Description Critical Incidents Method

Name tool: Critical Incidents Method

When to use? Can be used broadly for example to create a new function, to improve cooperation within a team, etc. The objective of the exercise is to define what is needed e.g. competencies, conditions, attitudes,… to answer the basic question of the exercise, based on 'critical incidents' .

Participants? Between 4 and 10 (ideally)

How to use?

- Define the basic question e.g. 'What does good team cooperation mean for our team?'
- Every group member thinks of concrete and specific real-life examples (positive and negative) of a real situation – not too long ago – that contributed positively or negatively to the answer of the starting question e.g. good team collaboration. It is important to find positive as well as negative examples (when did the team collaborate well in the recent past and when did it fail). It is important that group members played a role in their own examples. Every example is written down on a metacard.
- Every participant brings his/her examples into the group. The facilitator seeks – together with the group – the essence of every example e.g. is the example about communication, is it about respect, time management etc.
- The examples are all clustered around their essence e.g. all examples related to communication are put together on the wall or a flipchart. All examples related to respect are put together etc.
- Next step is to objectivize the examples. E.g. when a group of examples is related to the topic 'communication', then the next question is 'what is critical to achieve good communication?' 'What are the competencies needed? What kind of attitudes? What are organizational conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to communicate better? What are underlying assumptions we need to tackle? Etc.
- Prioritization of the answers (coming out of the former question) is done.
- Next step is the discussion on what needs to be done with the priority list: what needs to be done first? How and who will do what? How and who will follow up?
- A follow up meeting can be planned

Results? More insight in what is needed regarding competencies, conditions,… in order to answer the starting question, and a first step for further action**.** Meer inzicht in wat nodig is op vlak van competenties (kennis, vaardigheden, attitudes),…

Time Investment? Depending on the subject and the size of the group: half a day to one day

Material neededl? Metacards in different colours, flipchart, tape, markers in different colours, a wall in the meeting room that can be used when clustering the examples, prioritization etc.