

## **SOME AUTHENTIC ACTIVITIES IN THE REDESIGNED SOCIAL WORK METHODS AND PRACTICE MODULE**

### **1.Power and Conflict activity**

#### **Activity: Triangle, Circle andSquares**

### **Purpose**

An experiential group activity that highlights power, privilege, diversity, and conflict dynamics. It encourages participants to reflect on group identity, cultural differences, and societal “rules.”

### **Setup**

- **Participants:** 15–40, late adolescents to adults
- **Materials:** Paper shapes (squares, circles, triangles) and pins
- **Time:** 30–45 minutes activity, 15–30 minutes debrief
- **Distribution:** ~60% squares, then 60% of the rest circles, and the remaining triangles. Squares outnumber the other groups combined.

### **Rules (kept secret from other groups)**

- **Squares:** “You have it, and you don’t want anyone else to have it.”
- **Circles:** “You want to be a square.”
- **Triangles:** “You want what squares have, but you don’t want to be a square.”

### **Typical Dynamics**

1. Circles and triangles chase squares, trying to take what they have.
2. Squares resist, sometimes banding together physically.
3. Circles and triangles regroup, often frustrated, and discuss strategies.
4. Squares relax, then grow uneasy when they notice less attention.
5. Circles and triangles may collaborate, sometimes suggesting discarding identities.
6. Squares resist sharing power, though some individuals may defect to join the others.

### **Processing / Debrief**

- **Triangles & Circles:** report frustration.
- **Squares:** often feel uncomfortable and negative about their role.
- Participants admit they obeyed rules simply because they were told to, mirroring how societal norms operate.
- Discussion links to cultural identity, privilege, and systemic “rules” that shape behavior.

### **Theoretical Lens**

- **Emic:** stresses differences between cultural groups, risks reducing people to checklists.
- **Etic:** stresses commonalities, but risks ignoring cultural specifics.
- **Optimal Theory:** balances both—people share universal traits, cultural particularities, and individual uniqueness.\

## Relevance to Authentic e-Learning

The *Triangle, Circle, and Squares* activity directly connects to authentic learning because it immerses participants in a realistic, problem-based scenario that mirrors power, privilege, and conflict dynamics in society. Instead of learning abstract theories of inequality or cultural difference, learners experience these dynamics firsthand and then critically reflect on their actions, feelings, and choices during the debrief. This aligns with authentic e-learning's emphasis on meaningful engagement with complex, ill-structured problems that do not have one "right" answer. The experiential nature of the activity ensures that concepts like systemic privilege, cultural identity, and societal rules move beyond theory into lived practice, making the learning both personal and socially relevant.

## 1. Group Cohesion

### Activity: Blast Off

*(Origin unknown; commonly used in Center for Family Life Youth Programs)*

#### Purpose

To encourage the group to work together toward a shared goal.

#### Directions

Participants form a circle, facing one another. Together, the group must count down from 10 to 1 (or start from another number, depending on group size, cohesion, and ability). Only one person may speak at a time. If two or more people call out the same number simultaneously, the group must start again from 10.

#### Variations

- Add a time or smoothness challenge by stating the purpose as "to complete the task as quickly and smoothly as possible."
- Instead of counting down, the group counts upward from 1 to see how high they can go together as a team.
- Increase difficulty by having participants face away from one another.

## Relevance to Authentic e-Learning

The *Blast Off* activity reflects key elements of authentic e-learning by creating a collaborative task that requires learners to rely on one another to succeed. It mirrors real-world problem solving, where group members must coordinate actions, listen carefully, and adjust strategies when challenges arise. The countdown task highlights shared responsibility and

interdependence, while variations such as adding time limits or removing visual cues encourage adaptability and deeper engagement. By fostering group cohesion and emphasising teamwork toward a common goal.

### **3.Commonalities**

#### **Activity: Me Too, Me Three**

**Purpose:** To help group members discover commonalities and appreciate uniqueness.

#### **How to Play**

- Participants sit or stand in a circle.
- One person (the “Caller”) shares a fact about themselves.
- If the neighbor shares it, they say “**Me Too**” and become the new Caller. Others who share it say “**Me Three.**”
- Momentum only shifts when the Caller and their neighbor have something in common.
- If not, the neighbor responds politely (“that’s nice,” “cool”) and the Caller tries another fact.
- Play continues until everyone has been a Caller.

#### **Tips**

- Encourage deeper categories (hobbies, talents, travels, hopes) rather than obvious traits.
- Online version: assign turns by number or alphabetical order.

### **Relevance to Authentic e-learning**

The Me Too, Me Three activity supports authentic e-learning by fostering collaboration, multiple perspectives, and social presence. It gives participants an opportunity to connect through shared experiences while also appreciating what makes each person unique. The process of exchanging personal facts encourages deeper engagement and reflection, as learners go beyond surface traits to explore values, talents, and interests. This not only builds group cohesion but also mirrors real-world teamwork, where recognising both common ground and diversity strengthens collective problem-solving.

## **iv. Ice-Breakers and Games for Groups**

### **a. Weather Report**

Participants describe their mood as a type of weather (e.g., sunny, stormy). Can be done quickly with thumbs up/down or followed by brief sharing. Useful for check-ins and check-outs.

### **b. Pass a Gift**

In a circle, each person whispers a “gift” to the person on their left, and a “use” for a gift to the person on their right. Results are then shared with the group.

- c. **Name's the Game**  
One person ("it") points to another and asks them to name things starting with a chosen letter while an object is passed around the circle. If the player doesn't finish in time, they become "it."
- d. **Names & Stories**  
Each participant introduces themselves and shares a funny or ridiculous story from their student life.
- e. **Napkin Game**  
Small groups fold a napkin as small as possible while keeping enough space for each member to place a toe on it.
- f. **Stone Sharing**  
Each person selects a stone and shares their name's meaning, an animal that has been special to them, and a meaningful place. Stones are passed around as a symbol of connection.
- g. **Let's Get to Know Each Other**  
Go around the circle finishing prompts such as: "Once upon a time, I...", "My ideal vacation is...", or "The wildest thing I ever did was..."
- h. **Find an Object**  
Participants find an object that represents their feelings, aspirations, or identity and explain its meaning to the group.
- i. **The 4 C's**  
Each person describes themselves with a **Cartoon character, Colour, Car, and Cuisine** and explains why.
- j. **Who's Here?**  
Participants step into the centre of the circle if a statement applies to them (e.g., "Who here is the oldest child?"). Promotes awareness of identity, diversity, and belonging.

## **Relevance to Authentic e-Learning**

These ice-breakers and games connect directly to authentic e-learning because they create spaces where learners engage meaningfully with each other, build trust, and establish a sense of community. Authentic learning emphasises collaboration, personal connection, and reflection, and these activities allow participants to share parts of their identities, emotions, and experiences in ways that make the learning environment more real and human. By encouraging self-expression, listening, and mutual recognition, the exercises help learners bring their whole selves into the process, which supports deeper engagement with tasks that follow.

## **v. Learning Each Other's Names**

### **Activity Name: My Name Is and I Like To...**

*(Origin unknown. Adapted by Helene Onserud for Center for Family Life Youth Programs, Brooklyn, New York)*

**Purpose**

To help group members learn each other's names while also discovering shared interests in a fun, interactive way.

**How to Play**

- i. Have the group stand in a circle.
- ii. The facilitator begins: "My name is [Name] and I like to [activity]," while acting out a motion that represents the activity.
- iii. The group repeats together: "[Name] likes to [activity]," while copying the motion.
- iv. The next person introduces themselves in the same way, and the group repeats their sequence—along with those that came before—until everyone has had a turn.

*Example:*

- Helene: "My name is Helene and I like to garden" (mimes gardening).
- Group: "Helene likes to garden."
- Michael: "My name is Michael and I like to walk my dog" (mimes walking).
- Group: "Michael likes to walk his dog. Helene likes to garden."

**Variations**

- After everyone has shared, the group can recite all the names and activities in unison.
- Try a final round where the group silently performs the sequence as a collective choreography.

**Online Adaptation**

For virtual groups, the facilitator can assign numbers or letters to participants beforehand so each person knows when their turn is coming. This can be done randomly or in alphabetical order.

**Relevance to Authentic Learning**

This activity supports authentic e-learning because it combines identity, memory, and collaboration in a way that makes the learning environment personal and engaging. By linking names to actions and interests, learners not only remember each other better but also start forming connections based on shared experiences. The group repetition reinforces active participation, collective memory, and accountability, which are key aspects of collaborative learning. It also introduces an element of embodiment and creativity, showing that knowledge and relationships are built through both verbal and non-verbal expression. In online adaptations, the structured order ensures inclusivity while still fostering interaction, which helps maintain community and presence in digital spaces.