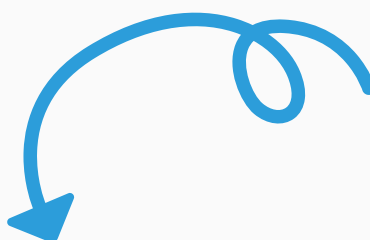


# NARRATE Exercise

Units In-House	Units In-Company	Skill cards
We Knowledge	We Knowledge	Ability to face and learn from failure Collaboration Communication Empathy Self-awareness Teamwork

## Diamond ranking

Minimum number of participants	Average time length	Individual setting	Group setting	Special Equipment	Online
1	30-40 min	Yes	Yes	No	Yes



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## 1. Overview

This exercise for couples and groups helps to explore and clarify value positions and feelings towards a particular topic or problem, taking into account the specific needs of PoAS. The Diamond Ranking (also known as “9 Diamonds”) allows for the equal and inclusive participation of a diverse group of members, including those with autism. It helps to explore and clarify value positions, feelings and thoughts regarding a particular topic, problem or idea. It is usually used with nine written statements, but can be adapted with drawings, photographs or objects for those with literacy difficulties.

While the resulting ranking is a source of data in itself, the annotations, explanations, and dialogue while interpreting the ranking provide an even richer source of interpretation and meaning.

## 2. Aim / Benefits

- Extract constructs and facilitate conversation: this exercise helps PoAS express their thoughts and feelings in a clear and structured way. Visualising and classifying items, statements, objects or images make it easier for them to communicate their ideas. The method can be used with participants of any age and education level, including those with literacy difficulties. In fact, the use of images, photographs or objects makes the exercise accessible even to PoAS who may have difficulties with verbal or written communication.
- Organise and clarify priorities: categorising items helps you explore and clarify priorities in relation to a specific topic, challenge or problem. This is especially useful for PoAS who can benefit from visual structures for understanding and organising information. The clear, visual structure of the exercise encourages active participation and helps reduce the social anxiety that they may feel in group situations. Knowing what to expect and having a visual overview of the tasks can make the experience less stressful and more manageable.
- Promote mutual understanding: discussing choices with other participants helps PoAS to make explicit their general relationships with which they organise knowledge. This process facilitates mutual understanding and allows the group to analyse and compare different perspectives. Exercise helps PoAS practice and improve their communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal. The need to explain one's choices and listen to those of others promotes the development of dialogue and active listening skills.

### 3. Training tier and UNIT(s) related

This exercise can be related to Inhouse Training:

- Unit WE, because it can help professionals **deconstruct their role of power** towards PoAS as it facilitates conversations and promotes mutual understanding.
- Unit KNOWLEDGE as it can help professionals support PoAS in developing **career prospects** by clarifying and organising priorities.

This exercise can be related to In-Company Training:

- Unit WE as it can help enhance the **Person-Organisation Fit (PO Fit)**.
- Unit KNOWLEDGE, as it can help professionals explore **the explicit and implicit power dynamics in the workspace**.

This exercise can be used to practise the following skills reflected in the skill cards: Face and learn from failure, Collaboration, Communication, Empathy, Self-awareness, and Teamwork. Diamond ranking is an effective exercise to explore and clarify positions of value and feelings towards a particular theme or problem. When done in a group, it enhances collaboration and mutual understanding by allowing participants to openly discuss their perspectives and priorities.

The ability to face and learn from failure helps participants understand that differing opinions are not setbacks but opportunities for growth.

Collaboration is key as it encourages everyone to work together towards a shared goal, valuing each other's contributions. Effective communication ensures that all voices are heard and understood, facilitating a deeper exchange of ideas and insights.

Empathy allows participants to appreciate and respect the diverse viewpoints within the group, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.

Self-awareness enables individuals to reflect on their own values and feelings, and how these influence their positions in the exercise.

Teamwork brings all these elements together, creating a cohesive group dynamic where members can collectively navigate and resolve the theme or problem at hand.

Through Diamond ranking, participants not only clarify their own values but also gain a better understanding of their peers, leading to enhanced group cohesion and a stronger sense of community. This exercise promotes constructive dialogue, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving, making it a valuable tool for both personal and professional development.

## 4. How to do the exercise

### **Step 1 / Preparation:**

*(MANDATORY to explain how to prepare and introduce the exercise to the participant)*

### **Introduction of the theme:**

The professional clearly introduces the theme or topic of the exercise, using simple and direct language to help PoAS. Visual aids, such as images or photographs, may also be used to aid understanding. For example, if the topic is "how to manage stress," visual examples of stressful and relaxing situations can be shown.

### **Explanation of the purpose of the exercise:**

The purpose of the exercise is explained clearly and concisely: *"We are doing this exercise to understand what is most important to you about [topic]."*

### **Diamond classification:**

It is explained that participants will have to classify 9 statements, images or objects in a diamond formation. A visual example of the diamond formation can be shown to clarify the concept.

### **Instructions on how to craft affirmations:**

If the statements need to be defined by the group, the professional provides clear instructions on how to write or draw them. Visual aids and coloured sticky notes can be used to facilitate the process.

### **Discussion rules:**

Clear and simple rules are established for discussions, emphasising the importance of mutual respect and consensus. For example: *"Listen to others, talk one at a time and try to find an agreement."*

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## **Step 2**

### **Identification of statements:**

Statements can be defined by the facilitator or by the participants. If participants have to write down statements, they can use drawings, photographs or objects to represent their ideas.

### **Use of visual aids:**

In case of literacy difficulties, images or objects can be used to represent the statements. Each statement is accompanied by a short title or number for ease of reference.

### **Grouping and reducing statements:**

If the group is large, the practitioner can group the statements into 9 main categories to simplify the classification process.

## **Step 3**

### **Formation of pairs or groups of three:**

Participants are divided into pairs or groups of three to work together.

### **Classification and discussion:**

The groups rank the statements using diamond formation. They must agree on the ranking and explain their choices. The top rows represent the most important elements, while the bottom rows represent the least important ones.

### **Discussion annotation:**

After completing the ranking, groups write down their comments and explanations for each statement, using visual aids if necessary.

## **Final step / Conclusion:**

### **Presentation of diamonds:**

At the end of the exercise, participants can present their diamond rankings to others. This presentation can be done verbally or simply by showing the completed leaderboard.

### **Sharing and analysis:**

Rankings can be shared with the group for collective discussion, or they can be used for individual analysis. Discussion notes and annotations are critical to understanding the reasoning behind each ranking.

## 5. Debrief

After the session, the results can be analysed both at the level of individual pairs or groups of three, and at the group level. It is important that the debriefing is structured and conducted in a safe and predictable environment, to minimise anxiety and maximise participation and understanding of PoAS (People on the Autism Spectrum).

After the session, the results can be analysed:

- On the level of individual pairs or threesomes;
- On group level

The professional can analyse the annotations and reflect upon them and ask the pairs/threesomes to add on their own reflections. Each pair or trio is asked to add their reflections in a written or visual format. A reflection form with clear and simple questions can be used to guide the process, avoiding metaphors or ambiguous language.

The questions which are relevant in this process are:

- Why were the statements, drawings, photographs or objects classified in this way? What are the reasons why they were classified this way?
- What ideas/thoughts/feelings do you have after the classification agreement process?
- Has the process changed the ideas/thoughts/feelings you have about the topic, problem, challenge or solution?
- What did you learn by compiling the ranking?

When working in a small group, another option is to ask the pairs/threesomes to present the ranking to the group, and explain their ranking and annotations. Couples or trios are asked to present their ranking to the group. This can be done using visual aids, such as posters or slides, to aid understanding.



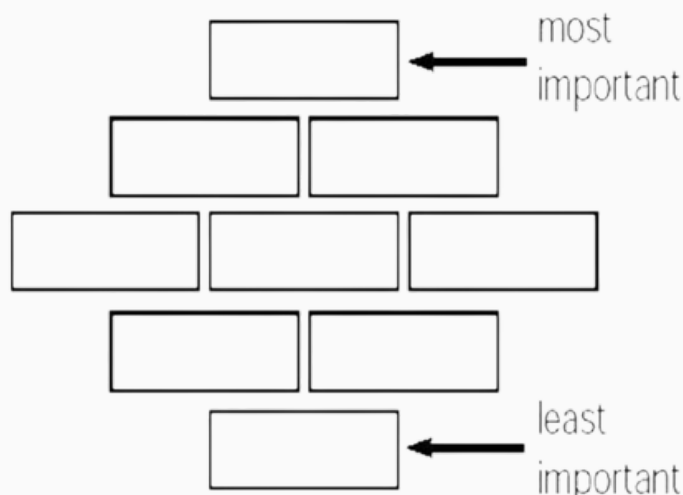
Each group explains their ranking and annotations, using simple and clear language. The professional can reflect on the presentations first and then ask the group to share their thoughts, feelings and reflections. Alternatively, the group can first be asked to express their reflections, and then the professional can analyse and summarise the information collected.

The questions which are relevant in this process are:

- Why were statements, drawings, photographs or objects classified in this way? What are the reasons why they were classified this way?
- What ideas/thoughts/feelings do you have after the classification agreement process?
- Has the process changed the ideas/thoughts/feelings you have about the topic, problem, challenge or solution?
- What did you learn by compiling the ranking?

## 6. Specific materials

- A3 sheets
- Post-It
- Pencils/Pens/Markers
- The diamond ranking model like the one shown below:





## 7. Tips and Tricks for use Inhouse

**Create a sensory-friendly environment:** ensure the room is comfortable and free from sensory distractions. Use soft lighting, reduce noise levels, and avoid visual clutter. Provide sensory tools such as stress balls or noise-cancelling headphones for participants who might need them.

**Use clear instructions and visual aids:** give clear and concise instructions, supplemented by visual aids like diagrams or written steps. Provide handouts with the exercise steps and key points to help participants follow along.

**Facilitate group formation:** form pairs or small groups based on non-sensitive characteristics to ensure participants feel comfortable and included. Clearly explain the basis for group formation and encourage a positive, inclusive atmosphere.

**Respect communication preferences:** allow participants to choose their preferred mode of communication, whether verbal, written, or through visual aids. Be patient and give participants ample time to express themselves.

**Provide structured support:** be available to offer support and guidance, helping participants stay focused and engaged. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and listen actively to others.

**Promote empathy and understanding:** foster an atmosphere of empathy by encouraging participants to listen with an open mind and respect each other's experiences. Highlight commonalities and shared experiences to build connections within the group.

**Use visual tools for ranking:** use large A3 sheets, post-it notes, and markers to make the diamond ranking visible and interactive. Ensure that visual aids are clear and accessible to all participants.



## 8. Tips and Tricks for use In-Company

**Educate and sensitise employees:** conduct training sessions on autism awareness and inclusivity to ensure all employees understand the needs and strengths of autistic colleagues. Promote a culture of empathy and respect within the company.

**Adapt the workplace environment:** create sensory-friendly spaces within the workplace where employees can feel comfortable and focused. Ensure the environment is free from potential sensory overload triggers, such as loud noises or harsh lighting.

**Facilitate inclusive group activities:** form groups based on common work-related topics or interests to ensure relevance and engagement. Clearly explain the exercise's purpose and structure to all participants, emphasising inclusivity and mutual support.

**Encourage open communication:** promote a culture of open and respectful communication, where all employees feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and experiences. Provide multiple channels for feedback and discussion, ensuring everyone can participate in a way that suits them.

**Provide ongoing support:** offer resources and support for employees who may need additional help during the exercise, such as one-on-one sessions with a facilitator. Encourage managers and team leaders to be attentive and supportive of their team members' needs.

**Promote team building and collaboration:** use the exercise as an opportunity to strengthen team dynamics and foster a collaborative work environment. Highlight the importance of teamwork, communication, and empathy in achieving common goals.

**Use technology for visual ranking:** Use tools like digital whiteboards or collaborative software to facilitate the diamond ranking process. Ensure that all participants have access to and understand how to use these tools.

## 9. On-line version

The exercise can be done online and essentially follows the same steps as indicated for the offline version. In this case, you need to use a video conferencing tool to allow participants to discuss. While in a face-to-face context the professional can monitor and interact with multiple groups at the same time (and guide them in the process), online this can only be done using a video conferencing application that allows you to create breakout rooms, in which couples or groups of three can discuss among themselves, while the professional listens. For a group of 2 or 3 people the breakout options are not necessary.

When using the diamond ranking template, to ensure that all participants can interact with the template, it is recommended to use a tool that allows for brainstorming and collaborative work, such as Google Doc, Google Presentation, Miro Board, Lino, in short, any tool that enables collaborative work. The only thing the professional needs to do is create the model

## 10. Bibliography – Sitography

- Clark, J., (2012), Using diamond ranking as visual cues to engage young people in the research process. Qualitative Research journal.
- Clark, J., Laing, K., Tiplady, L. and Woolner, P. (2013) Making Connections: Theory and Practice of Using Visual Methods to Aid Participation in Research. Research Centre for Learning and Teaching, Newcastle University.

Collaborative redesign with schools:

- <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/mediav8/cored/files/diamond-ranking/Diamond%20Ranking%20Instructions%20English.pdf>
- Professional Development Service for Teachers (2015) Active Learning Methodologies