

OUT OF THE BOX*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

- 🕒 **Time:** 20-30 minutes
- ➔ **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
 - Leave distracting thoughts behind them.
 - Start to explore the concept of thinking “out of the box.”
- ✂️ **Materials:**
 - Laptop
 - Projector with screen or blank white wall
 - Markers
 - Participant booklet to follow lesson and power point
- 🔪 **Preparation:**
 - Use tape to make large (about 3'x3') “boxes” scattered around the floor. (Alternatively, you could tape down large pieces of newsprint.)
 - You will need enough so that 3-5 participants can go to each box. (Example: if you have 15 participants, you will need 3-5 boxes.)

Instructions

1. Give each participant an index card. Acknowledge that most of us come to a training with many things on our minds: the traffic, the work we’re not getting done while we’re here, a conversation we’ve recently had with someone important to us, etc. This is a chance to leave these thoughts behind. Tell participants to write down whatever is in their minds right now. They don’t need to be elaborate, a few words for each distracting thought will do.
2. After everyone is through, point out the “boxes” scattered around the room. Tell them that they are going to get to go to a box and briefly discuss as much or as little of what they’ve written on their cards as they like. Encourage them to simply listen to one another, and offer support.
3. Break the group up into groups of 3, 4, or 5 and send each small group to a separate box. Give them about 10 minutes for discussion.
4. Tell the groups that they can now put their issues aside. Go around the room with a small box, and ask participants to put their cards in the box. At the end of the day, if they want them, they can go pick them up again.
5. Before they go back to their seats, ask how it feels to be in their box. Comments may include: cozy, safe, connected to the others in the box, separate from those outside their box, isolated, “boxed in.” Hopefully some of the comments will indicate a desire to get out. Tell participants to return to their seats.
6. Ask: How many of you have ever heard the expression “thinking outside the box?” What does it mean to you? Explain that this usually indicates a need to think about things without typical categories or constraints, and involves creativity and vision.

* This module comes from the Lotus Women’s Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.

OUT OF THE BOX

7. Part of the process of becoming culturally competent means looking at our own “boxes.” We frequently box ourselves in with assumptions, beliefs, and stereotypes. All of these--assumptions, beliefs, and stereotypes--are normal, human ways to manage information. However, all of these benefit from being challenged and questioned from time to time. Our challenge in this workshop is to let ourselves look at what’s in our boxes without being defensive, and question whether it’s time to let go of some old beliefs and behaviors, and make room for some new ones.

* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from the Lotus Women’s Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.