



Trans-sitting through Life

Dear Facilitator,

Thank you for choosing to work with *Trans-sitting through Life*.

Trans-sitting through Life is a toolkit designed to support your advocacy efforts primarily to sensitise cisgender heteronormative individuals over 18 years of age about the life experiences and challenges faced by transgender persons. (That said, this toolkit could be an activity used to engage with queer and transgender persons too! It is up to the facilitator to decide.) This game at its core is designed to bring the group closer by creating relatable and empathetic moments with one another. This toolkit is designed as a game with over 80 different situations that transgender persons face in their lives related to different aspects including school, college, workplace, health and personal relationships including family, friends, partner, among others. The intention is to support your sensitisation session with an interactive experience for the participants, enabling them to better understand the struggles, joy and lived realities of transgender persons. This toolkit enables all players of this game to think about different situations in a transgender person's life by playing as someone identifying as being within the transgender umbrella.

This is a toolkit that is available in creative commons to all those who facilitate sensitisation sessions on the lived realities of transgender persons. In addition to the 80+ instances, this toolkit allows for other context/country-specific instances to be included by the facilitator to elicit certain situations that may not be available in this published version. The PDF document with the cards to play this game, also includes empty cards that can be filled up with other situations. This toolkit has been designed in an open format to collate as many instances as possible from different cultures, contexts, countries and in different languages.

Please note that it is advisable for this toolkit to be used only by facilitators familiar with and sensitised about the lived realities of transgender persons. It may not be effective for facilitators who have no experience working with the LGBTIQ+ community.

Overview and Instructions for the game

- Potential audiences: Corporates, organisations - for profits and nonprofits, schools, professionals like lawyers, health professionals, government officials, LGBTIQ+ community, and other audiences that the facilitator/s may find appropriate. This toolkit is designed for audiences over 18 years of age
- It is essential that the facilitator reads through every card in this toolkit to understand and envision the potential ways in which each situation can play out during engagement. This could vary depending on the audience group in every session.
- This board game can be played with 4-6 players per board. It may also be played on a single board with a larger group to illustrate some examples to facilitate a sensitisation session about the lived experiences of transgender persons
- Duration: The game along with post-game discussion will require about an hour to an hour and half depending on the number of players.
- The board required for this activity is available as a downloadable PDF <find name>
- The document with the card containing specific instances related to school, college, workplace, personal relationships, health etc, is available as a downloadable PDF <find name>
- Each player would need something to represent them on the board. Choose any object that you would like to use as a marker to move through the board. Some examples: pen, eraser, coin, feather, colours, pen caps or anything that you think you could use to move through the board. These are mere examples. Feel free to have fun and make it as personal as possible for each participant in the group to find a marker for themselves!
- Each player may need a sheet of paper and pen
- Each player has 4 lifelines to support them with a challenge that they may face while moving through different experiences on this board - 1) Lawyer 2) Internet 3) Community organisation 4) Queer-friendly counsellor (Note: If need be, feel free to add any additional lifeline to your version of the game depending on your audience.)
- The game would require either a dice or chits of paper with numbers from 1-6 written to be used in place of a dice to help the players move through the board and also for use while choosing the specific cards for each category
- Start the session by explaining the difference between sex, gender identity and gender expression. Introduce transgender as an umbrella term including many different identities. Explain concepts like passing as a certain gender, gender expression of individuals independent of gender identity and / sexual orientation before starting the game
- Once the above concepts are explained, it will be useful to begin the game with a trigger warning so that members in the audience who may be experiencing different kinds of mental health concerns are aware of the different kinds of situations that may be discussed during the course of the game – sexual harassment, domestic violence,

bullying, among others. This trigger warning will be essential and useful since every player will be playing this game as a transgender person. Further, please inform them about the kind of support that you will be able to provide them, in case of an emergency. This will allow them to take an informed call about participating in the game or to skip it.

- Each player chooses a number between 1 to 6 and plays the game as a person with the specific gender identity assigned to that specific number. Before beginning the game, the player will read out the definition of the specific gender identity. The intent here is to introduce the players to 6 different gender identities in the transgender spectrum.
 - Gender Identity 1 - **Agender**: Agender, non-gendered, or ungendered is an identity under the nonbinary and transgender umbrella terms. Agender individuals find that they have no gender identity, although some define it more as having a gender identity that is neutral - <https://nonbinary.wiki/wiki/Agender>
 - Gender Identity 2 - **Non-binary**: Non-Binary (a.k.a enby; NB) – Is a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine – identities that are outside the gender binary. (<https://www.sapphokolkata.in/>)
 - Gender Identity 3 - **Trans woman**: Transgender woman (also referred to as a transfeminine person) – (noun) A person assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman. (<https://www.sapphokolkata.in/>)
 - Gender Identity 4 - **Trans man**: Transgender man (also referred to as transmasculine person) – (noun) A person assigned female at birth who identifies as a man. (<https://www.sapphokolkata.in/>)
 - Gender Identity 5 - **Gender fluid**: Gender fluid is a dynamic gender identity where a person may identify with any position in the gender spectrum at any given point of time. A person who is gender fluid may have different quotidian experiences across several gender spectra. (<https://www.sapphokolkata.in/>)
 - Gender Identity 6 - **Gender queer**: A gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid). Genderqueer people may think of themselves as one or more of these genders, and they may define these terms differently; may combine aspects of various gender identities in the spectrum (bigender, pangender and more); not have a gender or identify with a gender (genderless, agender); move between genders (genderfluid); or other-gendered; includes those who do not place a name to their gender having an overlap of, or blurred lines between, gender identity and sexual and romantic orientation. (<https://www.sapphokolkata.in/>)
- The facilitator can engage with the players and the group by probing them to reflect on the definitions shared, their thoughts on it, etc.
- The players may now begin the game by choosing a chit or roll a dice and use the number on the chit/dice as the number of steps to move through the board.

- The board has boxes coloured in blue and pink. Blue denotes trans pain in this game and pink denotes trans joy. If a player lands on a pink box with a specific theme, (eg. school, college, workplace etc.) the player has to roll the dice or pick a number to decide on the card number of the specific theme and understand their circumstances. Similarly, the player will choose a number if they land on a blue box to pick a card of the specific theme.
- In case you don't have paper to make chits or a dice, person A can stand behind person B and use their fingers to denote different numbers from 1 to 6 continuously. Whenever Player B says STOP, person A can stop counting and reveal the number on which they have stopped. That number will then be used to move through the board.
- In case of a challenge (trans pain - blue cards), the player may choose a lifeline to respond to the challenge. All situations may not need a lifeline to get them through it. Ask them to either note down what they feel after each situation that they experience on a sheet of paper or they can choose to engage in a discussion within their group after one round of moves by each player in the group
- Independent of the situation being pain or joy, every situation presents possibilities for conversation within the group. Probe the group to have a discussion about any given situation to better understand the different options and possibilities that are available to transgender persons.
- Once a person uses all their 3 lifelines, the game ends for them.
- Alternatively, the game may end once the player reaches the last box on the board - the pink public and private services box.
- Ending the game: Landing on the last pink box may take multiple attempts due to the number that the player may choose. That is intentional. Transgender persons constantly strive to ultimately arrive at that point of joy in their life and it often takes more than multiple attempts! This can open up several points for discussion with the group too!

Trigger warning and managing triggers

- This toolkit is designed to provide a sneak-peak into the different ways in which the lives of transgender persons play out in reality.
- Although this game/toolkit has been designed with a balance between moments of trans pain and trans joy, the activity may trigger different experiences within the group of participants independent of their gender identity or sexual orientation for several reasons. This toolkit includes situations involving familial violence, sexual harassment at workplace, bullying in school and college, among others. These are instances that many experience at different times in their lives independent of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Many times, there may be individuals in the audience/participants group who are under depression or experiencing other kinds of mental illnesses. Open the session with a trigger warning so that everyone in the audience is aware of the kind of situations

that may be presented. Please be mindful of this at all times while using this toolkit to be prepared to handle any triggers that may arise. Remember that these triggers can also create opportunities to bust different myths and stereotypes related to different social constructs going beyond transgender realities. This can create relatable moments between participants enabling them to also empathise with transgender persons going beyond their prejudices.

- Some cards under personal relationships on conversion therapy can be triggering and shocking for some of the participants. The possibilities that can come up during conversation include corrective rape, forced medication, hormone therapy, among others. This depends depending on the group and their level of involvement with the activity at hand.
- Apart from the examples provided above, there may be other cards with other possibilities that trigger participants for different reasons. Facilitators are encouraged to use discretion in providing examples depending on the age and maturity of the participants in the group
- Please also be mindful about the level of support that you can personally provide to any participant in the group during the course of this exercise. It would be useful to manoeuvre conversations away from specific topics like death, suicide if you think that the group may not be able to handle it. The intensity of engagement and the layers that can be unpacked related to any specific aspect related to transgender realities will depend on the audience, their interest, involvement, the bandwidth of the facilitator/s among others.

Formats & Ideas for Group Engagement

Below is a list of ideas for possible group engagement. Please note that these are only suggestions. This toolkit is designed to allow for other ideas to evolve and emerge over time from the facilitator's use of this toolkit with their work.

- If there is a large group of participants in the room, they can be split into smaller groups of 4-6 people to play this game. It may also be useful to have more than one or two facilitators for a large group of audience
- Playing the game in smaller groups will require the facilitator/s to move between groups as participants work in groups to play this game and understand the experience of transgender persons
- The participants may be asked to reflect on their experience of playing the game within their group once all players are done playing.
- At the end of the session, the different groups may be asked to share the experience with all the participants in the room. Such a sharing session can allow for more conversation and engagement with the group about the lived realities of transgender persons

- Independent of the group size, the circumstances presented by every player's move opens up several possibilities for conversation within the group and in the room
- If you choose to play this game with all participants in the room as one group, the facilitator may roll the dice/pick a number and choose to illustrate multiple examples of how a situation may play out to the group
- Each example may present a situation for discussion and engagement with the audience at large
- Finally, in addition to sensitisation, the ultimate goal of this game is to bring the group closer by creating relatable and moments and moments of empatheticity with one another. This might serve as a useful reminder to support you, the facilitator to manoeuvre any difficult conversation to a positive resolution, one with room for empathy and grace!

Thanks again for choosing to use this toolkit to be a partner in your sensitisation efforts. If you have any questions, suggestions, comments or simply wish to share your the experience of using this toolkit, write to brindaalakshmi@proton.me

Acknowledgement & Credits

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