






Recognizing 'Master Suppression Technique'

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AIM: An exercise focusing on how to recognize the power structures that are taking place in our everyday life.
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Participants: 4 - 20
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Duration: 40 – 60 minutes
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Required Material: print-out of the master suppression techniques, one on each sheet. A blackboard / whiteboard.
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Category: Dialogue exercise / inter-cultural, homogeneous

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- A. Create a safe space by telling the participants that many people are not aware of their privileges and often use 'Master Suppression Techniques' without being aware of it.
- B. No one should point the finger at each other; this is a space to learn and become aware of the 'Master Suppression Techniques' so they can spot them and not use them in the future.
- C. It may scare some of the participants to tell them they have to perform a play for each other. Use a more natural word like active participation etc.
- D. The given example of the role play can be adapted and changed depending on what you want to highlight. The example in this exercise is a "common" example that everyone can identify with. If you want to, you could change the scenario to be between a teacher-student, employer-employee, father/mother-child, politician-citizen, ethnic/religious majority- minority. Remember to create a different setting for the role play if you want to use one of these, e.g. if you want to illustrate 'Master Suppression Techniques' between an ethnic/religious majority- minority you could play out a scene where a Muslim girl in her predominantly Christian class is not invited to a party because they took it for granted that as a Muslim she doesn't drink and therefore

doesn't party. This would then be 'Withholding of information' and 'stereotyping' as they presume that she doesn't want to go to the party because she doesn't drink, or that she doesn't drink at all because she is a Muslim. In this case, it is also a good example that illustrates that her classmate didn't necessarily have bad intentions of not inviting her, they just made an assumption. This is still relevant to discuss, likewise if the intention was on purpose.

E. This is only one way of doing it. Be creative and create more plays if you want.

STEPS	
Preparation (5 minutes)	Divide the group into 3-4 (minimum 3 persons in each group).
Activity (30 minutes)	<p>Each group should agree to play out a meeting where something must be decided (meeting room in the office, planning a school activity, meeting in a sport club, cabinet meeting, government leaders coming together, etc.). One of the participants in the meeting is consistently being frozen out of the conversation and of the decisions that are made.</p> <p>Each group can get three 'Master of Suppression Techniques' to play out, and they will incorporate/play at least two of them in the role play. But all groups will get at least one common master of suppression technique. (The facilitator will choose which one it is).</p> <p>The other groups will observe and try to identify how one of the participants is getting frozen out of the meeting. Afterwards, the groups will switch roles.</p> <p>Five ways to freeze a person out of a meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invisibility: the person who gets frozen out of the role play will be forgotten, overlooked, bypassed, or "overrun". • Ridicule: the person who gets ignored in the role play is mocked and ridiculed more or less openly when he/she contributes to the conversation at the meeting. • Withholding of information: the person who gets frozen out of the role play does not have the same information as the others in the group with regard to what is being discussed, or information is shared between the others in the group without him/her having access to (whispering in the ears, text messages during the meeting, etc.).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condemnation of whatever you do: the person who gets frozen out of the role play will be "punished" regardless of what she/he does: talking too much or being too passive, coming up with bad ideas or no ideas, etc. This is also called double punishment. • Applying guilt and shame: the person who gets frozen out of the role play is being talked down to, personal aspects of her/his life are drawn into the meeting, things that are said to individuals in confidence are being said at the meeting, etc. <p>Let each group practice how their play will take shape within their groups: delegating the different roles to each other, who says what and how etc.</p> <p>When they are ready they should perform it for the other groups. The other groups will have to guess which 'Master Suppression Techniques' the group played to freeze the person out.</p> <p>Write suggestions on the blackboard. See if you can find one or two words that explain the way the participant was frozen out/ignored. Can you find one 'Master Suppression Technique' or perhaps even more in the role play?</p>
Reflection (20 minutes)	<p>Questions for reflection could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you experience being ignored and frozen out/ or to be the one who ignored the other? • Was it easy to identify the one who was being ignored/frozen out? • Was it difficult to find the 'Master Suppression Techniques'? • Do you recognize the 'Master Suppression Techniques' from other situations? • Are the 'Master Suppression Techniques' being used against groups of people in the community / your society, and if so when and how? • What can the person who is being subjected to 'Master Suppression Techniques' do? • What can you do if you notice that some are using 'Master Suppression Techniques' on others, whether in a meeting or a different situation?
Conclusion (5 minutes)	<p>Thank everyone for their participation, summarize what was learned.</p>