Interpersonal Skills Frame Game

Instructional Objective

This frame game reinforces key concepts taught in many professional development courses that address interpersonal skills. The game helps to increase learning transfer by asking students to describe and apply strategies in five areas: 1) developing and maintaining trust, 2) increasing communication skills, 3) expressing feelings verbally, 4) listening and responding in a helpful manner, 5) and resolving interpersonal conflict.

Upon completing the game, learners will better understand the value of having these interpersonal skills; what happens when effective interpersonal skills are used compared to what happens when poor skills are used; the root cause of processes that break down; and how to apply interpersonal strategies in concrete situations.

While interpersonal skills development is popular among business professionals, they are also increasingly being offered in CEGEP and university. For example, Concordia University offers such as course as part of its Applied Human Sciences programs. http://ahsc.concordia.ca/. At the CEGP level, interpersonal skills training is normally offered as part of a Social Science program.

Learners & Context of Use

The Interpersonal Skills frame game is designed for adults between the ages of 18 and 65. The game is played immediately following a course, training session, workshop or seminar on the development of interpersonal skills. The game can be played in its entirety after instruction, or it can be played in stages to match the agenda of a multi-week course. Upon completion of the game, learners are encouraged to reflect upon and apply the techniques presented during game play.

- Minimum # of players: 5
- Ideal number of players: 5 teams of 2 or more

Object of the Framegame

The team that receives the highest score upon completion of all six interpersonal skills challenges wins a prize (i.e. coffee card, gift pen, mug, etc.)

Framegame Materials

The following materials are required:

- Five work tables

- One chair for each learner
- 1 deck of "situation" cards
- 1 "value" worksheet
- 1 "bad practice" worksheet
- 1 "root cause" worksheet
- 1 "good practice" worksheet
- 1 "act it" worksheet
- Six pencils
- Time

Time Required

The game takes approximately 1.5 hours to complete. There are five rounds of game play - one for each interpersonal skills category. Each round takes approximately 20 minutes. Game play can be carried over several training sessions, as needed and to accommodate the course agenda.

The Rules or Game Play

- Learners are divided into five teams and assigned a worktable.
- Each team is given a pencil, 1 "value" worksheet, 1 "bad practice" worksheet, 1 "root cause" worksheet" and 1 "good practice" worksheet.#
- The instructor draws a card from the situation deck and reads aloud the content of the card to provide some context and inspire thinking from the teams. #
  - **Example 1**: You are disappointed by the raise you received this year. You've been learning new work-related skills on your own time and getting excellent customer comments.#
  - **Example 2**: Your colleague has the habit of undermining your work in front of others, and especially in front of your boss.#
- Each team is given a different challenge to complete with regards to the situation:#
  - **Value Challenge**: This challenge requires learners to identify all of the benefits of having effective skills in a specific interpersonal area.#
  - **Bad Practice**: This challenge requires learners to describe what typically happens when ineffective skills are used in a specific interpersonal area.#
  - **Root Cause Challenge**: This challenge requires learners to identify to identify the underlying issues that typically cause people to react a certain way.#
  - **Good Practice Challenge**: This challenge requires learners to describe what typically happens when good skills are used in a specific interpersonal area.#
  - **Act It Challenge**: This challenge requires learners to act out the "good practice" in the given interpersonal skills for handling the situation read aloud by the instructor. #
- The timer is turned on and each team is given 10 minutes to prepare responses to their individual challenges using the provided worksheets.#

- Each team takes turns to present their responses in two minutes or less.#
- As each team presents, the instructor silently ranks the individual responses on a score of 1 to 5.#
- After each round, teams rotate the challenge they are to work on. For example:#
  - **Round 1 Game Play: Developing and Maintaining Trust**
    - Team 1 works on the "value" challenge.#
    - Team 2 works on the "bad practices" challenge#
    - Team 3 works on the "root causes" challenge#
    - Team 4 works on the "good practices" challenge#
    - Team 5 works on the "act it" challenge#
  - **Round 2 Game Play: Increasing Communication Skills**
    - Team 1 works on the "act it" challenge.#
    - Team 2 works on the "value" challenge#
    - Team 3 works on the "bad practice" challenge#
    - Team 4 works on the "root cause" challenge#
    - Team 5 works on the "good practice" challenge#
  - **Round 3 Game Play: Self-disclosing appropriately**
    - Team 1 works on the "good practice" challenge.#
    - Team 2 works on the "act it" challenge#
    - Team 3 works on the "value" challenge#
    - Team 4 works on the "bad practice" challenge#
    - Team 5 works on the "root cause" challenge#
  - **Round 4 Game Play: Listening and Responding in a Helpful Manner**
    - Team 1 works on the "root cause" challenge.#
    - Team 2 works on the "good practice" challenge#
    - Team 3 works on the "act it" challenge#
    - Team 4 works on the "value" challenge#
    - Team 5 works on the "bad practice" challenge#
  - **Round 5 Game Play: Resolving Interpersonal Conflict**
    - Team 1 works on the "bad practice" challenge.#
    - Team 2 works on the "root cause" challenge#
    - Team 3 works on the "good practice" challenge#
    - Team 4 works on the "act it" challenge#
    - Team 5 works on the "value" challenge#
- After all five challenges have been completed; the instructor tallies up the scores and announces the winning team.#
- The team with the highest total score wins. #
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Description of the Learning Problem

Good interpersonal relationships require the ability to interact effectively with others, such as family members, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues. Interpersonal relationships also

requires self-disclosure so that you can be recognized as an individual; building trust with yourself and others; communicating your ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively; listening to other people express their problems constructively and responding in a helpful manner; and facing conflicts and resolving them constructively (Johnson, 2000).

Learning interpersonal skills involves learning from your experiences in the same way as other skills are learned. This framegame is designed to create the situations in which the learner can practice interpersonal skills as a "coach" or teacher watches and gives feedback on how well learners are performing the skills. The possible learning outcomes of each skill are outlined below:

Trust
The objective of the " developing and maintaining trust" segment of the game is to practice:
- Identifying the situations that causes distrust
- Creating the situations that builds and increase trust
- Identifying the levels of trustworthiness
- Recognizing the trust issues that hinders the development of meaningful relationships

Communication
The objective of the "communication" segment of the game is to help learners practice:
- Communicating with others in a respectful and accepting manner
- Using formal language appropriately
- Recognizing passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors
- Identifying the difference between sending a complaint and sending a request
- Recognizing effective and ineffective statements using the BCF model

Note: The BCF Model
- *B = Behavior that bothers you*
- *C = Consequences of that behavior and how it affects you*
- *F = How you feel about the situation*

Use the BCF model to make "I" statements that expresses your concerns about the situation

Self-Disclosure
The objective of the "self-disclosure" segment of the game is to practice:
- Identifying self-disclosures that may upset or cause distress
- Identifying the risks involved by self-disclosing
- Appropriately sharing feelings with others

Conflict
The objective of the "conflict" segment of the game is to allow learners to practice effective strategies to deal with conflict appropriately by using win-win problem solving approaches. This

involves stating one's views and needs and listening intently to the views and needs of others, and then working collaboratively to find an agreeable solution by:

- Making a statement to the other party
- Allowing the other party to respond
- Agreeing on the conflict
- Developing and alternative solution to resolve the conflict
- Agreeing on a change

Listening and responding

The objective of the "listening and responding" segment of the game is to develop effective listening and responding skills:

- Identify your response style
- Understand the different types of responses to use in a given situation
- Determine which type of response is most effective in helping other with a problem

Debriefing

The follow reflective questions will help learners to internalize (clarify and solidify) their understanding:

- How would you know if your listening and attending skills helped or hindered your ability to deal with a difficult customer, boss, or co-worker?
- How does your communication style foster a supportive, respectful and inclusive environment?
- What kind of environment would be safe for verbally expressing feelings?
- How would you define trustworthiness?
- Are there any risks in self-disclosing?

References

The Interpersonal Skills frame game was initially inspired by the "4Cs" frame game by Mathew Richter. We adapted it quite a bit for the learning needs of interpersonal skills development.

Books & Journals

Johnson, D. W. (2000) *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualization*.
Allyn and Bacon Needham Heights: MA

Electronic

http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/march2004.html#StructuredSharingURL2