

SESSION 1

Introduction to Social Perception Training

AIM OF THE SESSION

To provide an overview of the program and motivate participants to participate actively

PROCEDURE

1. Give an introduction to perception by showing an optical illusion in a drawing or video clip. This clearly illustrates to young people that things are not always what they seem. Explain that an optical illusion occurs when we perceive an image to be different from what it really is. The information sent from our eyes to our brain challenges our perception of reality. Explain that *perception* means interpreting or giving a meaning to something one experiences.
2. Role-play with your co-facilitator or show a video clip involving an ambiguous situation. For example, a girl is waiting for her boyfriend. A boy comes over and asks the way to the movie theater. The girl's boyfriend sees them talking together and walks away. How might the boyfriend interpret this—first, when he hasn't heard what they said, and second, when he has heard it? Reflect upon what happened and how the boyfriend's thoughts about the other boy's intention may influence how the boyfriend reacts. Remember to use suitable language for the group.
3. Point out that in social situations we receive many signals, both verbal and nonverbal. At the same time, the situation we are in is likely to have its own rules. Explain that the aim of the program is to raise participants' understanding of ways to interpret social situations, thus enabling them to make better choices in subsequent interactions. Reality is not always what we believe it to be: A Mercedes rushes past us on the motorway. Is the driver showing off? Is he a snob? Maybe he's going to the hospital. Sometimes we interpret an event in the light of the characteristics we apply to another person (e.g., that he's a snob, from another culture, mean, annoying). On other occasions, we may consider factors in the situation itself: He's driving to the hospital, he needs money, and so forth. Such matters can determine not only how we interpret the situation but also the subsequent interaction.
4. Give participants one minute to identify all the green items in the classroom. After they identifying the green objects, ask them to identify objects of another color.

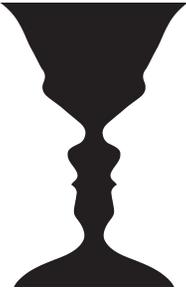
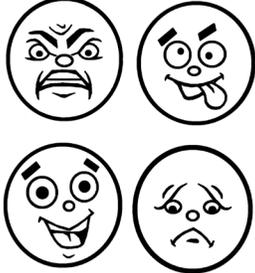
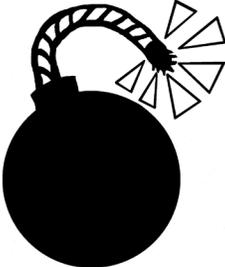
By doing this, we illustrate that we normally perceive what we are looking for. Reflect on another example, like one person who spends time identifying hairstyles among spectators while watching a soccer match while others know and can talk about both the players who have scored and the ones who have given assists to those who scored.

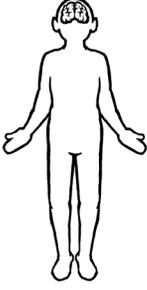
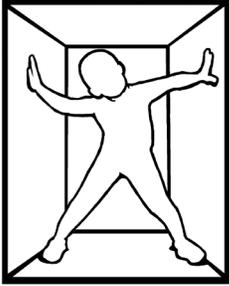
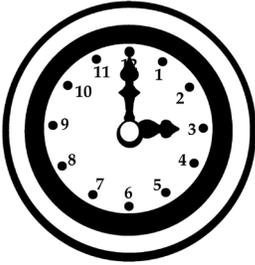
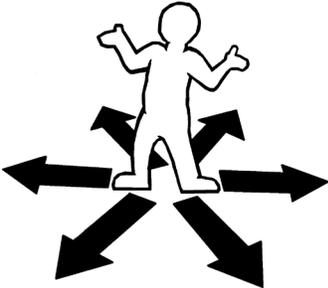
5. Give each participant a copy of the Social Perception Training Session Outline. Briefly describe the content of each session, preferably with the aid of illustrations or video clips. Explain that the course will include training in both receiving and processing the information we obtain from social settings and also help us to choose suitable responses.
6. To get participants to play an active role in the session, encourage them to think about what Social Perception Training is and why it is useful: It helps you to achieve your goals, not make a fool of yourself, not hurt other people's feelings, not get angry or make others angry, not risk being frozen out, and so on.

The use of humor is very helpful in sensitizing what can go wrong when people do not use the appropriate skills when they fall victim to illusions and misconstrue what is happening. TV sitcoms are a good source of examples.

7. Draw up group rules together with the participants. The group should generate its own ideas, but some common helpful rules are as follows:
 - Come to the session on time.
 - Keep what is said within the group.
 - Be respectful.
 - Raise your hand before speaking.

Social Perception Training Session Outline

	<p>Session 1: Introduction to Social Perception Training</p> <p>To <i>perceive</i> means to interpret or give meaning to what we observe. In the sessions, we will take a close look at some common social situations in which it is easy to be misunderstood or to misunderstand others. These misunderstandings may lead to conflict, loss of friendships, and other difficult situations. The object of the program is to learn social rules and norms to better handle these difficult social situations.</p>
	<p>Session 2: Emotional Awareness</p> <p>The ability to communicate our own feelings and also take into consideration other people's worries and emotions is the key to social success. If we can't interpret others' feelings and experience from others' perspectives, we can easily interpret social signals incorrectly and be confused about how we should react in an acceptable way.</p>
	<p>Session 3: Open and Hidden Rules in Different Situations</p> <p>Open rules are explicitly expressed and fairly easy to learn. Hidden rules are implicitly expressed rules that just occur within a culture or situation and that we need to master to avoid behaving in a socially unacceptable way.</p>
	<p>Session 4: Cultural Differences</p> <p>Cultural differences are differences in the ways groups do things. For example, different nations and ethnic cultures may have different hidden and open rules. Different subcultures may have different rules within larger nations or groups—for example, there may be different expectations for males and females or young people and adults.</p>
	<p>Session 5: Setting Events</p> <p>Often we bring experiences, thoughts, emotions, or physiological status (like pain or tiredness) from one situation to another. These setting events are important because they influence the way we think and act, even if they are not directly connected to the situation we are in.</p>

	<p>Session 6: Thoughts, Feelings, Body Signals, and Actions</p> <p>How we think about or interpret a situation can affect our feelings, body signals, and actions. Sometimes our feelings and body signals come first, and we might interpret a situation on the basis of how we feel and not on what we think. Changes in any one of these factors will have an impact on the others.</p>
	<p>Session 7: Interpreting Others' Intentions</p> <p>An intention is what you or another wishes to achieve in a certain situation. For example, you might want to be kind or get something. It is important to be able to interpret others' intentions because this interpretation will influence how we react and respond.</p>
	<p>Session 8: Cognitive Distortions</p> <p>Cognitive distortions, sometimes called thinking errors, are things we tell ourselves to justify actions we actually know are not right. This way of justifying our actions is called <i>self-centered</i>. There are three categories within of self-centeredness: <i>blaming others</i>, <i>minimizing</i>, and <i>assuming the worst</i>. Understanding our thinking errors helps us to take responsibility for our actions.</p>
	<p>Session 9: Timing (Right Time and Place)</p> <p>Timing means the right time and place for an action. To get along with others, it is important to be able to distinguish between situations where a specific action might be proper and where it might be considered wrong. It is also very important to know <i>when</i> to act and <i>when</i> to wait. Sometimes it is important to interrupt a conversation, to change the subject of the conversation, and so on. Knowing when to do this is an important skill.</p>
	<p>Session 10: Consequences (If-Then)</p> <p>Consequences are what happen after an action, right away or after some time has gone by. Consequences might be good or bad. Evaluating consequences helps us to predict what will happen and make better choices in the future.</p>