

Third Side Roles Exercise¹



Teaching Note

Materials Needed:

- Overhead projector or LCD set up
- Copy of room set up and Third Side Roles diagram as a transparencies (See below)
- Magic markers, flip charts, flip chart stand
- Copies of the different roles and their detailed explanation from the third side website. www.thirdside.org

Purpose of the Exercise:

- To give participants an overview of the roles and distinctions between the roles.
- To give participants a language with which to discuss the Third Side and a person role in it.
- To take the often daunting feel of the Third Side out and show people it is possible to contribute to the Third Side in their own unique manner
- To promote the participants self awareness, particularly with regard to their tendency toward certain roles.
 - To enable participants to identify with a role that is most comfortable for them and to explore that role in more detail with other like minded individuals. Also, provide the challenge of “selling” the role to the others in the room.
 - To enable participants to identify with a role that they believe to be the most challenging for them and to discuss this in detail with others of like mind. Also, to be pushed to articulate why this role is difficult for them.
- To exhibit the need for a collective approach that uses the strengths of the different people involved. Also to emphasize that you are not alone in these endeavors and seek out those that can compliment your efforts.

Exercise Time required:

The instructor will require 25 minutes to introduce the exercise. The participants should be given 95 minutes to conduct this exercise and debrief it with the instructor. The breakdown is as follows:

1. Overview of roles with explanations and distinctions – 15 minutes

¹ There does not appear to be an ideal number to do this exercise with. It is preferable if there are at least 10 people, but that is not necessary.

2. Overview of exercise and room setup by instructor – 10 minutes
3. People getting into the role they are most comfortable with, read role, development of 2 or 3 selling points – 20 minutes
4. Brief description of role and presentation of 2 or 3 selling points – 25 minutes
5. Switch positions to the most challenging role, read role, development of 2 or 3 reasons why the role is so challenging – 20 minutes
6. Presentation of 2 or 3 reasons why the role is challenging – 15 minutes
7. General debriefing – 15 minutes

Total time: 120 minutes

Brief overview of the exercise:

1. Overview of the roles
2. Overview of the exercise
3. People getting into the role they are most comfortable with related activities
4. Presentation of role and selling points
5. Switch positions to the most challenging role
6. Presentation of challenging role
7. General debriefing

Detailed instructions for running the exercise:

1. Overview of the roles:

In this section the instructor should discuss the different roles using the Third Side Role Matrix (See below). The instructor should briefly provide an overview of each role, their key tasks, and how a role is distinct from the others.

2. Overview of the exercise:

Explain:

- This exercise is designed to:
 - A. Give participants an overview of the roles and distinctions between the roles.
 - B. To promote the participants self awareness, particularly with regard to their tendency toward certain roles.
 - To enable participants to identify with a role that is most comfortable for them and to explore that role in more detail with other like minded individuals. Also, provide the challenge of “selling” the role to the others in the room.
 - To enable participants to identify with a role that they believe to be the most challenging for them and to discuss this in detail with others of like mind. Also, to be pushed to articulate why this role is difficult for them.

Explain:

- To engage in this exercise, you will begin by selecting a role that you feel most comfortable with based on what you have heard thus far (Note: Add that you may feel comfortable with a few roles, but for the purposes of the

exercise please select just one). Once you have selected one of the ten roles please look around the room and find that role posted on the wall. Please take your chair and go sit under that sign. (Note: Before beginning wait until everyone is settled).

- Now that everyone is at their chosen role please take 5 minutes and read the role in more detail. After having done that you will get together with the others in the group and develop 2-3 “selling” points to convey to the others about this role and why it is so important. The points can be anything – think of yourself as a salesperson or advocate for the role and you are trying to help other people understand why it is so important.
- (Once people have their 2-3 points) We will now go around the room (start with any role) and hear the different advocates. (Note to instructor: Comment as necessary on what people say and push them to explain themselves in detail.)
- (After all have made their presentations) Now we are going to switch and have you go to the most challenging role. Please do so now and then read the role. After having done that please congregate with the others at that role and highlight the 2 or 3 biggest challenges this role poses to you as a group.
- (Once people have their 2-3 points) We will now go around the room and hear the different reasons why people find a role challenging. (Note to instructor: Comment as necessary on what people say and push them to explain themselves in detail.)
- After all have made their presentations you can shift to the general debrief. People can either stay where they are or come back to the larger group setting.

General Debrief:

Below are some questions to ask. One important point to get into the discussion at some juncture is the need for a collective approach that uses the strengths of all the different people involved. If you are not interested in a role or don't feel it best matches your skill set you can seek out allies to play those roles. Also to emphasize that you are not alone in these endeavors and seek out those that can compliment your efforts.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that the roles not only need to be played to increase the likelihood of success, but they should also act in concert. This takes coordination – something no one role is tasked to do but that does require some type of orchestration. This might come from someone playing a specific role or someone else who is not playing a role at all but simply focused on the coordinating element. In the past this has often been referred to as a meta mediator.

The following are some questions to ask:

- What did you take away from this exercise?
- Was there anything challenging about this for you?
- Were you surprised how many or how few people went to a role that was challenging for you? What does this suggest to you? (Note for instructor:

This might be a good place to introduce the notion of interconnectedness of the roles.)

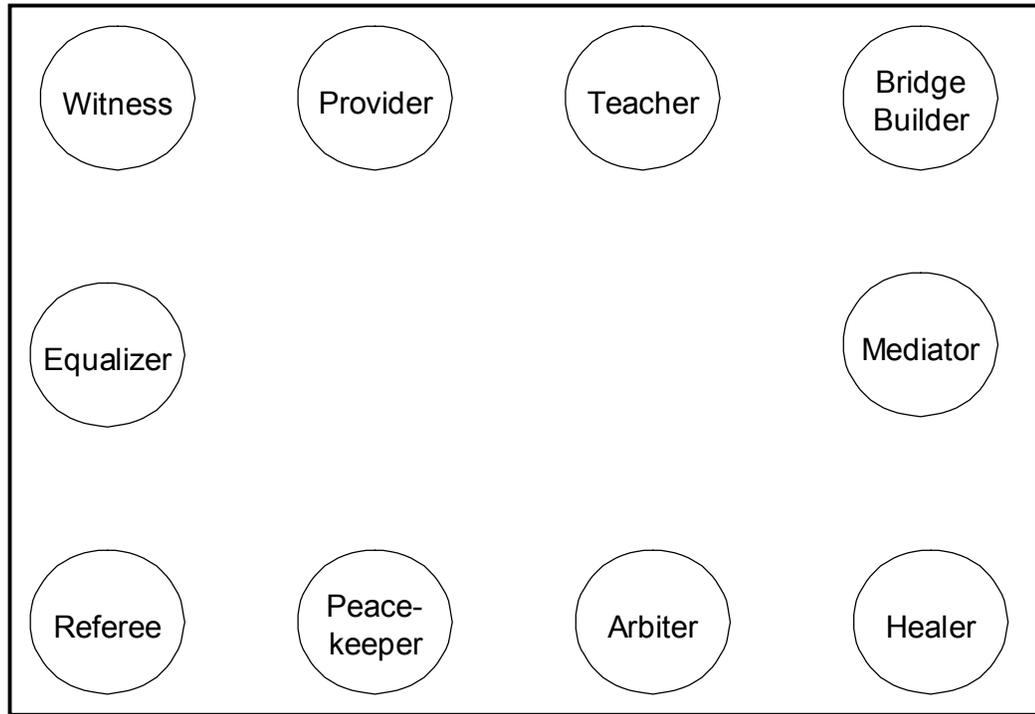
- If nobody went to a particular role. What do you make of the fact that nobody went to the _____ role?
- Which presentations did you find most persuasive? Why were they persuasive?
- What did you learn about a role that you did not know previously?
- Did anyone have their perception altered about a role? Why?
- Through this process can you think of other roles that might be created to aid in a conflict?
- OPTIONAL IF THERE IS TIME. Let's personalize this for a moment. Take a minute and think of a conflict where the Third Side could assist the parties. Now think about the different people you know who could play different roles. Map those out and see what roles could be played and which are missing? How important are those missing roles? If important, think more broadly about who might play those roles?

Diagram

NOTE: Square signifies room

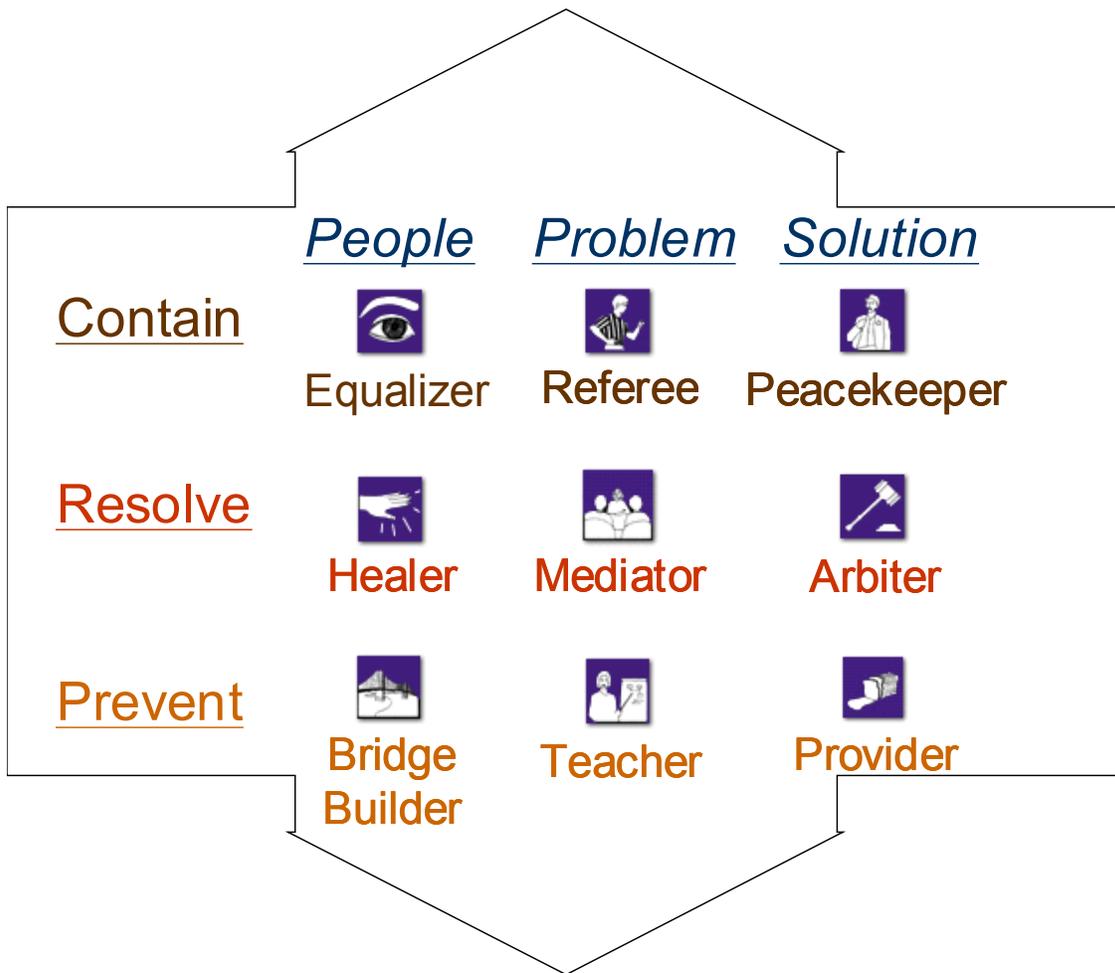


Room Set up



10 Roles of the Third Side

Meta Mediator



Witness

