

16

FANTASY WALK IN THE WOODS

Objective: To examine the symbolic meanings of fantasy experiences as a way of exploring attitudes and values.

TIME REQUIRED 30 minutes or less

RISK LEVEL Low

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED Any number of participants, plus one facilitator

PROCEDURE Please take the following steps:

1. Ask the participants to close their eyes and imagine walking through a dark wood on a dimly lighted path. They walk and walk for a long time on the path, until suddenly they emerge into a meadow with bright sunlight, long soft grass, butterflies and birds, and gentle breezes.
2. Ask participants to imagine themselves as they move out of the dark woods into the meadow and to imagine what they would do next.
3. Pause a few moments, and then ask the participants to imagine that they are now on the other side of the meadow, continuing on the trail through the dark woods for a long, long time, until suddenly they turn a corner and meet a large bear standing on its hind legs, as surprised as they are.
4. Again, have the participants imagine what they would do in this circumstance.
5. Pause a few moments, and then ask the participants to imagine that the bear is now gone and that they are continuing on the path again for a long, long time, until they reach the bottom of a tall cliff that rises straight up in front of them into the clouds. There is no obvious path to the right or left; the path seems to just end at the bottom of this cliff.
6. Again, have the participants imagine what they would do in this circumstance.
7. Pause a few moments, and then inform the participants that the path symbolizes life's journey, the meadow represents sexuality, the bear represents life's problems, and the cliff represents death.

8. Ask the participants to disclose only as much of their responses as they choose and to make their own interpretations of what those responses might mean.

DEBRIEFING

The facilitator will need to be careful that participants not self-disclose to the point of being uncomfortable. The group may want to explore how life problems, sexuality, and death are experienced differently in different cultures, broadly defined. Some discussion questions include the following:

1. Did the interpretation make sense to you?
2. Would the same symbols have the same meanings across cultures?
3. Knowing what the symbols represent, would you change your responses?
4. What feelings did you experience during the fantasy?
5. Were you surprised at any point by your own thoughts?

INSIGHT

Each culture provides different interpretations of normal life experiences.

59

NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

Objective: To make sure that group participation is not dominated by members who are more articulate, assertive, and powerful in a multicultural group.

TIME REQUIRED About an hour

RISK LEVEL Moderate

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED Any number of participants, plus one facilitator

PROCEDURE Please take the following steps:

1. Have the participants arrange themselves in a circle.
2. Instruct the participants that each group member will have a turn to make one statement or express one idea, but not more than one idea, during each turn.
3. Begin the discussion on a particular topic.
4. Monitor this process, and prevent any group member from expressing more than one idea or statement during his or her turn. Each group member will, in turn, provide an insight, idea, question, or statement to the group. If a group member has nothing to say, he or she has the right to pass up the opportunity to speak.
5. Allow the discussion to proceed from one member to the next around the circle until all group members have had an opportunity to express their ideas, insights, questions, or statements to the rest of the group.

DEBRIEFING One frequent problem in multicultural groups is that some members are more assertive and aggressive in expressing their viewpoints than others. Typically, these stronger group members dominate the discussion, and others in the group have no opportunity to express their own ideas. This procedure provides one way to balance the unequal distribution of power in a multicultural group. This process was developed by the Tavistock Institute in England (www.tavistockinstitute.org) and provides a level playing field for multicultural groups so that group members have an equal opportunity

to express their ideas. The debriefing might explore whether this procedure seemed more fair than a free-for-all discussion. Some questions for discussion are as follows:

1. Participants from which cultures tend to speak less in an open discussion?
2. Participants from which cultures tend to speak more in an open discussion?
3. Did the group rules inhibit free discussion?
4. Did people speak out opinions that might otherwise have gone unstated?
5. If people don't want to contribute to a discussion, should they be encouraged to do so?

INSIGHT

Sometimes the group members with the best ideas are not assertive in expressing their ideas unless they are given permission to do so.

Objective: To help students become more aware of the role of culture in their lives by systematically describing their own personal cultural history.

TIME REQUIRED From 1 to 3 hours

RISK LEVEL Low

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED Any number of participants, plus a facilitator

PROCEDURE Please take the following steps:

1. Ask students to complete the following questionnaire:
 - a. Describe the earliest memory you have of an experience with a person or people of a cultural or ethnic group different from your own.
 - b. Who or what has had the most influence in the formation of your attitudes and opinions about people of different cultural groups? In what way?
 - c. What influences in your experience have led to the development of positive feelings about your own cultural heritage and background?
 - d. What influences in your experience have led to the development of negative feelings, if any, about your own cultural heritage or background?
 - e. What changes, if any, would you like to make in your own attitudes or experiences in relation to people of other ethnic or cultural groups?
 - f. Describe an experience in your own life when you feel you were discriminated against for any reason, not necessarily because of your culture.
 - g. How do you feel you should deal with (or not deal with) issues of cultural diversity in American society?
2. Organize a small or large group discussion to compare responses to this self-assessment across students. Allow the students to disclose.

DEBRIEFING Discuss the similarities and differences in group members' responses to the same questions. Allow the students to self-disclose only to the extent they are comfortable;

no student should feel pressure to disclose his or her responses if reluctant to do so. Some discussion questions are as follows:

1. How would you describe your culture?
2. Who was the most significant culture teacher in your life?
3. How has your culture changed over time?
4. Are you aware of how your culture has changed you?
5. How many different cultures do you belong to?

INSIGHT

Each of us belongs to many different cultures.