

Hypothetical Criteria: a brief review

You have been asked to expand on the use of hypothetical criteria for sociometric explorations. Describe scenarios when hypothetical criteria are particularly beneficial to groups.

A hypothetical criterion on a survey is a question which describes a situation, setting or activity which is outside the everyday reality of the respondents, one which has little likelihood of actual engagement. The question calls for the participants to imagine a situation outside the usual role repertoire of the group and to make choices based on possible responses. The purpose of using a hypothetical criterion is to have the group members warm up to roles they have outside of the usual role relationships and to explore their imaginative or fantasy sociometry. It can lead to an exploration of wished for relationships, and the need for surplus reality explorations.

Example 1: A group member has explored an abandonment theme and the director has had the protagonist identify persons from their life who could come into the scene and take the role of responsible and loving parents. Following the sharing you notice there are a number of people still warmed up to this issue. A question can be posed to the group: Imagine you are feeling isolated and lonely. Your own parents are busy and haven't noticed you and what you may be needing from them. If you could have two group members be your parents for ten minutes and give you their undivided attention, whom would you choose? The sociometric choices made can then be used for an accommodation exercise.

Example 2: Think of one of your favorite leisure time activities which involves having others join you. Whom in the group do you choose to join you in this activity? List in order of preference. This is an example of a role cluster (leisure activity) exploration. Some time in the future there may actually be an opportunity for people to be engaged in a leisure activity together; however, it is not part of their regular role repertoire. This exploration can give the leader and the group a picture of an underlying sociometric structure of an informal network involving social roles. It also gives an indication of the range of choices over the group from highly chosen to not chosen on the criterion.

Example 3: The village you live in has been bombed. Adults have been asked to work in teams of four to provide security watches for three-hour rotations at night. Choose the other three people from the group with whom you most want to share the night watch rotation. This hypothetical criterion uses a scenario which could be investigated via sociodrama. The roles involved in providing security can open the discussion of the protector role and sharing the role of protector with others. It also focuses the group members on working as part of a team and accesses their "best

guessâ€• of whom they want to team up with to share a major responsibility.

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