



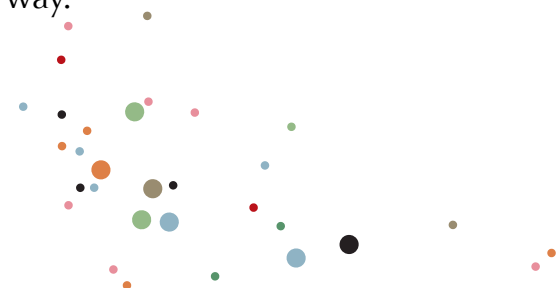
Group puzzle process

Background:

The group puzzle process is a fascinating dynamic process developed by the POY team and implemented in work with different groups: work teams, management teams, leadership development, and so on, as well as in group work with families, couples, teenagers and children.

The process holds up a mirror to the way in which the individual within the group thinks and behaves, and the dynamic of the group.

The advantage of this process lies in the use of the coaching game which enables participants to touch on deep and essential issues in a non-confrontational, hands-on, enjoyable and creative way.



Number of Participants:

Six (6) to 25 participants aged 10 and up

Supplies:

Points of You - The Coaching Game



The objectives of the process:

1. To enable each participant in the group to re-examine and redefine his or her role within the group.
2. To allow the group to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the existing group dynamic, and increase its precision in accordance with the current group objectives.

NOTE:

You can focus on any of the objectives outlined, or, adjust them as needed for the specific outcomes you desire.





Time:

1 to 5 hours total, depending on number of participants.

Room/space set-up:

The ideal room set-up is a circle of chairs or cushions, with no tables or desks to serve as a barrier between participants. In cases where this kind of circle seating is not possible, try to make even subtle changes in desk/chair placement, to change the atmosphere and help participants move out of their regular states of being.

Facilitator preparations:

At least 20 minutes before conducting this activity, sit down and review the session plan.

Consider the following questions:

- What do I want to achieve from this activity?
- What are the exact aims that I am going to communicate to the participants?
- On which issues or objectives am I going to focus?
- Have I allotted sufficient time to accomplish the desired outcomes, including time for:
 - Participants to share meaningfully
 - Breaks
- Which stories/quotes/question from the Coaching Book will I use while facilitating the activity and why?
- Do I have all the materials I need to conduct this activity, such as the Coaching Ticket note pad/pre-designed worksheets on which participants will record their insights and action plans?



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Activity Process - Step by Step:

1. Introduction

Explain the aims and importance of this activity, and what the participants can gain from it!

Below is an example of presenting an activity on the subject of team development:

“At today’s meeting we are going to do something that is of the greatest importance - we are going to examine what factors promote teamwork, and what factors hold it back or cause it to get stuck. The meeting today has the potential to produce an amazing improvement in your ability to cooperate with each other in a good and effective way, and achieve your personal and team objectives.”

Describe the time frame and the process as follows:

“We have a total of X hours for this activity.

Don’t worry, we will take breaks.

The most important thing I want you to remember is that this activity is a game - it is an interesting and powerful game, during which we will have lots of fun.”

2. Define the game rules: (our suggestions)

a. Each participant will have time to share his/her own point of view. He/she can share and say whatever they want - as long as it is not inappropriate, anything goes.

The Points of You team recognizes that facilitators must support and endorse corporate/school rules, so please adjust this rule accordingly.





b. Each of the participants can decide for themselves how deep and sincere they want to be. If a participant decides not to share and be involved, it is also alright, so long as s/he plays and listens.

c. This game offers you a great opportunity to express yourself, and each participant is encouraged to do so. To demonstrate support for one another, no talking is allowed while someone is sharing. This rule allows you to listen really deeply, so that you can be less judgmental in hearing and accepting different points of view.

NOTE: As the facilitator, you are allowed to speak and ask questions. Explain this distinction to the participants.

d. Once a participant has finished sharing, there will be time for the group to ask clarifying questions and to offer their own points of view on what the participant has shared.

NOTE: Allowing time for each participant to share consumes a great deal of time, so make certain in advance that you have time for this.

In addition, allowing participants to offer their points of view on what other group members have said is “feedback” and is their opinion and perspective alone. All participants should be helped to understand that their point of view is just that - one of an infinite number of perspectives. It is not right or wrong, and in the end, each person decides for him or herself what to take and embrace from this session, and what to leave behind.



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Stage 1- Exploration and expanding of points of view

1. Spread the cards on the floor, face up, and ask each participant to choose 2 cards: (You can write the focus for each card on the board as below so they can see it all the time)

Card 1 - reflects your opinion and your personal experience with regard to what promotes the group work.

Card 2 - reflects your opinion and your personal experience with regard to what holds back / inhibits the group work.

2. Give the participants five (5) minutes to go over the cards and to choose the ones that suit them. (Option: Play soft music while they are choosing their cards. Select music that will support the ambience you want to create in the room).

- Tell participants that they can choose cards based on the topic that appears on the card, on the photo, on the topic and the photo together, or for any other reason.

- It is alright for participants to choose more than two cards if they find it difficult to decide. Don't suggest this at the beginning of the activity, but certainly allow it if a participant asks, or if you think it will help an individual to participate more fully in the process.

3. After all the participants have selected their cards, ask them to return to their seats and place the cards in front of them. When the group has settled, begin the sharing session.

- In cases where two participants want the same card, give them time to work out a solution for themselves. If they are unable to do so, suggest they both use the same card.



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4. When a participant is sharing, use the following questions to help him or her go deeper and to keep the rest of the group connected:

- Can you describe the photo on the card to us?
- Do you like the photo? Why? If not, why not?
- What is the topic or word on the card?
- How do you relate to the topic? What does it mean to you?
- How does this card reflect your thoughts and emotions on what promotes the group work / what holds back the groupwork?
- Why did you choose these cards? Which other cards did you consider?

5. Once a participant has finished sharing, you can allow the group to relate their perspectives and/or ask questions. In between the sharing (between every 3-4 participants) you can read a relevant story, question or quote from the Coaching Book. Just read the selection, let it echo through the room, and move on.

After all the participants have had the opportunity to share, ask them to leave their cards on the floor in front of them and then send them out to take a break.

NOTE:

Stage 1 has two objectives:

1. Bringing up the subject on which you have chosen to focus the group work
 2. Creating an emotional bond and identification between each of the participants and the cards they have chosen.
- Emotional identification of the participants with the cards they have chosen will considerably enhance the effect of Stage 2. Explanation to follow.



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Stage 2- Group Puzzle

After the break the participants return to their places and to the cards that they chose in the previous stage. It is possible to allow a few moments for the participants to share about the first stage and the insight and understandings that they may have reached during the break.

Then, announce to the participants that the process is now being taken a stage further and deeper!

Give the participants the following instructions:

“In a few minutes I’m going to ask you to make up a group puzzle using the cards that you chose in the first stage. Listen carefully to the instructions, because I am only going to explain once, and when I have finished I will not answer any questions or respond to anything happening in the room until you complete the puzzle. These are the instructions:

These are the instructions:

You have 15 minutes to build a group puzzle together out of your cards, with the aim of representing you as a group.

You can create a group puzzle representing the group as it operates today and/or you can create a puzzle representing the group as you would like it to operate. You have just 15 minutes for the task, and you can start now!”

NOTE:

After you have explained the instructions once, do not explain again and do not answer any questions, even if some of the participants haven’t understood, and even if none of them have understood. Let them deal with it and work out solutions by themselves!

You take a step back, and just observe and listen to what is happening in the room.



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Below are the points to which you should pay attention:
(it is recommended to write them down while you are observing the process):

- Who has understood the instructions, and how do they act or not act?
- Who has not understood the instructions, and how do they act or not act?
- Who leads the task?
- What is the dynamic between those leading the task and the other members of the group?
- Is there a group discussion of the task? If so, who initiates it? Who cooperates? Who does not?
- Is there any planning of the task, and how much thought is invested before starting to act?
- Where does each individual position his or her cards relative to the puzzle - in the center, at the side, in accordance with the instructions of the group, over the cards of other participants?
- Do any of the participants move cards put down by other participants? If so, what is the reaction of the other participants? Do they communicate their reaction to the room? Does it affect their level of cooperation? Is the person who moves the cards aware of the impact of this action on the others?
- Is there any creative thinking in creating the puzzle - in terms of colorfulness, in terms of the shape of the puzzle, is the puzzle one-dimensional - that is, the cards are spread out only over the floor, or is it two-dimensional with some of the cards standing upright?
- Is there any logic and connection between the content of the cards relative to the shape in which they are arranged as a puzzle? Do the cards set out in the puzzle tell any kind of story that begins with one card and continues to the others?

Paying attention to the above points will give you a great deal of information about the group's behavior, and reveal many deep and concealed layers connected with the dynamic of the group and of each participant in the group.

Very important: At this stage, you still do not share any of the observations or insights that have occurred to you with the group.



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2. After the group completes the puzzle, ask the participants to return to their places and ask who wants to share. Some will choose to share their experience at the personal level, some will choose to share what happened at the level of the group dynamic, and some will choose to share about the process of creating a puzzle. And some will choose not to share at all. Let the participants share freely, and do not focus them on anything specific.

3. After the participants have shared, this is the time to share with them what you have seen as an observer on the sidelines. It is important to do so in a clean and non-judgmental manner, and to allow them to respond and decide for themselves what they think about it, whether it does or does not reflect their regular work as a group, and how it promotes or holds them back as a group.

At the end of the discussion and analysis of the process, the participants can be sent out for another break.



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Stage 3 - Summarizing insights and focusing on actions

1. Briefly summarize the day's objectives and the insights that the participants have shared during the day.

Now ask the participants which next step(s) they wish to take, individually and collectively, in order to get them "from here to there".

2. Explain to the group that the "next step" is a metaphor or call for action. When making a change, it is often wise to start small, by doing something over which they have control, and which is not dependent on someone else or on outside elements.

Go on to explain that their "next step" or action is very powerful, because it will be an expression of their willingness to trust in themselves and to "go with themselves", doing what they think they should do.

Finally, taking action or considering next steps can be an uncomfortable task for participants because:

- It focuses them on practical steps
- It can be challenging to declare in front of the group

3. If a participant is not ready to reveal or discuss his or her action steps, do not force it. It is alright. That said, you can work with a reluctant participant during this stage by:

- Encouraging him/her to move through the block and connect to the power of intention by first "thinking the action", then saying it quietly to himself or to just one other person, and only then saying it out loud.
- Helping the participant clarify which small action is totally up to him or her. Being clear about one's ability to act purposefully and determine one's own course can be the beginning of the desired change.

- Asking other participants if they have suggestions or advice for their friend.

- Inviting the group to applaud after each participant declares his/her first small action toward the group success.

- Offering a series of ongoing meetings designed to help and support participants in taking steps, as well as sharing successes and difficulties.



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4. Close this activity by wishing participants good luck in achieving their goals. Remind the group that anything is possible and that small actions can lead to big results! You might also read a selected text on taking action or making change from the Coaching Book.

Enjoy and pay it forward...



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