

Session : Dialogue for conflict transformation: Why it matters and how it can help

CISV International 2018 | training.quality.assurance@cisv.org

Valid from 1 March 2019

Training(s): All CISV programme trainings (before the programme)
This session is designed also to be run at the start of a CISV programme to train and support team building of the leadership team.

Duration: Short version: 40 minutes (long version 65 minutes)
Designed by: Various, based on an resources by Crossing Borders Education
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Expected outcomes

- Trainees will demonstrate an understanding of the concept of dialogue;
- Trainees will explain how it is different from debate and
- Trainees will identify ways it can help transform conflicts.



Training Session Description

Trainees will first experience division in the form of a discussion on a given topic. They will reflect on what divides people, and on common divisions in today's world. Dialogue is then introduced as a way of communicating to help to overcome divisions. Trainees learn about the characteristics of dialogue and how to foster it. The session links to situations in CISV where dialogue can prevent or reduce conflicts, especially among adults in roles of programme responsibility.



Element, Goals & Indicators

This session relates to Elements 2 and 3 from the programme curricula, and covers

- Goal 2, Indicator B: Understand how individual responsibilities are important in a wider context (K)
- Goal 2, Indicator D: Be willing to adopt a proactive and responsible attitude (A)
- Goal 4, Indicator B: Be able to make a positive contribution to a group environment (S)
- Goal 4, Indicator C: Be able to respond appropriately to change and conflict (S)
- Goal 4, Indicator D: Be willing to act inclusively and with an open mind (A).



Materials

- 1-4 printouts **Appendix 1 – Behaviour Table** depending on the size of the trainee group. The printouts should be at least A3 size
- One pen for each trainee
- A laptop (and projector if needed)
- Internet and access to the slide presentation **Dialogue vs. Debate** (<https://slides.com/crossingborderseducation/debate-dialogue#/>) and the video **On Conflict Transformation** (<https://vimeo.com/197029324>) by Crossing Borders



What did you learn from this session?

This session is introduced in 2019 so we are keen to hear from you how to improve it!



Tips for facilitators

- Explore the elearning module **Dialogue Tools**. This learning module complements this training session. It is designed to help the trainees deepen and consolidate their learning. To access the module, you have to first register at <https://learn.cisv.org>. The second step is to enrol (or register) for the module Dialogue Tools, using the enrolment key: Dialogue2019. For questions, please email learn@cisv.org.
- Trainers should acquaint themselves with the **Dialogue vs. Debate** presentation and **On Conflict Transformation** video before the training session.

Step by step



Activity

Phase

Time



Step I: Creating a division

Introduce a topic to the trainees, which they will discuss for a couple of minutes. To inspire or provoke engagement pick a topic that the trainees can relate to emotionally, that does not require extensive background knowledge, and that they are very likely to have an opinion on. If possible, the topic could have something to do with the programme they are training for, or something situational that concerns the training arrangements. The topic can be made up as well.

To ensure that all trainees get an opportunity to speak up in the discussion, consider dividing them into smaller groups of 5-6 trainees.

Here are a couple suggested topics (but feel free to pick any topic you feel will work with your trainees):

- Not having to make camp-shirts in the programme?
- Only allow vegetarian food in the programme?
- Dinner time at 18:00 or 20:00?
- Start tomorrow's first training session at 07:00 or 08:00?
- Not having a camp-shop?
- Completely turn off mobile phones during all training sessions?

The purpose of this step is for the trainees to engage in a discussion and preferably bring out different opinions. The purpose is not to reach an agreement or a decision. We recommend using a rather 'light' topic that is easily relatable and to reserve reflection on deeper questions around strongly held beliefs, core values, or divergent attitudes for a later stage.

Do:
Trainees experience division

5 minutes
(10 minutes, if time permits)

Step II: Reflecting on division and behaviours

Conclude the discussion in the previous step by asking the trainees to remain in their group and for each individual to quietly reflect on the experience with a focus on the behaviours they observed. Prompt the trainees by reading out a few reflective questions and give them 10 seconds to think about each one. E.g. *Do you think your impressions of the others' behaviours are reliable? Do you think the others got a fair impression of you? If not, why? Did you have a constructive or negative effect on the discussion? Did the others have constructive or negative effect on the discussion?*

Give each group the two printouts of **Appendix 1 – My behaviour and that of others** as well as a pen to every trainee. Ask trainees to draw a dot after the behaviours they felt applied to themselves (in **My behaviour**), and also after the behaviours they felt were represented in the rest of the group (in **Group behaviour**). Give them 3 minutes to do this without talking to another. This should be done individually but making all dots on the same two printouts. There is no limit to how many behaviours each trainee can dot.

Note: The first ten behaviours are negative and the bottom ten are positive. This will make it easier to quickly see whether the self-perceptions and group perceptions are differently 'charged'.

After 3 minutes, display the two printouts with dots side by side so that everyone can see them.

Compare and reflect on the two columns. There may be a difference between the individual and group behaviours. For example, a pattern could emerge where the more positive behaviours are attributed to the individual behaviours ('me'), and the more negative ones are attributed to the group. As the trainer, be prepared for any outcome. If the individual and group behaviours are balanced, that also gives you the opportunity to discuss how we as a group should help each other to practice the best behaviours. Draw conclusions about this group in terms of impressions and self-perception.

Expected outcome: We tend to think that our individual behaviour is better, more balanced or less problematic, than that of others. 'Others' in this session refers to the people in the group that we are part of. The **key learning** of this part of the session is for every trainee to see that they, personally, and their personal perceptions, are part of the problem as well as the solution.

Step III: Introducing dialogue and understanding

Building on the discussion in Step II, and the shared understanding the group has at this moment, show the slide presentation '**Dialogue versus Debate**' followed by the 2-minute film '**On Conflict Transformation**'.

Use the film to explain and discuss how we often get into conflicts despite our best intentions. With the trainees, in a short open conversation, explore how difficult it is to really listen with the intention to understand others (and not to answer back and explain to them why exactly they are wrong). Be clear that dialogue, listening, and empathy are at the heart of what CISV does. Nevertheless, when we are tested by real world challenges, we should not assume that we respond any better than most people. Explain that dialogue is most necessary when there is conflict around topics that engage our strongly held beliefs, our deepest values, and opposing attitudes. Trainees should understand that dealing with conflict will always remain challenging, but there are specific skills that this training session and CISV educational experiences in general, aim to develop. Strong conflict resolution skills are essential within CISV and, of course, outside CISV in our interactions with friends, family, colleagues, children, etc.

Conclude the conversation by asking: In concrete terms, how do we apply the skills mentioned in the film as a CISV programme staff

Reflect: Trainees discover causes of division	10 minutes (15 minutes, if time permits)
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Do: Trainees watch the slides	10 minutes (15 minutes, if time permits)
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and leader? Encourage the group to share a few experiences they have made with those skills, expectations and maybe fears they may have when thinking about their upcoming programme experience. The skills mentioned in the film are: interpersonal openness, social awareness, cross-cultural courage, emotional resilience, human compassion.

Step IV: Identifying the needs

Having also introduced the concept of dialogue, ask the trainees to get back into their respective discussion groups and give them 5 minutes to identify no more than 4 behaviours that their specific group needs in order to move forward constructively, and that they can all commit to. Encourage each trainee to really consider in what ways they might adapt their attitudes and/or behaviours to contribute to constructive dialogue in this group.

Be clear that the behaviours the trainees agree on should be with their specific discussion group in mind. The point is not to come up with generic "rules of the road". The point is to identify the needs of *this* particular discussion group, and to find what behaviours *they* need as a group – through each member’s individual commitment and behaviour – to succeed in having a constructive dialogue.

Invite each group to share their agreed behaviours. If time allows, ask if they think the agreed behaviours will come easily to them?

Do:
Trainees find a few behaviours to meet their group’s need

10 minutes
(15 minutes, if time permits)

Step V: Takeaways

Summing up the session, here are a couple of points to mention or highlight:

- Every group is different (and so is my role in different groups). Each group will also have their specific needs and challenges
- Not everything can be anticipated and planned for. Despite our best efforts and intentions, we may find ourselves in a conflict
- Everyone can contribute (in different ways) to a good dialogue and to help solve conflicts
- Awareness of your own needs as well as those of others in a group can help a group to start an honest and productive dialogue which may help address or even prevent conflicts at a later stage
- Conflict is a natural part of life and individuals, teams, and organizations can gain a lot from constructively transforming conflict into new solutions
- Conflict can escalate easily, so everybody in the group should be aware of and committed to positive behaviours
- Engaging in dialogue is a particularly useful approach in intercultural conflict situations (which is at the heart of what CISV).

This session is designed to be experienced once or twice by the same trainee, at different times and in different groups

- **Before the programme:** Most trainees will soon be off to hopefully amazing and enriching CISV experiences as either staff or leaders. Each one will be part of a unique group or adults with different behaviours. Good dialogue skill will be key to each group.
- **At the start of the programme:** Trainees may wish to do this activity at the start of their programme with their fellow staff and leaders. The agreed behaviours in their programme may be quite different from the ones in this session. Before running the session, they can check how many people in the group already know the session and ask those who know it to help organise it.

Generalize:
Trainees will think of how to apply dialogue skills to their upcoming programme s roles.

5 minutes
(10 minutes, if time permits)

Appendix 1: My behaviour and the behaviours of others

My behaviour

1. I really wanted to get my point across	
2. I was stubborn/opinionated	
3. I interrupted others	
4. I did not engage (because I was not interested)	
5. I did not say much but I was thinking about it	
6. I was debating and argumentative	
7. I found it frustrating to be disagreed with	
8. I was distracted and did not pay much attention	
9. I did not say much because I was uncomfortable/shy	
10. I was aggressive	
11. I listened well	
12. I facilitated well	
13. I was convincing and made good points	
14. I respected other people's experience and knowledge	
15. I was engaging in a dialogue	
16. I made it easy for others to share their view	
17. I kept an open mind	
18. I was considerate	
19. I was trying to understand the views of others	
20. I would have been fine with any outcome	

Group behaviour (the others)

1. Others really wanted to get their point across	
2. Others were stubborn/opinionated	
3. Others interrupted	
4. Others did not engage (because they were not interested)	
5. Others did not say much but they were thinking about it	
6. Others were debating and argumentative	
7. Others found it frustrating to be disagreed with	
8. Others were distracted and did not pay much attention	
9. Others did not say much because they were uncomfortable/shy	
10. Others were aggressive	
11. Others listened well	
12. Others facilitated well	
13. Others were convincing and made good points	
14. Others respected other people's experience and knowledge	
15. Others were engaging in a dialogue	
16. Others made it easy for others to share their view	
17. Others kept an open mind	
18. Others were considerate	
19. Others were trying to understand the views of others	
20. Others would have been fine with any outcome	