

# The Art of Connecting



## OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the elements of “neuroception” that define relationships with other people.
- To learn tools to accompany people and improve communication.



## AXES:

Collective emotional intelligence



## AGE GROUPS:

Adults



## STEP BY STEP DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

### >> 1st part of the activity: (in)communication laboratory

Organise the group into pairs. One member (A) of each pair should think of a difficult, sad, embarrassing or outrageous situation they have recently experienced (that does not involve excessive trauma or distress) to tell their partner about. The B's are given slips of paper with instructions, which they should “act but not exaggerate, as naturally as possible” while A tells him/her/they about his/her/their problem. The pairs are distributed around the space so that they can converse comfortably, with some intimacy. A tells his story and B will act according to the instructions he received while listening to the story.

Once they have finished sharing the story, the participants are brought together. Ask each A: How did you feel while talking about your situation? Why? After each participant A shares their feeling, ask their respective B: Can you read your instructions out loud? We switch roles and repeat all steps

### >> 2nd part of the activity: Co-regulation

Based on the perceptions of A-members, introduce some aspects of non-verbal communication, neuroception (see Theoretical framework).

Discuss aspects of the functioning of the autonomic nervous system, concerning cardiac and arterial regulation, breathing, sweating, functioning of internal organs, changes in perception and hormonal changes that occur in situations of well-being, confidence and social bonding versus what happens in situations of stress, when people feel ignored, rejected, despised, forgotten, misunderstood...

Ask the group:

To what extent can we support and help balance others through our gestures, voice, posture, gaze? What gestures serve to foster reciprocity, restoration and recovery when another person is under stress?

### >> 3rd part of the activity: Bodies and links

Explain how changes in the way we speak: rate of speech, pauses, low or high-pitched tone, how we look at the other person, eye contact, our physical posture and gestures, hand movements, and even our breathing, can communicate a connection with the other (or can communicate disconnection).

Provide each participant with a photocopy of a human figure and two felt-tip pens (one blue and one green).

Ask them to do the following:

- 1) Think of people in your environment who help you feel connected and calm. Which means do they –consciously or unconsciously– use (i.e. gaze, some specific body posture, a characteristic of the voice)? ... With blue write the name of the people identified on the figure and which non-verbal communication channel you think they offer you. Write it on the part of the body to which it is related.

In a second step, invite the group to:

2) Think about what non-verbal communication channels they themselves can use – or already use – to help other people (adults or students) to regulate themselves. Mark them in the figure. Think of names of people you would like to accompany (at this point, it is advisable that colleagues help each other to identify capacities that the person himself/herself/ herself has not detected, as many times we are unaware of how we support others non-verbally).



## MATERIALS:

- Photocopies of instructions (see attachment 2)
- Photocopies of human figure: 1/person (see attachment 1)
- 2 coloured markers for each participant



## METHODOLOGY: Neurosciences of Education

## PREPARATION

Have a large space, allowing couples to talk without disturbing each other and the group to meet and exchange experiences.



## TIPS FOR THE PERSON DOING IT

This exercise is good preparation for the Active Listening exercise. It is recommended to read the materials suggested in Theoretical framework to understand what happens to us when we are under sympathetic (flight, fight), dorsal parasympathetic (isolation, freezing) or ventral parasympathetic (connection, regulation) Autonomic Nervous System functioning. It is recommended to understand: What does "co-regulation" mean? What elements of our behaviour, gestures, voice, movement can influence other people without us realising it?



**WHEN:**  
Any time



**DURATION:**  
1h30m



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

