn, often depending on privileged members of their community. Even financially migrants can sometimes experience poor social integration. Their qualifications may be unrecognised, and they may perceive aspects of European culture as superior or inferior. They often face social and cultural pressures from the host community or their own community, that prevent them from experiencing inclusion in Maltese society, as well as a poor knowledge of migrant adult education pedagogies in the classroom, and the lack of valuable psychosocial support.

Research

When looking at the research from other projects within similar field, studies could prove the positive effects of youth project on young peoples values. Respect of other cultures, tolerance, solidarity, etc. have improved after participating in the projects.

When it comes to learning a new language, no research has proven that there is "one best way". For certain, research suggests that the motivation of the student is the most important factor for the learning curve. So having tools for motivating and making students understand why it's important.[1]

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[1] https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3269/EffectsOfInclusionProjects.pdf

A Handbook for Support Staff

The purpose of this handbook is to supplement a multicultural classroom with new tools and ideas.

This handbook should come as a complementary tool to formal education environments, while following a structured program.

The purpose of this handbook is to promote non-formal education practices as an alternative to standard classroom settings.

This handbook attempts to deliver methods, relating to our own experiences regarding migrant inclusion in the educational system. This handbook brings the reader real life examples of authentic practices, done, tested and developed in cooperation between specialists and migrants on formal and official contexts.

Within this handbook, it comes forward with unconventional ideas for unconventional situations so consider the following as a general guideline for procedure. Nothing is set in stone!

Each context is unique and so should be each approach.

It is suggested to adapt and change each activity as you see fit in order to accommodate the needs and strengths of each group.

Be attentive and listen to the students. Keeping an open line of dialogue is essential to find solutions but also the problems in any learning or educational context.

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For more resources and ideas visit our website at
http://www.project-smile.eu/

What is non-formal learning? Why is it important?

From CEDEFOP (Job learning) 2015, Europe , Unequal access to job-related learning: evidence from the adult education survey (2015).

Education and training is understood as learning which is intentional, institutionalized, taught and planed.

Non-formal education and training is understood as education and training leading to qualifications which are not directly recognized as such by relevant national education authorities (or equivalent authorities) or not leading to any qualification at all (although recognition and validation of learning outcomes could then be used and indirectly lead to formal qualifications).

This concept is therefore distinguished from formal education and training, which:

(a) *Typically takes place in (or, in the case of formal apprenticeships, dually involve) the system of schools, colleges and universities and other formal education institutions;*

(b) *Normally, although not necessarily, constitutes a continuous ladder of education for children and young people;*

(c) *Is directly relevant for the determination of the highest level of formal education attained. It is also distinguished from random and informal learning which are not intentional and/or not institutionalised.*

The role of the facilitator

Just as in a formal setting, being a facilitator of a non-formal experience is about enabling and guiding individuals.

It is less about teaching and more about encouraging, moderating and empowering the learner. The focus should be on self-learning, following a flexible set of goals and an unconventional education environment.

The facilitator should also be able to identify the needs and strengths of the group and focus on results and feasible objectives for each individual.

It is also important to be aware of the local reality and be able to connect with other potential partners and organizations for a more effective and efficient use of time and resources.

Every activity should be followed with a moment to discuss and reflect on the learning outcomes and personal gains. The facilitator should be ready to ask: "What did we learn? Do you think it is important? And why? Is there something to improve?

Setting up partnership

It is important to connect with the local networks and create effective partnerships. Other organizations, institutions, companies, governmental bodies, community organizations or associations can take a proposed project into a new scale, resulting in a more effective and efficient work for all. Different stakeholders with common goals can easily find the necessary resources for their common needs.

Inclusion, Exclusion, Integration and Segregation

When considering a classroom of migrants and the promotion of inclusion, comprehension of the terms is essential. Planning clear goals is an essential part of ensuring understanding within a diverse classroom environment.

A standard situation that typically occurs in an unstructured setting is either segregation or exclusion. To avoid this from happening it's important that, from the start, educators provide migrants within the basic skills of reading, speaking, and listening in the arrival countries language. This must be done before engaging and entering into a full educational program.

An additional method educators can do is adjust their body language. By adapting their body language they can make an impact on the classroom and foster inclusion.

Effective integration or inclusion takes effort not only from the local community, but also from the newly arrived students.

From UN 2016 Report on the World Social Situation:

- Social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state.

- Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.

Considering both definitions we can say the process of inclusion is never complete but it is a goal. It is an ongoing objective and it needs focus, time and effort.

EXCLUSION

SEGREGATION

INCLUSION

INTEGRATION
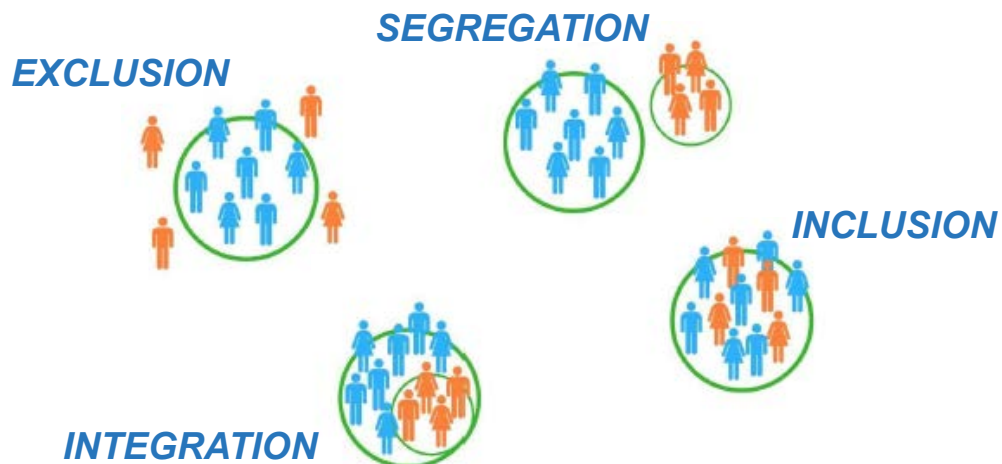
Learning to Learn

As a result of new information and communication technologies there have been a continuous push and focus from "education into learning." Self-learning therefore becomes a valuable asset with a transformative potential.

According to EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) Learning to Learn is:

The ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one's own learning, including

through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

Promoting Self Learning also means empowering the individual (by providing new tools and resources) and promoting Learning Exchanges in any context.

For Language Learning new online tools and smartphone apps can prove to be an invaluable asset for any learner! (Google Translate, Duolingo, or any similar free tools can and should be individually explored as a compliment to formal training).
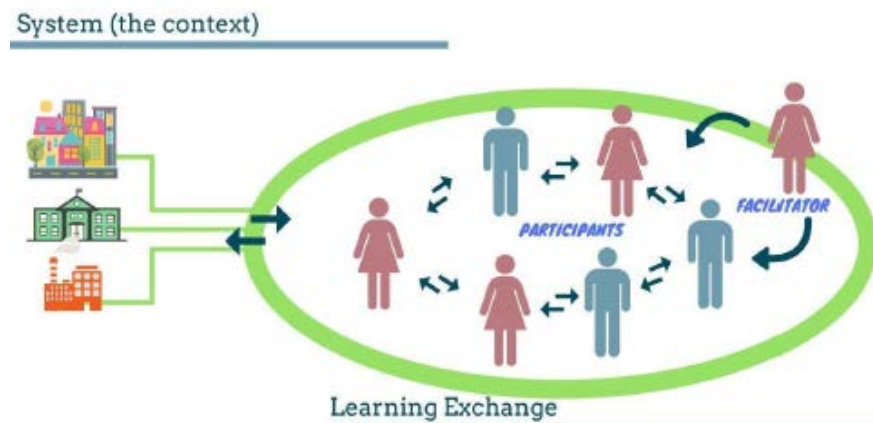
The need to reflect!

Reflection after any non-formal exercise is an essential step for an effective learning experience.

Upon completion of any non-formal exercise no learning experience is complete without open dialogue and guided reflection.

By approaching participants collectively, the facilitator can guide the learning experience by turning personal experiences during the exercise into a dialogue. Opening the space for debate and making sure the participants understand the purpose and the outcomes of each exercise ensures that the individuals build upon previous experiences and hopefully can relate it to the new knowledge gained.

Usage of games and non-formal methods in the classroom!

Experiment new games in the classroom context as a way to off-balance the expectations of the group.

Bring simple short games into the formal setting as a way to practice skills that connect with the official program.

Take the students outdoors, visiting a workplace environment or a local business and allow them to discuss and reflect on it later, as a group.

Bring their problems into the class: How to do taxes? How to fill in official documents? How to apply for a study program? How to prepare a CV?

A language café!

Consider setting up an informal learning space!

A language café is, in its core, a simple gathering where migrants and locals can meet and have coffee and biscuits together. Participants should not only be part of the activity but also take responsibility for it! A facilitator should be present, as well as local volunteers and members of the community. Food and beverages should be provided and discussion, in small groups or even in pairs, should flow naturally. If needed the facilitator should bring a topic to start conversation.

What is needed?

A place!

This should be an accessible and public place. Participants should be comfortable and able to join and the location should be big enough to accommodate all who would like to join the activity. Consider space for people to sit in groups. Tables, chairs, and sofas should be provided. A library, community center, local coffee house or public facility could all be a possibility!

People!

Participants from the migrant and local community should be able to meet together. This is a necessary component for successful integration. (Not only for the possibility of language practice but also for the opportunity to learn more about the culture, costumes and practices and to socially connect with the local communities).

A facilitator/organizer!

For the success of the activity it requires a competent leader. This is someone who can take full responsibility of the whole activity pre-stages, delivery and post- activity. This is inclusive of the planning, advertisement and even the booking of the activity place. In a perfect world the activity will eventually become self-sustainable!

A mentorship program

Consider starting a mentorship program! Connecting migrant learners with established members of the local community can be a catalyst for a more successful and sustainable inclusion program!

Mentors can be any member of the community with a proven connection and established role in the community. They can be migrants or native-born citizens, employed or retired, as long as they have a genuine interest in helping out the newly arrived. A Mentor can help more than one learner, as long as there is a balanced and fair management of time and resources. But a learner should work with only one mentor and be able to develop a trust-based relation with him/her.

A Mentorship program needs both parts to be willing and motivated to make it work.

Organize a lecture or a debate

Following the interests of the class, consider inviting a guest speaker to join the group for a special session.

Either a relevant or an important person from the community, having a new person in the classroom that can share and bring new ideas can be an effective way to enable students to focus on new goals, find new angles and approaches and develop their understanding of the real-life problems that they can expect to face in their new environment.

Allowing the discussion and dialogue to flow is very important. The facilitator would need to have special care in order to direct and guide the debate according to the proposed topic and objectives of the session.

Storytelling and self-expression

Consider different ways to tell a story.

By asking the students to explore their personal backgrounds and their own past experiences we can focus on understanding and strengthening the individual! If they feel so inclined, they can share it later with the group or even in the community. Consider their right to privacy and do not force anyone to share or present if they do not want to.

Different methods can be used depending on the available resources, the skills of the group and the intended objectives!

Using video making, drawing, drama, photography, sculpture, painting, text, games or any form of artistic expression will create a moment of self-reflection and self-assessment.

Video making

Experiment with film-making (using simple smartphone cameras) and ask the students to work in pairs and tell their own story in simple words through a short video. Let them take their time to practice how to present themselves and find the best way say more about themselves.

The River of Life

Ask the learners to present their own story with a visual aid! Using a large piece of paper (A1), the students should draw a river, representing their own life, and the main events that lead them into the present. The drawing should include key moments in life in a visual representation of the life as a river, flowing and moving into the present moment. Some obstacles change the course of a river. Some moments go faster, some go slower. The students should then explain and present their drawing to the group if they feel so inclined.

Writing your own story

Using words and taking the necessary time and support, students should prepare a blog, paper or book where they can write down moments, happenings or pieces of their lives that sum up a meaningful and life altering experience. They should try are relate it to a significant or meaningful moment and why it can be considered as so.

The Living Library (The Human Library)

Ask each participant to draw a Book Cover for their own personal story. Ask them to choose an appropriate title. Then, on the back of the Book, ask them to write down the title of at least 5 different chapters of their own story. They can choose to add as many chapters as they want.

For the next step, participants should find another participant and offer their books to be read. Participants are not obligated to explain everything about their book but the purpose would be for them to allow the other person to ask questions and get to know more about the content of the other person's story.

One word, one statue (exploring language with your body)

Group everyone together and have them standing in the middle. One of them will start by saying a word. It can be a verb, or an object noun. It is important that the word is expressed without hesitation. Based on level of language they can ask the leaders for help with words (best case scenario there is a language teacher). After 5 seconds the leaders gives a signal (for example, a hand clap) and everybody else should portray this word in a fixed manner like a statue. This will solidify the learning process of language.

Making a play!

Language is of course one of the bases when working with theater and drama. It can vary from sounds, words, body language, gestures and so on. Using playwriting exercises can fortify the relational dimension, it serves as the ideal instrument to practice a language and explore the complexities of communication while achieving a particularly in-depth immersion into its structures. For best result the leader should be accompanied by a guest language teacher. The leader can present themes, stories, and experiences, developing these to create theater format.

Start with:
USING OBJECTS
Bring objects that they can use to outline a story. The object can be the center of attention in the narrative. The object can be made up and not real also. Using an object that has been important to the person often helps to tell a story. The leader can ask the participants to bring a objects that has a certain meaning for them in their daily life. Encourage them to write a brief story around this object. Remember that in this phase they should just try to outline the story. What is the narrative, theme, the story about?

STORYTELLING
Seemingly easy and simple. Tell a story from your life, it can be sad, dark, happy, or whatever the person might like. You can continue using the object as base. They can if they want continue building from the story of the object.

LISTING SITUATIONS

This exercise is linked to the previous one. The participants proceeds making a list of the situations that occured in the previous storytelling.

LISTING CHARACTERS

Also linked to previous exercises. List all characters that occured in the development of the storyline. Put them in the order that they affected the outcome of story.

PROBING CHARACTERS

Now describe the characters that will be in the story/scene. Objective is to have a logical description of characters.

WRITING INDIVIDUAL SCENES

Now that the situation and characters are defined you can start writing the scenes. It is very valuable for learning the host language. Try to clarify and write each individual scene of the storyline. If possible the language teacher will go over and help the participants and correct individual phrases and introduce grammar rules. The scenes can be very basic and easy.

WRITING DIALOGUES

Try writing dialogues using the storyline and characters that are now defined. It is very valuable for learning the host language. Now the dialogues and narrative parts are written and more "fine-tuned". If possible the language teacher will do the same kind of work and helping participants. Encourage to keep the text simple!

FINAL PRODUCTION!

Production will be the final part of the theater learning process. Depending on the organisations situation you can stage it however you want. You can limit the participants to people related to the group (relatives, friends, etc.). Or if hosting a workshop you can invite the local population for a public event. When the narrative hits the stage it will be completed in front of everybody. Remember that the place of the play can be relevant. Technical instruments (audio, lights, etc.) makes things more easy. But if you chose a non-conventional space, lets say a street, you can have greater public interaction of the performance. Remember in the end that the exercise is for building a meeting, an encounter, between migrants and the public environment. You are not

aiming for a great play but for them to learn a language in a fun, non-formal way. In best case scenario two people will meet and understand each other. They will have created a story based on their life experiences that can be understood by someone else. A formida-ble instrument for mutual awareness. Distancing fear between people, since we fear what we do not know.

Follow up! Set goals!

After the sessions take the time to discuss and access. What are the next steps? Any career plans? Any future studies? What would they like to achieve? Can they set some short-term, mid-term and long-term goals? Can they make a plan for 1 year, 3 years and 5 years?

Have they planned an alternative for when one of their goals is not achieved? What would happen then? Is failure ok? What would you do if you had to try again?

Start a people's kitchen

Participants should be able to organize an event where food will be served to a large group.

Participants themselves should prepare and organize the whole event, starting with the planning, purchase of ingredients, preparation and booking of the space, deciding the menu, cooking, serving and cleaning.

The group should work together, diving tasks and sharing responsibility.

The event should be open and in a public space. There should be proper advertisement of the event and a goal for the event itself.

Exclusion of people can also be determined by personal and practical obstacles.

Can you identify the personal and practical obstacles to social inclusion that people face in your community?

Use a similar table and ask each learner to fill in their personal and practical obstacles.

Personal Obstacles:

- *Lack of self-esteem, self-confidence*
- *Lack of encouragement*
- *Dislike of being patronised*
- *Unappealing image of social work*
- *Fear of being discriminated against*
- *Uninteresting activities, etc*

Practical Obstacles:

- *Lack of information*
- *Lack of permission to join activities, or group pressure against joining*
- *Lack of time or energy*
- *Lack of money*
- *Cultural or religious conflicts*
- *Mobility problems, etc*

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Some notes on Augusto Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed

"While some people make theatre, we all are theatre."

Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal developed the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) during the 1960s. He wanted to transform the monologue of traditional performance into a dialogue between audience and stage. Boal experimented with many kinds of interactive theatre, believing that dialogue is the common, healthy dynamic between all humans, that all human beings desire and are capable of dialogue, and that when a dialogue becomes a monologue, oppression ensues.

Inevitably, when someone shows us an image or tells us a story about their experiences, we invest that story and those characters with the colours of our own experiences. Image theatre uses the human body as a tool of representing feelings, ideas and relationships. Through sculpting others or using your own body to demonstrate a body position, you can create anything from one-person to large-group image sculptures that reflect the sculptor's impression of a situation or oppression. You can use image theatre with groups that are familiar and conf ident with dramatic techniques and those with little or no experience. No one has to learn lines or perform, but the technique often helps people explore their own feelings and experiences in a non-threatening environment. It can also be a lot of fun!

Another feature of Boal's work is Forum Theatre. In essence, this is a form of dramatic exploration that, in a subversive way, provokes understanding and learning, devising possible coping strategies to assist a group or individual in investigating possible solutions to particular oppressions or challenges. In the Forum Theatre people explore other persons, other ways which give them more power in a certain situation. It is about learning another kind of behaviour if it helps to prevent oppression. Forum does not compel, it does not say this is what you must do, but it does say maybe you could try this or that – it is up to you to decide in the end.

Forum scenes are usually presented as short scenes, which may well involve bringing to life the frozen images or tableaux already explored. Initially, the audience watches the whole scene, facilitated by a "joker".

The joker then tells the audience that the sketch will be performed again, except this time if anyone in the audience wants to suggest a different action or change to the script to bring about a better solution they must shout "STOP!" The audience member can then exchange places with the actor and try out their idea themselves or tell them how they want the scene to change. If the audience is reluctant to halt the action, the joker may do so and then invite the audience to suggest possible solutions.

Forum theatre not only empowers audiences and makes them part of the action, it also illustrates that there are always alternatives and choices to make, which can change outcomes.

Image theatre

Aim

In image theatre, small groups create still photographs or tableaux of real situations (in this case of social exclusion) that a member or members of the group have experienced. It allows the exploration of feelings and empowering possible resolutions in a safe environment.

Step-by-step description

1.   Explain the background to Boal's work and how his form of the theatre allows everyone a "voice" – which does not necessarily mean they have to speak.

2.   Ask the group to think about an issue – for example, bullying, isolation, discrimination – that they feel strongly about and that they could illustrate with a specif ic example. Then ask someone to volunteer to use their experience to be the "sculptor", indicating how many people they would need to represent this. Ask for volunteers to become a living sculpture.

3.   The sculptor moulds each person into a character in their scene. They can do this by demonstrating a pose and asking the person to copy it. If participants are comfortable, the sculptor can adjust facial expressions and physically move limbs into the desired position. Ensure no one is likely to be injured!

4.   When the picture is complete the sculptor asks the frozen characters to come to life one at a time and each one to speak their thoughts out loud. These are called "thought tracks".

5.   You can follow each discussion of the image by asking members of the group to sculpt a possible solution to the situation.

6.   Let each person in the group have a turn at being the sculptor if they wish and if time permits.

Reflection and evaluation

Ask each tableau member how it felt to be moulded into a character or into portraying a specific emotion.

Ask the observers what they felt about the representation;
Was it realistic?
If solutions were followed up, were they realistic?

Finally, ask the original volunteer whose issue was explored what they had gained or learned from creating the tab-leau.

Work of this nature, depending on the subject matter, can arouse strong emotions and so must be treated with great sensitivity. Always ensure the session allows sufficient time for a wind-down activity to restore equilibrium.

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