



NEED FINDING EMPATHY TIMELINE

This method involves asking community members to think about the complexities of the issue at hand. Community members can become aware of their own subjective viewpoints on environmental problems, as this approach allows participants to think about their own personal perceptions. This reflexivity can be achieved by having community members talk about the ways that they are affected by the issue, but also the ways that they contribute to it. An empathy timeline facilitates community building by bringing people together to discuss issues and consider them in a way that they perhaps have not often done before.

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FORMAT
Method, Workshop

TIMEFRAME
< 1h

GROUP SIZE
All

FACILITATION LEVEL
Low

REQUIRED MATERIALS
A1 sheets of paper, markers, shapes and icon cut-outs, sticker dots

STEPS

1

Using A1 sheets of paper, draw two parallel lines horizontally across each sheet. At the ends of both lines, mark out a 24-hour timeline (midnight to midnight). Also, in preparation, cut out different icons or images related to the issue at hand. Include some abstract shapes too, adding anything that might spark creative thought.

2

Have the community members form small groups, and ask them to fill in the timelines. In the first half of the exercise, the first line represents the ways that the participants were affected by the problem in the previous 24 hours. Ask them to consider what they encountered throughout the day in relation to the issue, specifying that they include positive things as well as negatives. Then switch to the second timeline, asking the participants to repeat the process to represent how they contributed to that issue, and the times they did so.

3

Once the groups have populated the timeline with all their activities, ask the community members to use green and red sticker dots to identify which things they consider to be positive, and which negative.

4

Ask each group to present their findings back to the other participants, with particular attention paid to their discussions and the insights that they had during the task. This is a truly eye-opening activity, and phenomenal for building relationships between community members!

Benefits

A little empathy can go a long way when aiming for change in the public domain. Drawing an empathy timeline helps us better understand the issue at hand, as it encourages us to look at both sides of the problem and how we might understand our role in it.

Tips

Keep in mind the guiding question while implementing this method: how were you affected by the problem and how did you contribute in the last 24 hours?

Sources

1. GoNano Project

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