



Ensuring safe environment during the activities





Choosing a safe environment and creating a positive atmosphere determines the success of the activity.

A safe environment is understood as the totality of physical and emotional experiences.

Before you start the session, make sure that:



The room where the activity will take place is clean, well ventilated. Looking at the room, ask yourself, does such an environment inspire me to think, discuss, look for solutions to complex situations?



Double-check that you have all the tools you need: scissors, coloured leaflets, coloured pencils or writing instruments, tools for creative tasks, a computer, a phone, or any other tool you need.



Plan the space so that you can access one of the participants or their groups at any time.



Try to plan the space so that when tasks change, participants can easily move in the space, carry a chair or move easily with a wheelchair. Leave space to move around during the session without distracting the participants.

Tips to help you create a psychologically safe environment.



Community. When you start, let the participants relax, get to know each other. Allow to laugh, share thoughts, expectations or even fears. This will help to create and maintain a sense of emotional security among the participants.

Visualization of thoughts. Leave the results of the tasks performed by the participants visible in space.

Clear rules. It is especially important to discuss and record the rules of working together before longer training. Mark non-negotiable rules such as respect, confidentiality, and e.g. Follow the rules.

Admit it when you don't know. People value sincerity and humanity more. It is fine to suggest to look it up later.

Participate together. Get involved in the given tasks, search for answers.

Keep calm. If your opinions do not agree with the participants, if you feel anger or even get into a conflict, keep calm.

Show your positives. Don't feel tangled or superior to the participants, you are exactly the same person as them.

Move in space. Be with the participants, observe their activities, communicate with everyone evenly.

Notice the tension. It is surprising to be able to notice tension between participants before a conflict situation arises. In complex situations, you can choose from several ways: allow them to discuss with each other, mediate, or separate until the tension eases.

Model complex situations. Give participants the opportunity to express situations in which they felt frightened, uncomfortable, or confused. Share your situations as well.

Smile. Your body language can convey a variety of feelings to group members. A smile helps people to relax and feel safe.

Show patience.

Provide the opportunity to solve problems independently. Give it time to think.

Let the choice. Giving participants a choice will show that you respect their opinion.

Conflict Management



When working with different people, you never know how one or the other person will react to certain situations, how people will react to each other. Conflict situations may arise between participants or between participants and you. Therefore, it is worth talking about conflict management and training on how best to deal with similar situations.

It is worth thinking about your actions, reactions in the face of conflict situations, but do not forget that each situation is different and you will usually have to react very creatively.



Conflict Management

Conflict is very often caused by different beliefs, needs or expectations. Sometimes it is possible to anticipate conflict situations by knowing the traditional types of participants:

- ❖ A participant who seeks to challenge what others are saying (too intense questioning, commenting);
- ❖ A participant who deliberately disturbs others (desire to dominate the discussion, speeches unrelated to the topic, delays);
- ❖ Rude participant (competes with other participants, criticises the opinion of others).

If there is a participant in your group who wants to dominate and chooses the wrong tools, the easiest way to manage the situation is with the help of other participants in the group, asking the opinions of other participants in the group on similar topics. This helps to create an atmosphere of trust with the rest of the group, if this method does not help, the undisciplined participant can be stopped and allowed to speak only by asking a question or limiting the speaking time.



Conflict Management

Managing conflict situations is often also related to the psychological strength of the leader of non-formal education. Psychological resilience and the ability to respond calmly to complex situations are developed. Self-control can be learned either independently or in various specialised classes.

Conflict Management

Here we will provide some tips on how to protect yourself from the negative effects of stress in a conflict situation or how to prevent a conflict from arising.

- ♣ **Self-assess your group of participants.** Ask yourself what topics or reactions could potentially provoke disagreement or even conflict. Is the size of the group of participants appropriate for a non-formal education activity?
- ♣ **My reaction to conflicts.** Take time and think about how you usually react to conflicts. Do you tend to avoid conflict situations? Are you inclined to look for a compromise? Or maybe you tend to intensify situations? Once you have discovered your typical way of engaging in a conflict situation, consider the most appropriate way to respond while working with the group and to maintain group harmony.
- ♣ **Open a debate and set clear rules.**
- ♣ **Community building.** Allow participants to get to know each other. You can ask participants to name the situations that most often provoke their anger. It can also ask everyone to react to inappropriate behaviour. In this way, the community will help you anticipate the conflict and support it in resolving it.
- ♣ **Show empathy.**



What should you do if the conflict starts anyway?

- ❑ **Don't ignore it.** If you do not react in any way, it is very likely that this behaviour will happen again in the future. First of all, name it as a conflict in your view and present some solution strategies: to talk respectfully, to calm down and then to talk, to get one of the members out of the conflict. If there is no response to the proposals, the best strategy is to get out of the conflict on your own, just remember to say out loud that "I see that you are too angry to talk calmly. Now I go out to make coffee. We'll talk when I get back. " The safety of other group members should be assessed before leaving. If there is the slightest doubt about the safety of others, do not leave the room under any circumstances. It is possible to offer all group members a coffee break together.
- ❑ **Stay calm.** Remember that emotions are reflected and tend to grow. If you lose your temper and start screaming in a conflict situation, the conflict will only get worse. Maintain self-control.
- ❑ If you are feeling uneasy after a conflict situation, it is best to reflect internally (e.g. meditate), take time to breathe outside and reconnect with nature, or hang out with someone close to you, do not hold or accumulate regrets.



In creating a safe environment for participants, we pay a lot of attention to ensuring psychological security.

Creating a safe psychological atmosphere depends very much on your own psychological state and psychological resilience, so make sure to spend time to develop your own skills, and maintain your own mental health.

The best teacher is one who is constantly learning themselves. So, by organizing non-formal education sessions, you will always be involved in the learning process and grow too!