

MY ILLNESS AND ME

- challenges associated with illness and medication

The aim of the 'My Illness and Me' exercise is to help participants to clarify how they think and feel about having a chronic condition and especially the associated medical treatment. The exercise consists of a series of cards with quotations that point to the challenges that can be experienced by people with a chronic illness. The challenge cards are split into five themes relevant for patients with a chronic illness: personal issues (lilac), socio-economic issues (red), treatment-related issues (blue), illness-related issues (bordeaux) and issues relating to the health service (orange). Participants select the card they feel is relevant for their experience. The colour code of the selected cards indicates the areas where participants have special challenges.



Approximately 10 minutes to identify cards
At least 40 minutes for the whole exercise



36 challenge cards, relevance cards and task cards for each participant
Good table space
'Goal and Plan' sheet, writing implements



Can be used for introductory talk
Individual
In pairs (person beside)
Group dialogue



Use the 'Goal and Plan' exercise for the second part of the exercise
The same type of exercise as: 'Goal Game', 'My Eating Habits' and 'Exercise Challenges'

STEP BY STEP

1. The educator introduces the aim of the exercise: To identify and verbalise individual participants' challenges associated with illness and medication.
2. Each participant gets a set of cards with challenge statements.
3. The educator takes a set and uses that to give instructions.
4. The "I have challenges with...." card is placed on the table.
5. The cards with "Relevant " and "Not relevant" are placed below.
6. While providing instructions, the educator uses the cards to show how it works.
7. The educator may for example say: "You have all got cards with different statements on the challenges you may face as part of your illness and medical treatment. Split the statements into two piles on the table - one with " Relevant" and the other, "Not relevant".
8. When all the statements have been allocated, participants choose 3 - 5 cards from the "Relevant" pile that they feel are the most important.
9. If they do not feel their experiences are covered by the statements on the cards, they can write their own statements on a piece of paper.
10. The exercise continues when everybody has selected 3 - 5 cards – some participants may possibly need a little help from the educator.
11. Participants should now pair off to tell each other about their choices. By comparing their cards, they can also discuss what they understand them to mean and why they have selected them.
12. The educator may conclude by getting pairs to present what they have been talking about.
12. A Part 2: The exercise can continue with 'Goal and Plan', with participants each selecting 1-3 challenges that they would like to work on in the process.
13. A The educator can conclude the exercise with participants telling the group what they would like to work on in the learning process.