

GAMES

This is a pack of Games handouts that I have written, adapting both original source material and my own experience. Psychological Games are played out of awareness. We all play games and we can all learn how to spot them and how to communicate more cleanly.

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GAMES

REPETITIVE CONFLICTS

1. FAILING AT CLOSENESS

People will often settle for receiving negative strokes, instead of a total absence of recognition and this can lead them to engage in negative transactions which then lead to negative outcomes. These types of repetitive and negative transactions with others are known as *psychological games* (Julie Hay 1988). We tend to play games out of awareness, because the interactions are so familiar to us. Games can be played in seconds or can be repeated over many years.

Eric Berne defined psychological games as "any ulterior transaction which is played out in a game-like manner" (Berne, 1964)

Spotting the best way to avoid the game in a game:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)

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2. DEGRADING

Berne

- I.
- II.
- III.

Thank you.

3. THE

People can... that these are all unhealthy.

- Generate many intense strokes, which although negative, feel better than being ignored.
- Reinforce our beliefs about ourselves, others and our relative positions within the world. These can be seen in our life positions, such as I'm not Ok : You're not Ok.
- Avoid something, perhaps a serious conversation about an uncomfortable issue.
- Provide us with the chance to repeat a sequence from our past, which we developed to protect us from something. As a result we continue to think and feel in our established ways and avoid coming to terms with our psychological pain.
- Tell our friends exactly what happened, in exciting detail and with lots of repetition. What other excitement would we have to report on anyway?
- Subsequently replay the game in our mind's eye and re-experience our feelings and thoughts. We may even keep ourselves awake at night. What else would we do with the time anyway?

4. THE DRAMA TRIANGLE (Stephen Karpman, 1972)

Stephen Karpman realised that games were similar to theatrical dramas and the scenes which really captured the attention of the audience tended to contain the elements of a game. He devised the Drama Triangle as a tool to help people analyse games. Each person involved in the game plays a part on the triangle and may switch parts as the game is played.

Pers
I'm Ok

ays

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An example of this game?

- I. Sharon has a problem and asks Derek for help.
- II. Derek responds by hanging his head and returning to his desk in silence. (He ends up in victim, with Sharon ending up as persecutor).
- III. Sharon responds by shouting at Derek and blaming him for the problem.
- IV. Eventually, Sharon sorts it out on her own.
- V. Sometimes, Sharon suggests useless ideas.
- VI. When this happens, Derek responds by hanging his head and returning to his desk in silence. (He ends up in victim, with Sharon ending up as persecutor).
- VII. Whatever happens, Sharon and Derek both receive lots of negative strokes from each other. These are their payoffs for playing the game. If only they knew how to deliver straight strokes and ask for help, they could have a much healthier working life and avoid all that conflict!

5. AVOIDING GAMES

- Acey Choy, 1990, developed a version of a *Winner's Triangle*. Persecutor becomes *Powerful* (can change things, negotiate and be assertive) – Rescuer becomes *Responsible* (willing to help when asked, has genuine concern for others) – Victim becomes *Vulnerable* (acknowledges own problems and can solve them with help).
- Games are always played from either Parent or Child. Stay in Adult to avoid them or respond to the Child need which is being expressed, in a healthy way.
- Give other people straight strokes, ask for the strokes you really need and then stroke yourself for avoiding the game.
- If you find yourself in a game simply cross the transaction (e.g. from Adult) or voice your intuitions.

Ref: Tactics, Newton & Napper, 2000 / TA for Trainers, Hay, 1996 / Richard Maun

GAMES

TYPES IN ORGANISATIONS

Games are played in all parts of life. Some are particularly common in organisations and these are shown below. However, this list is not exhaustive and you may find it interesting to spot and name some types of games which are played in your organisation.

I spy with my little eye...

Yes, but Helpful suggestions are always countered with a “yes, *but*...” response. The underlying communication is about who is cleverest. The person with the problem is trying to show that they have exhausted all possibilities, whereas the person suggesting solutions is trying to show that they can improve on everything already considered. Try using “yes, and” or “and, if” instead.

Harrier

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Rap



collapse as a martyr.
or let down (again!).
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hat capable and
taking a break
complain about
e me alone”. We
own.
you, you son of a
ing the other
explains an idea
tions until he
ho was feeling
essed. This game
vited to persecute
ner ideas. This
ever they are in
to their point of
about “I win, you
nent. We tell the
the
er is left battered
n as *Kick me*,
ly when we see
an apparent
advantage of and our
payoff is to retain our cynicism or how people rip us off when we offer help. Our colleague (or customer) is baffled by our reaction as we had lead them to believe our offer gave them *carte blanche*. Their payoff is to remain cynical about our lack of genuine desire to help. For example, have you ever offered a relative some food and then complained at how much they ate? *Rapo* is usually associated with sexual games, where someone appears to flirt and then gets offended when someone else oversteps a boundary which has not been made clear to them.

Ref: TA for Trainers, Hay, 1996 / Games People Play, Berne, 1964

EXERCISE

Gotcha at the Great Giggling Pin Company

Please read the example of a game in action and have a go at the questions that follow.

You attend a regular month-end meeting, where staff discuss their results and their plans for the next month. The following is an extract from a confrontation which regularly occurs. In fact, the other people in the meeting often place bets to see how long the meeting will last before something like this happens:

Question 1.

Draw the drama triangle - where do Mr Major and Jenkins start?

Managing P

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Pins. T

Jenk

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Jenk

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Man

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Jenk

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Man

Oh?
it will
custo

Jenk

But th

Managing

(Angrily) What

products, not this half baked scheme you've just dreamed up! Does any one have any more ideas they wish to share?

The room falls silent...!

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Thank you.

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