TRUST EXERCISE (Paradigm-breaking methods)

The trust exercise can be applied for various purposes. In the context of the green transition, its aim is to examine the forces related to change, such as collaboration and resistance, and to consider ways to influence them.

Through the exercise, health and care participants explore roles related to change and the dynamics of change agents. This enables discussion about what happens in collaboration and resistance, and how to react and respond to these forces. Specifically, it considers how collaboration can be strengthened, how to navigate and tack in resistance, and how solutions can be found when there is resistance. Participants can then reflect on their own feelings and the dynamics of the change process, finding ways to promote collective progress and support the process of change.

What is required:

- Openness and trust: Participants are required to be open to change and each other's roles, and to trust their pair, especially when one person is blindfolded and relies on the other.
- Physical and mental readiness: The exercise requires physical participation, so participants need to be able to move and not to move, being guided by others. This may also evoke emotions that need to be addressed.
- Willingness to examine resistance: The exercise highlights possible elements of resistance in the change process, so participants are expected to be able to handle possible difficult emotions and resistance safely.
- Ability to discuss and reflect: Participants are required to be willing to engage in discussion and reflection on how change progresses and what collaboration and resistance mean in practice.

Level of difficulty: 3

Time required: 20-30 minutes

Materials:

- No special equipment, space to move

Participants: 4-40 people. At least 4 people, but more is better.

How to use:

1. Pairing up: Participants are paired up, with one person blindfolded and the other acting as a guide.
2. The guide leads the blindfolded person around the space, helping them navigate obstacles and ensuring their safety.
3. Roles are swapped when instructed by the facilitator.

4. Discussion and observation: The pairs reflect on what happens during the movement together. Metaphorically, they observe movement in leading change and being led.
5. Observation of movement and rhythm: The pairs experience and notice that a new environment or change situation can be unfamiliar and uncertain. During movement, attention is drawn to rhythm and recognising a common rhythm.
6. Transition to a larger group: The pairs combine into groups of four and create a trust exercise where no one leads but they aim to build a collective bodily movement.
7. Discussion on what happens when movement stops or goes in different directions: metaphorically, they discuss how common movement, rhythm and direction are found.

When to use:

- When dealing with change or collaborative relationships
- This exercise can be useful when discussing leadership, change management and the various stages of team work in an organic way

Why to use:

- To identify and address challenges related to collaboration
- To promote mutual understanding and development

How to document:

- Record the key observations and metaphors from the discussion

The roots of the method can be found here: Theatre director, dramaturg and pedagogue Augusto Boal describes numerous theatre-based methods in his book "Games for Actors and Non-actors" (2005), and this is one of them. It can also be linked to the following theoretical perspectives: Kotter's change management model (1996), which emphasises the importance of trust and a shared vision in change; Luhmann's trust theory (2000), which addresses the role of trust in cooperation and information sharing, and Granovetter's weak ties theory (1973). The weak ties theory highlights the importance of networks in sharing information and support, which is essential in environmental partnerships.

Further information:

Boal, A. (2002). *Games for actors and non-actors* (2nd ed.). Routledge.