



Parallel Universe.

- Useful for:** producing new ideas or for gathering insights about a cohort's experience of some specific thing.
- Very good for:** self-discovery, empathy, invention.
- Good for:** realization, cohesion.
- Type of exercise:** team or individual.

General description:

These kinds of exercise propose an imaginary place where everything is the same as the world the participants live in except for one (or more) thing that is different. This could be something missing, something added or something that acts differently – obviously the thing, or things, you change are pertinent to the objective of the session. These kinds of exercise ask participants to rethink things they take for granted. Almost anything that asks, 'What if...' fits into this category. This exercise is particularly revealing when the participants are a heterogeneous group and can be formed into homogeneous teams, the different points of view of different cohorts is highlighted in their diverse interpretations of the proposed change. It is also a great innovation exercise as it can produce highly unusual ideas.

Requirements:

A worksheet that describes/visualizes that which is different in the parallel universe and provides space, or spaces, where the consequences of this can be noted. Multiple spaces with captions can invite reflections on the effects of the change on specific things or people.

Example assignments:

- 'In a parallel universe, you can remotely control your patients for exactly 120 seconds every day, how do you use this time?' The worksheet could be an elaborate remote control machine that needs to be programmed with time, action, etc.
- 'In a parallel universe, you can be in two places at once for 10 minutes every day, how do you use this time?' The worksheet could be a double calendar entry.
- 'In a parallel universe, everybody is absolutely convinced of XXX and YYY, how does this affect ZZZ?' Or the opposite: 'In a parallel universe, nobody believes XXX and YYY, how does this affect ZZZ?'
- 'In a parallel universe, people don't have mouths or digestive tracts. How do you administer drug X?' The worksheet could show a drug packaging to be completed with the formulation and next to it a prescription to be written out.

Outcome:

When presenting, teams correctly tend to explain only the alternative reality they have imagined, sometimes it is important to ask how this differs from today and maybe ask why certain positive changes can't be implemented in our universe. As usual, look out for congruence and incongruence in the different teams' worksheets, use group conversation to explore the significance and importance of the diversity.