

Composite Role Play (CRP)



What is it?

Composite role play (CRP) is a technique I developed in 2003 to address many participants' natural and understandable reluctance to engage in 'role play' exercises.

Although many participants can experience nervousness before a role play session, many report that afterwards they really enjoyed it. Nevertheless, some people have reported that if they know that role play is a technique on a course, they are more reluctant to participate in it.

This technique involves groups of three participants working together, in composite form, to play one defined role, thus spreading the responsibility, attention and pressure between the whole group, rather than one person. CRP is a safe and supportive way to undertake role play. CRP can be used as an introductory technique to individual role play, later in the course or workshop.

How does it work?

Within the composite grouping, the central person takes on the main (named) role, whilst the two people flanking either side support the central person by providing (improvised) dialogue / out-loud thinking for the central person to process, project, reject or improvise with. The central role can be alternated between all members of the group of three, if agreed beforehand.

Why use it?

The two flanking people represent the internal thinking / feeling aspects of the role being played and their presence helps to take the pressure off the central person. This arrangement also means that a much more complex, detailed and lengthy role play can be attempted as the role is being animated by three people, rather than one.

Typical scenarios where it can work well...

Where role play is a central element of a workshop, for example, in developing empathic responses about situations of relevance to the participant / target group; where the group is made up of shy, inhibited or otherwise inexperienced people; where the group may not have gelled or worked together before; where the subject matter can be draining, or where the role requires a great deal of thought in order to do well.

For further information:

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