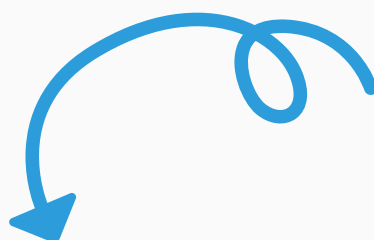


NARRATE Exercise

Units In-House	Units In-Company	Skill cards
Ownership Relationship	Relationship	Collaboration Empathy Teamwork

Guardian angel

Minimum number of participants	Average time length	Individual setting	Group setting	Special Equipment	Online
6	It may vary a lot	No	Yes	Yes	No



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1. Overview

This group exercise is designed to give each participant the opportunity to care for another member of the group by acting as a "Guardian Angel" in a discreet and non-invasive way. For autistic people, this approach respects sensitivity to social interactions and the need to manage relationships comfortably. By allowing them to experience social support without feeling pressured or exposed, the exercise aims to create a reassuring environment where they can explore the support role in a safe and positive way.

2. Aim / Benefits

The main objective of this exercise is to facilitate the practice of social support through the discreet and respectful action of the "Guardian Angel". For PoAS, this can help:

Develop personal agency: Promote the ability to subtly care for others, respecting their space and preferences. This approach allows them to explore the support role in a controlled and comfortable context, where they can develop confidence in their abilities to positively influence others.

Facilitate solution-oriented learning: Encourage creative thinking and problem solving in discreetly helping your "protégé." PoAS can benefit from the opportunity to face practical challenges and develop innovative strategies to support others without feeling overwhelmed by direct social interactions.



3. Training tier and UNIT(s) related

This exercise can be related to Inhouse Training - Unit OWNERSHIP, as it could be used by professionals to train themselves on a **solution-focused mindset** while supporting PoAS in their journey to entering the labour market.

This exercise can be related to In-Company Training - Unit RELATIONSHIP, as it could help professionals training both companies and PoAS use their power to establish **effective and constructive working relationships**.

This exercise can be used to practise Collaboration, Empathy, and Teamwork reflected in the skills cards. Guardian Angel is a group activity where participants care for another group member (the protegee) without their awareness. This activity trains individuals to support each other subtly, fostering a culture of mutual assistance and trust. Participants practise empathy by understanding the protegee's needs and coordinating efforts effectively without drawing attention. Collaboration is key as team members work together harmoniously, utilising their skills to ensure the protegee feels supported and included. Teamwork is essential in orchestrating this activity like a well-coordinated effort where each member plays a crucial role in providing assistance covertly. By honing these skills, participants enhance their ability to collaborate, empathise, and work as a cohesive team, promoting a supportive environment where everyone's contributions are valued and nurtured. This activity not only strengthens interpersonal bonds but also cultivates a sense of unity and shared responsibility within the group, contributing to overall team cohesion and effectiveness.



4. How to do the exercise

Step 1 / Preparation:

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

Each participant writes their name on a piece of paper, which is folded and placed inside a bag. Subsequently, each participant randomly extracts a piece of paper from the bag, thus becoming the "Guardian Angel" of the person whose name was drawn. If a participant draws their name, they have the option to put the piece of paper back in the bag and proceed with another drawing.

For PoAS it is crucial to establish the duration of the exercise in advance. We recommend choosing a significant period of time to allow participants to interact and act in a subtle and unobservable way in the role of Guardian Angel of their protégés. This planning allows for a deeper experience and allows participants to gradually develop confidence in their social support abilities.

In practice, this exercise can be integrated with other group activities. For example, it can be carried out during group sessions where the Guardian Angels support their protégés in the various activities and exercises proposed by the facilitator. This approach facilitates the development of a supportive attitude, allowing Guardian Angels to lead from the shadows, one step back, fostering an inclusive and empathetic learning environment.



Step 2

During the designated period, each Guardian Angel discreetly undertakes to assist their protégé, without drawing attention to themselves. This involves careful and sensitive action, aimed at providing support without interfering with the autonomy and preferences of the protected person. Guardian Angels are encouraged to show their care through subtle and non-invasive gestures, always respecting the boundaries and needs of others.

Final step / Conclusion:

At the end of the established period, all participants come together to share their experiences. Each participant has the opportunity to talk about what they experienced in the role of Guardian Angel and to share significant aspects of the experience. Next, there is a moment of speculation in which the participants try to guess who was whose Guardian Angel. This phase not only promotes reflection on the lived experience, but also awareness of the discreet social support and empathy manifested among group members.

In conclusion, each Guardian Angel reveals herself/himself by handing over the piece of paper with the name of his protégé, thus revealing the bond of care established during the exercise. This moment not only strengthens bonds within the group, but also the understanding of the importance of sensitive and non-invasive support in daily social dynamics.



5. Debrief

The debriefing phase is essential to allow participants to reflect on the experience of being Guardian Angels in a way that is inclusive and comfortable for PoAS:

Reassuring environment: Create a reassuring and structured environment during the debriefing to facilitate participation and emotional comfort of participants.

- Example: Make sure the space is quiet and free of distractions, offering the choice of actively participating in the discussion or silently observing.

Clear communication: Use direct and simple language to present reflection questions during the debriefing, respecting the different communication methods of the participants.

- Example: Explore the questions one at a time, allowing time to process the answers without undue pressure.

Support personal reflection: Encourage individual reflection and sharing experiences without forcing anyone to reveal more than they feel comfortable with.

- Example: Offer the option to write down responses instead of sharing them verbally, if some participants prefer to communicate this way.

Respect preferences: Respect personal preferences regarding discussion and sharing of experiences during the debriefing.

- Example: Ask whether participants would like to share their reflections in a group or prefer to discuss in pairs or individually with the facilitator.

Positive feedback: Provide positive feedback and support for each contribution during the debrief, emphasising the importance of the Guardian Angels' role in discreet and respectful support.

- Example: Recognize and praise each participant's efforts in being a Guardian Angel, highlighting how this role has contributed positively to the group dynamic.



Adapting the debriefing in this way can help PoAS reflect meaningfully on the experience of being a Guardian Angel, promoting emotional well-being and active participation within the group.

Here are some questions we suggest you ask:

- What was it like for you to support others while trying not to be seen?
- What was it like for you trying to care for your protégé by managing his or her problems?
- What personal resources were you able to apply while helping your protégé?
- How did you feel knowing that you can be supported in a subtle and discreet way?
- How do you feel knowing that you can have social resources to support you? And if you think about it, who among the people you know can be a social resource for you at this moment in your life?
- Imagine being your own guardian angel: how would you act to take care of yourself?

6. Specific materials

- Easy-to-fold paper notes
- Pens/markers
- A bag to hold the cards



7. Tips and Tricks for use Inhouse

- **Create a structured and predictable environment:** ensure the physical space is quiet, organised, and free from unexpected changes. Use visual schedules to outline the exercise's timeline and steps, helping participants understand what to expect.
- **Use clear and concise communication:** provide straightforward, step-by-step instructions using both verbal and visual aids. Use simple language and avoid metaphors or idioms that might be confusing.
- **Sensory considerations:** be mindful of sensory sensitivities and create an environment that minimises potential triggers, such as loud noises or bright lights. Allow participants to use sensory tools like fidget toys or noise-cancelling headphones if needed.
- **Facilitate participation:** encourage participation at a comfortable pace, allowing extra time for responses if necessary. Offer different ways to participate, such as writing down thoughts instead of speaking out loud.
- **Positive reinforcement:** provide consistent positive feedback to reinforce participation and effort. Recognize and celebrate small successes to build confidence and motivation.
- **Preparation for social interaction:** conduct practice sessions or role-playing to help participants feel more comfortable with the exercise. Provide examples of how to be a discreet and supportive Guardian Angel.
- **Emphasise empathy and respect:** teach and model empathy, emphasising the importance of respecting others' boundaries and preferences. Encourage participants to think about how they would like to be supported in similar situations.

8. Tips and Tricks for use In-Company

- **Promote awareness and understanding:** educate employees about autism and the importance of supportive social interactions. Provide resources and training on how to interact respectfully and inclusively with PoAS colleagues.
- **Incorporate into team-building activities:** integrate the Guardian Angel exercise into regular team-building sessions to foster a culture of support and collaboration. Use the exercise to highlight the importance of discrete and respectful assistance in the workplace.
- **Supportive work environment:** ensure the workplace environment is conducive to the exercise, with quiet areas and minimal distractions. Provide flexibility in participation, allowing employees to engage in ways that feel comfortable for them.
- **Encourage reflective practices:** after the exercise, facilitate discussions that allow employees to reflect on their experiences and learnings. Use guided questions to help employees consider how they can apply these supportive practices in their daily work interactions.
- **Provide ongoing support:** offer continuous opportunities for employees to practise and refine their support skills. Create a culture where seeking and offering help is normalised and encouraged.
- **Confidentiality and respect:** emphasise the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of colleagues. Encourage employees to be mindful of their actions and the potential impact on others.
- **Adaptation and flexibility:** be open to feedback and willing to adapt the exercise to better meet the needs of all participants. Ensure that the exercise is flexible and can be adjusted based on individual preferences and comfort levels.

9. On-line version

None

10. Bibliography – Sitography

None