

Step-In Sociometry Handout

What is Step-In Sociometry?

Step-In Sociometry is an action-based method used to explore group members' similarities and differences by inviting participants to physically 'step in' to a designated space (often a circle) in response to personal or professional prompts. It is rooted in the work of J.L. Moreno, the creator of psychodrama, who believed that sociometry could reveal the hidden social connections and preferences within a group.

Why Use It? (Therapeutic Benefits)

- Reveals group structure: Highlights inclusion/exclusion, affinities, outliers
- Builds group cohesion: Fosters shared understanding through nonverbal participation.
- Encourages embodiment: Promotes awareness of self-in-relationship-to-others.
- Respects autonomy: Participants can engage or observe without pressure.
- Supports reflection: Surfaces new insights about group identity, diversity, and belonging.
- Culturally adaptable: Can be used silently, symbolically, or with verbal sharing.

How It Works

The facilitator offers a prompt, and group members step into the circle or central space if the statement resonates with them. Use neutral language. Offer time to step in and step out. Debrief periodically with reflection questions.

Sample Prompts

To explore differences:

- I am someone who prefers solitude.
- I feel energized in large groups.
- I've lived in more than one country.
- I identify as a spiritual person.
- I've experienced professional burnout.

To discover common ground:

- I've been deeply moved by a client.
- I believe in the power of play.
- I value silence in my practice.
- I've had moments of doubt as a therapist.
- I am committed to lifelong learning.

Sociometry: The Science of Social Investigation

I am sharing a reflection about sociometry from my dear colleague and friend, Milton Hawkins, TEP, from a conversation we had on this topic.

To be a sociometrist is like being a social detective (Agatha Christie, Sherlock Holmes). What is being investigated? The obstacles, i.e., cultural conservatives (values, beliefs, traditions) that obscure (block) the human Encounter. Moreno declared the Encounter was (Una cum Uno), i.e., One becoming One. Cultural conservatives (beliefs/habits) interfere with the Encounter. We flow forward as we investigate the values, traditions that conserve (limit) us and prevent us from obtaining our Oneness (Universal Humanity) with each other i.e., Una cum Uno (One becoming One). Step-In Sociometry helps us explore our similarities and ultimately the differences in our role repertoire that block (role locks) us from accomplishing our Oneness, our Journey to the Oneness of Loving Humanity.