



Lifebelt

- Useful for:** understanding a group's needs and desires, understanding a group's beliefs regarding the needs and desires of another, diverse group.
- Very good for:** empathy, invention, realization, cohesion.
- Good for:** self-discovery.
- Type of exercise:** team.

General description:

This category includes exercises where the participants consider a situation/condition by focusing on advice they would give someone in a given situation. A lifebelt is a useful metaphor – it is associated with helping and saving others – but the object can be anything your imagination suggests or that is appropriate for the cohort/objective. This kind of exercise asks the participants to design an object with special features that are useful to a specific type of person or situation – it is useful for quickly understanding participants' opinions about and knowledge of a certain subject. When the participants are not part of the group of people for whom the object is designed, it becomes an exercise in empathy. When the participant is one of the people for whom the object is designed, it is an exercise in selfdiscovery that allows them to talk about their own needs and desires in the third person.

Requirements:

A worksheet with a visual theme that reflects the assignment and plenty of space for the participants to write notes. Generally speaking, this type of exercise works best towards the end of a session when the participants have been working on the subject for a while and they can draw – at least in part – on the output of previous exercises for inspiration.

Example assignments:

- 'Create a lifebelt for XZY (type of person) to help them ZXY (the objective).' The worksheet could be a large drawing of a lifebelt with four segments (each representing a different type of help) and space to write in.
- 'Create a shop for XZY (type of person). What are the features that make it perfect for them? What kinds of articles does it sell? What services does it provide? When is it open?' The worksheet could be a big sketch of a shop to be completed by drawing content with captions.
- 'Create a personal robot for XYZ (type of person). What does the robot know? What can it do? What tools can it use? When is it useful and why?' The worksheet could be a large drawing of a robot with empty captions indicating various parts to write in (more caption spaces, more characteristics).

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Example assignments:

- ‘Create the perfect holiday for XZY (type of person). What kind of holiday is it? What location? What activities? What amenities and services? What companions?’ The worksheet could be the two mostly empty sides of a picture postcard to be completed – one part image and the other part written description of the characteristics of the holiday.

Outcome:

When reviewing the outcome, you must try to understand (and help the participant understand) why something is considered valuable and the problem it solves, not just how it solves it.