

Various Practices of Saying Stop and Noticing Overwhelm

By Barbara Moon

If possible this works best standing across from each other if there is room. If not it can be done sitting knee to knee with a hand. Instructions for each are here. No words as you walk, only to say Stop or discuss feelings after. Facilitator can have group do each exercise more than once.

STANDING: Make two lines with each person having another across from them. If possible be about 7-10 steps away for each scenario. The facilitator will give directions for each scenario to everyone, then say OK, or Go.

1.) Person A walks **slowly** towards Person B with a neutral expression. Person B can think of someone they are not fond of or that they don't like to be with. As Person A is moving, Person B says, Stop, or holds up their hand when Person A is as close as they want A. **It could be after one step.** This is to practice a boundary, saying No or Stop, and for Person B to notice how their body feels and to say Stop. Discuss how it felt.

2.) Switch Person A, the walker, back up and repeat.

3.) This time same lines—purpose is to **observe** “overwhelm.” Person A will walk towards Person B and **Notice** when Person B wants to say Stop (starts to feel overwhelmed) by watching face, eyes, body language. Then Person A stops. No words, no signal. Discuss if Person A was correct.

4.) Switch Person A, the walker, back up and repeat.

5.) Same lines. Person A will have an **angry face** as they walk across. Do first with saying Stop, (As in Number 1.) Discuss feelings. Switch Person A. (Facilitator, watch for anyone who might get triggered by the angry face.)

6.) Same lines. As in Number 3.), Person A will have an **angry face** and **Notice** overwhelm in Person B by watching face, eyes, body language, etc. then Person A stops. No words or signals. Discuss if correct. Switch Person A.

7.) If time, everyone can switch to a different partner across from them and do Numbers 1 and 3 again.

WITH HAND: (By Chris Coursey) Sit about an arm's length away. You will use a hand instead of walking across.

1. Like Number 1.) above except Person A starts with their open hand at their own shoulder, palm out and moves the hand slowly toward the other person's face. Person B can be thinking of someone they don't like to be with. Person B says Stop. Notice how the body feels. Discuss feelings. Do three or four times then switch who is moving their hand.

2. Use hand to do as Number 3.) above where Person A watches eyes, face, etc. to notice when to stop without a word or signal. Do three or four times. Discuss feelings then switch.

3. Person A makes a claw with their hand and a snarly face. Person B says Stop. Do three or four times then switch.

4. Person A makes a claw with their hand and a snarly face. Person A watches, (like Number 3.) above, for when to stop with no words or signal. Discuss feelings. Do three or four times then Switch.