

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

This exercise is a simple way of demonstrating how the slightest change in a person's normal behaviour can create a feeling of discomfort. It helps us to understand why we experience resistance to change in the workplace, especially when we try to change people's behaviour.

WHEN TO USE THIS EXERCISE

This exercise can be used during any safety meeting, training session or course. It is particularly useful when discussing or conducting training on 'resistance to change' in safety procedures, safety programs, etc. This exercise can be conducted with a group of any size.

DURATION

Allow 5 to 10 minutes.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

None.

HOW TO RUN THIS EXERCISE

- STEP 1** Inform the participants that we are now going to do an exercise called 'Behavioural Change'.
- STEP 2** Ask the participants to put their hands down by their sides. Then ask them to fold their arms.
- STEP 3** Once the participants have had their arms folded for 5 to 10 seconds ask them to unfold their arms and place their hands down by their sides again.
- STEP 4** Ask the participants to fold their arms again but this time they must do it with their opposite arm on the top.

NOTE: The participants usually need to make a few attempts at this as some of them try to figure out which arm they previously had on top. You might want to add some light-hearted comments on this process.

Once everyone is sitting there with their arms folded, ask one or two of the people who tried a couple of times: "*Are you right now?*"

Get responses.

- STEP 5** Conduct the group discussion.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

There are a number of meaningful points that can come out of this exercise. Examples of questions that can help you to process this exercise include:

- How did you feel with your arms folded the opposite way?
- Did it feel comfortable?
- If it felt uncomfortable, why? (Was it awkward, etc.)
- Are there any similarities between this exercise and what we ask people to do in the workplace e.g. follow a particular Safe Work Procedure? Can you give me some examples?
- Do you think people would feel more uncomfortable if we asked them to make a big physical change? Why?
- So far we have mainly focused on physical changes and how people feel about them. How do you think people would feel if we asked them to make a major intellectual change, a change to the way they think?
- Do you think this may create some resistance? Why?
- How can we summarize the main points that have come out of this exercise?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

ATTACHMENTS

None.