

BALANCE CARD

– talking about imbalances, challenges and possibilities

The aim of the 'Balance Card' exercise is for participants to get the opportunity to speak about how illness has affected their lives and daily routines. The cards can help create clarity by letting participants talk about the imbalances they experience. Dialogue with others helps them identify their own challenges and thus their opportunities for change.

Each card has a quotation and a theme. There are theme cards for: The Balancing Person (cyan); Bodily Infirmities (bordeaux); Lowered Bar (orange); Challenging Relationships (blue) and Changeable moods (red). The pictures and theme enable various types of association to be made whilst the quotations give specific examples of the theme addressed by the card. The cards thus appeal to those participants who prefer pictures as well as those who prefer text and quotations.



Minimum 30 minutes



27 picture cards with text split into five themes. Table space.

Alternatively a white board that participants can stand around.



Individual reflection

Group dialogue



Link to the theory on The Balancing Person

STEP BY STEP

1. The educator introduces the aim of the exercise: To verbalise the changes experienced by participants in their day-to-day lives due to their illness.
2. The picture cards are placed on the table so all can see them. The educator may possibly opt for one theme to be worked on.
3. Participants should now have the time to view the cards for a while, possibly pick own relevant cards.
4. The educator's role is then to control a process in which everyone gets the chance to say something about the various cards. The most important thing is for participants to stick to the overall theme, whilst the quotation should be regarded as an example of the broader problem. If participants feel 'locked into' the picture or quotation, the educator will need to show that the theme can be broadened. For example it is not only a question of saying no thanks to food. It can also mean saying no to candles as a COPD patient or refusing an invitation if they do not have the energy to go out.
5. The educator can use 'what/how' questions to try to get participants to open up more - "What do you mean by that? How did you feel about that? What did you do then? How did you react?" The exercise also invites questions to move the discussion from the individual level to the more general: "What can we learn from that? What can you do in a situation like that? What could you do differently another time?"
6. It is important that this does not become a therapeutic process but a discussion that all participants can benefit from. It is therefore up to the educator to ensure there is a balance between discussions on the ordinary and general level and individual and specific goals.
7. The educator rounds off each subject when it has been exhausted by participants or when it is time to introduce a new topic.
8. The educator concludes the exercise by generalising the group's discussions on imbalances and asking participants to consider the suggestions made about ways of achieving better balance.