

Barnga Discussion Guidesheet

Phase 1: Description

You can start by saying: "Before we start the analysis of the experience, we will start by learning what you have felt during the game: frustration, happiness, sadness, pride, etc."

- What did you think or felt during play?
- What were your greatest frustrations and/or successes during play?

The question of whether or not different groups received different versions of "Five Tricks" will come up. If it comes up early, acknowledge it but do not make an issue out of it; press for other frustrations, successes, etc. After a while, ask how many think there were different versions. Then, ask those who do not think so (or who are not sure) what else might have been going on. Eventually, confirm the truth, but not before there has been ample opportunity for alternate explanations to emerge. Help them understand that each person interpreted the few discrepancies very differently, and that this caused a great deal of consternation, frustration, uncertainty, suspicion, etc.

Phase 2: Analysis

Several major problems arose during Barnga. You can summarize these quickly.

- During the game, all did their best, but each group was operating out of a different set of circumstances and ground rules.
- Many discovered or suspected that the rules were different, but didn't always know what to do to bridge the differences.
- Even if people knew how the rules were different, they didn't always know what to do to bridge the differences.
- Communicating with the others is difficult; it demands sensitivity and creativity.
- The above statements are true even when almost everything is the same and the differences are very few or hidden. In fact, when the differences are very few or hidden, it may be even more difficult to bridge them than when they are many and obvious.
- In spite of many similarities, people have differences in the way they do things. You have to understand and reconcile these differences to function effectively in a group.

Questions to ask to participants:

- What specific real-life situations does Barnga simulate?
- Have you ever had an experience where there was a "rule difference" you didn't know about?
- How did your view of things change once you became aware of the difference? In retrospect, how could you have handled the situation differently?
- Are there any similarities between the Tournament rules in Barnga and real-life "movement rules"?
- Choose a couple of the situations. What are the underlying causes of the problems which they raise?
- What does the game experience suggest about what to do when you are in the situation in the real world? (Try to remember what you did during the game that "worked.")
- What is the most important thing you have learned after playing Barnga?