Counterspeech Against Right-Wing Extremism: Training Responses And Other Intervention Strategies

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in:	Weimar
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	From the NGO Netzwerk für Demokratie und Courage Further reading: netzwerk-courage.de (German)

Workshop Itinerary

1. Quick ice breaker (Getting acquainted)
2. The Intervention Spectrum (Short input)
3. Sharing of experiences (Talk in pairs)
4. Training for intervention (live theater)
5. The 5-Step-Technique (Input and exercise)
6. “The Ball Bearings” (Quick reaction game)
7. Checkout

¶ This documentation is an instrument for the follow-up of the seminar/ workshop and is therefore not intended for third parties.

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1) Icebreaker: Sociogram

You positioned yourselves relative to each with regard to the following questions:

Creating a map:
- Which countries do you come from?

Creating molecules/groups of similar answer:
- What subjects do you teach?
- What type of school do you teach at?

Creating a spectrum of intensity:
How much does it challenge you to react to dehumazing statements and hate speech?

2) The Intervention Spectrum

When reacting to statements or actions we often go for whatever suits us best. We presented a model of escalating strategies that helps us understand better how much more we can do. The model's four categories of interventions are sorted from (rather) benevolent to (rather) confrontational and they come with specific risks and chances

	Persuade	**Create doubt**	**Create support/ adress onlookers**	**Stop and suppress**
Risks	end up in a back-and-forth without results	create a platform	Be more alone	bystanders might show solidarity
Chances	create a postive (counter) image	unmasking of the hateful statement	gain allies	create a safe space

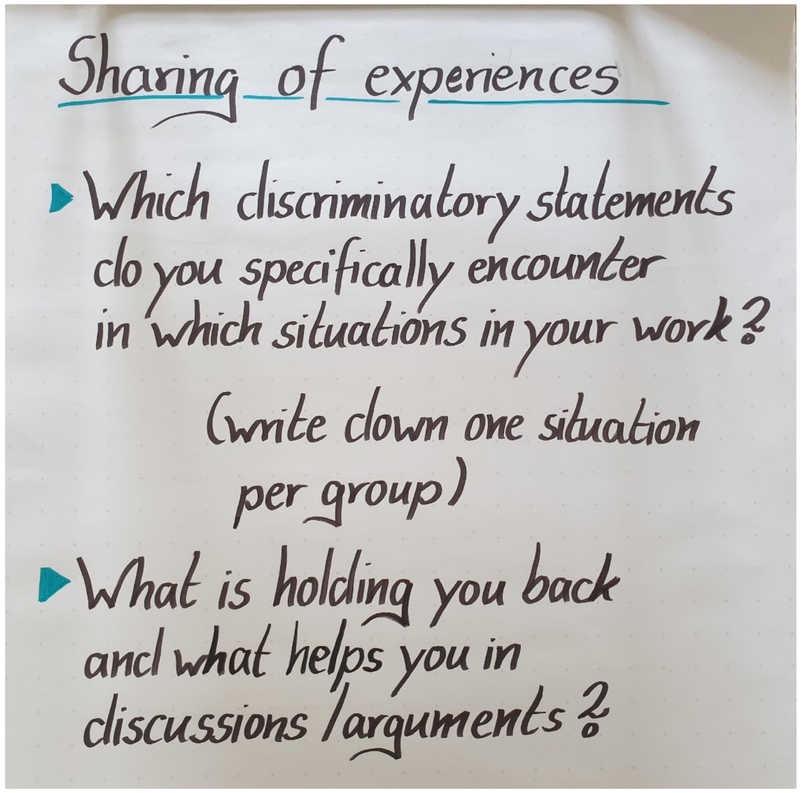
3) Knowledge sharing

You talked in pairs about
“Which discriminatory statements do you specifically encounter in which situations in your work?”

and

‘What is holding you back and what helps you in discussions/arguments?’

You wrote down your thoughts. In the following round we found that talking about those experiences, things that hold us back etc. can be helpful and relieving.

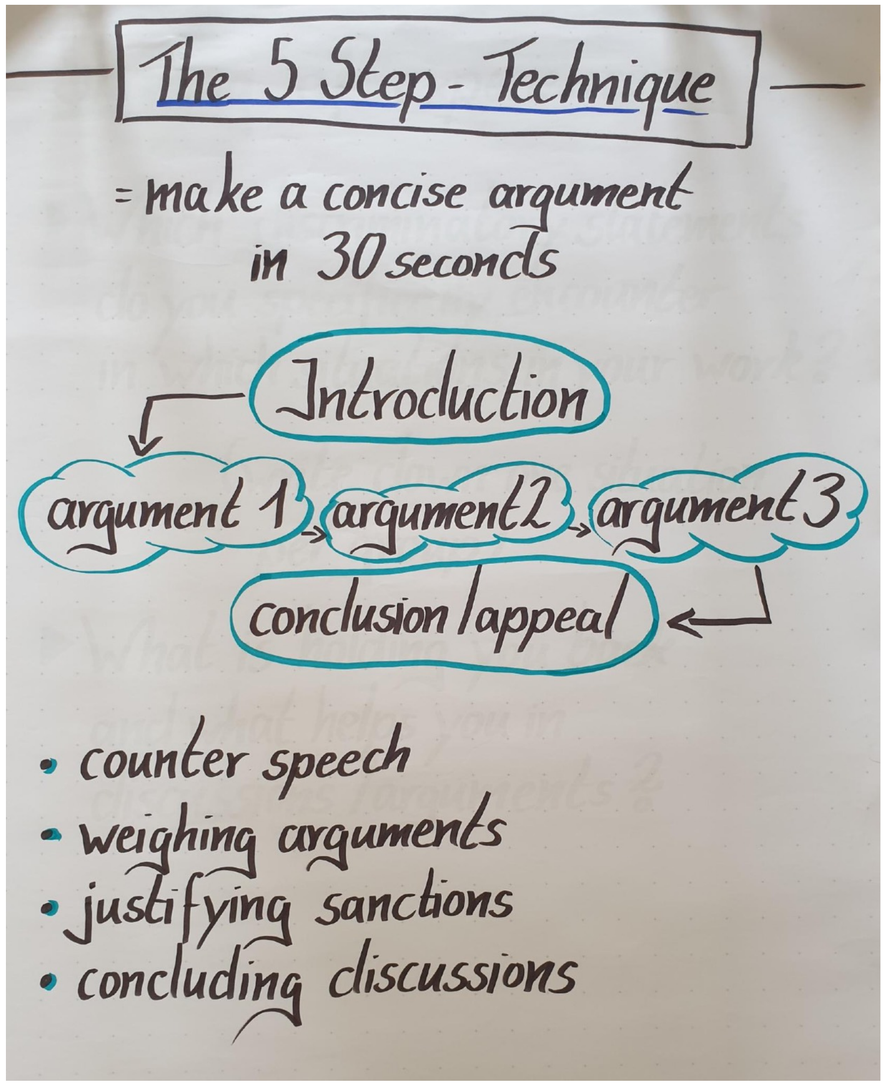


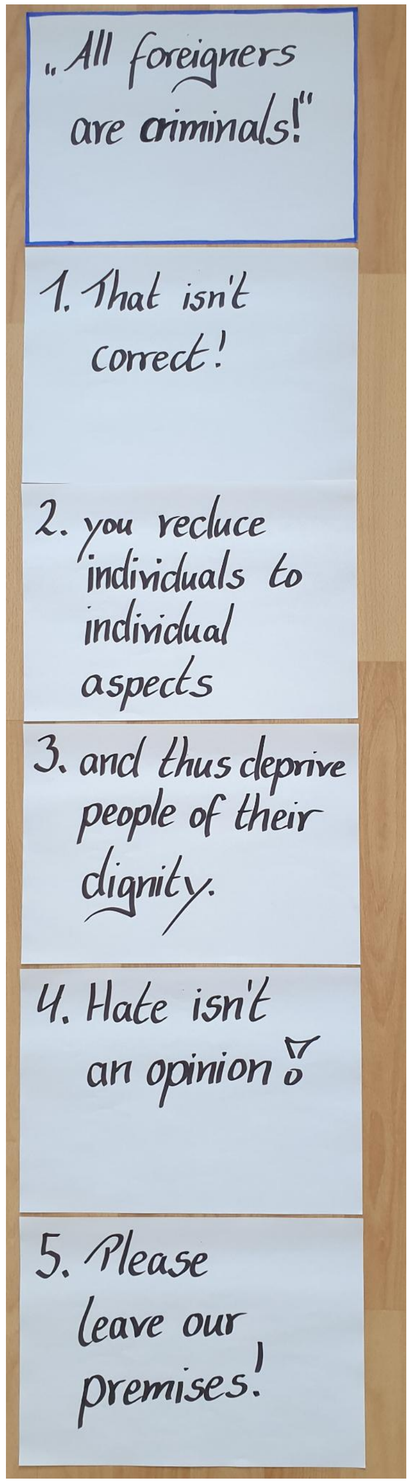
4. Training for intervention (live theater)

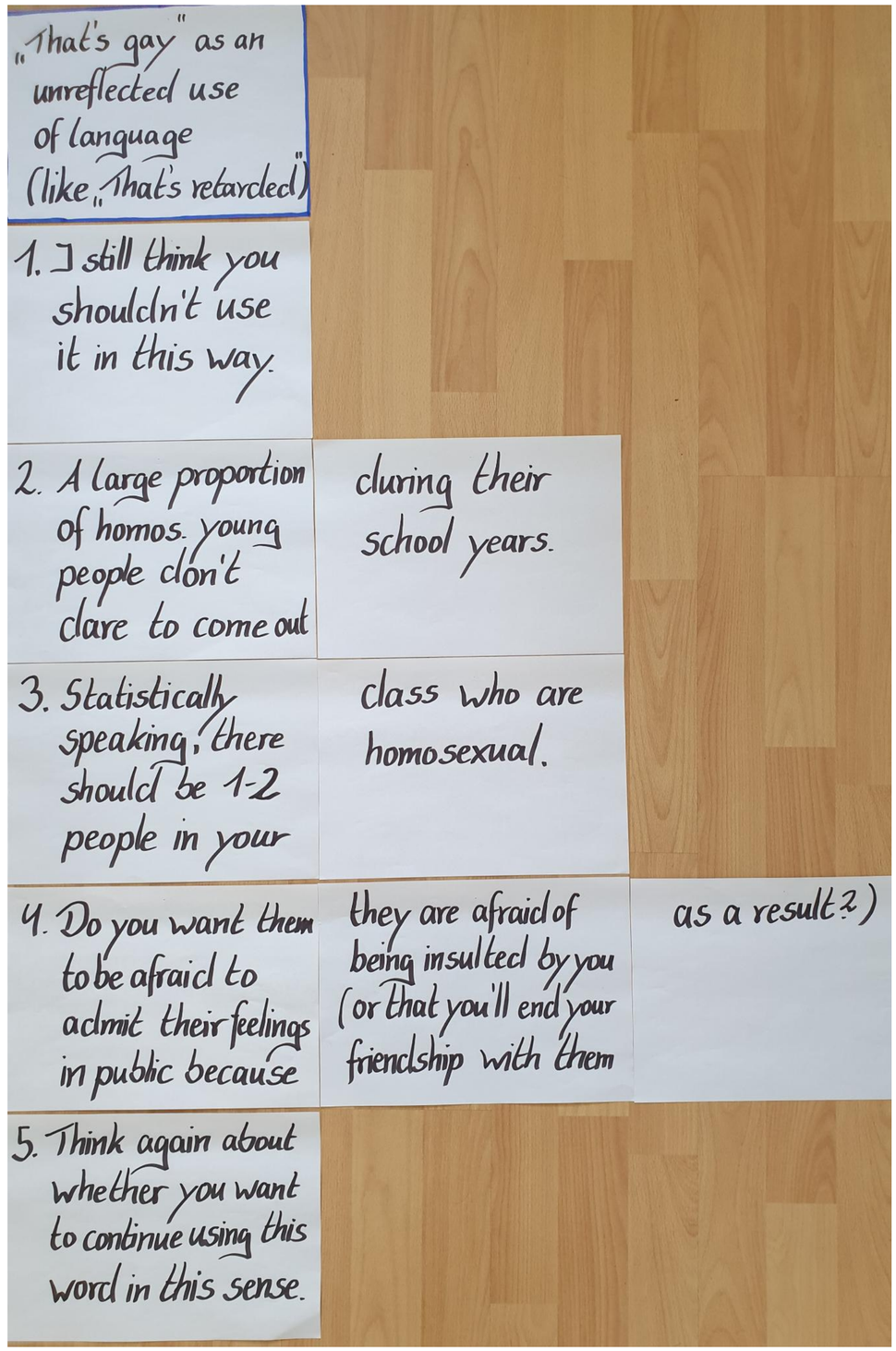
We did a short intervention training in the group. In the scene two teachers talked to a student who made homophobic and mysogonistic claims in the school.

5. The 5-Step-Technique (Input and exercise)

We presented the 5-Step-Technique (or 5-sentence-method), and gave you two examples where we answered bigoted or hateful statements.
Then you created you own arguments with the 5-step-technique.



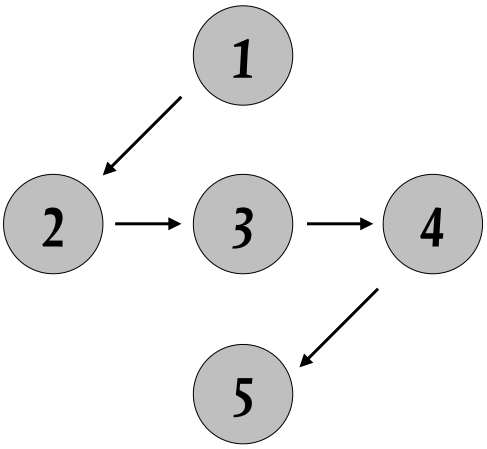




The 5 Sentence Method

This is a way to organize persuasive statements that can be used in different situations. The basic idea is to break your statement into five parts that, when put together in order, make a clear and convincing point. The shorter the better! Focus on you strongest points and don't be afraid to leave some things out. Different versions of this five sentence method usually change how the parts connect to each other. One simple version that uses a straightforward chain of arguments works like this:

(1) Introduction, connection to something previously said, can be emotionally colored



(2) First argument

(3) Second argument

(4) Third and strongest (most convincing) argument

(5) Conclusion sentence, ideally specifying what you want to happen now.

What the method can be used for

Counter-speech, making a statement, justifying sanctions, weighing arguments against each other, summarising and concluding discussion, formulating and justifying an appeal. Becoming clear about your own position, communicating your own position to others...

Example

Goal: I want to comment on deportations to Afghanistan and invite a more thoughtful discussion.

(1) I'm upset by the wrong ideas people have about deportations to Afghanistan:

(2) First: Afghanistan is not safe.

(3) So sending people there violates basic rights, like the right to be safe from harm.

(4) And it's not okay even if it's "only" criminals that are deported, because they also have human rights.

(5) Therefore, I don't want us to continue trivializing this violation of rights.

Writing your own Five Sentences

When designing and writing your own Five Sentences, it can be helpful to think 'backwards':

(a) "What is my goal, what is supposed to happen?", goes in the 5th sentence

(b) "What sequence of arguments is necessary for this?", goes in the middle section, i.e. sentences 2-4.

(c) "What could a motivating introduction look like?", belongs in the 1st sentence.

Goal or intention

Introduction/Connection

(1)

Middle Section/Line of reasoning

(2) (3) (4)

Conclusion/Call to action

(5)

“The Ball Bearings” (Quick reaction game)

For the closing moments we did an exercise called the “Ball Bearings”. You stood in two circles forming pairings between the inner and the outer circle. People in the inner circle chose one of the statements we earlier collected on the wall, the outer circle reacted to it. Each round took about 45 seconds. This was mainly to train to talk quickly and maybe forcefully at your “opponent”. Some of you tried to use a 5-step or intentionally chose on the four strategies from before to specifically pursue.

Checkout

In a quick checkout-round you told us how you felt after the last exercise and the workshop in general. Open questions were also answered.