



Lifeboat Exercises

The Queen Elizabeth III, a major ocean-liner, left the coast of England two days ago. The ship is on its way to New York. There is an international passenger list and the majority of the people have just entered the dining room for lunch. All of the sudden, there is a major explosion in the engine room. Lifeboats are released and the passengers start to board them. The ship is slowly sinking and only one more lifeboat remains. It can only hold six people, but there are ten people on deck.

- African-American activist, second-year medical student.
- Rabbi, 54 years old
- Swedish Biochemist
- Hollywood actress-singer-dancer
- Arab Diplomat
- Japanese accountant, 31 years old
- His wife, six months pregnant
- Brazilian Athlete, all sports
- Hispanic poet, 42 years old
- CIA agent with interpreting skills

The task is to decide which six people will board the last lifeboat and which four will go down with the ship. You will have ten minutes to decide which four you will eliminate. Select your six choices individually, then, as a group, decide on the six that will be saved.

Your Choices:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Group Choices:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Processing Questions:

1. Describe this experience. What was difficult or simple about it?
2. How did you, as an individual, choose who to save? As a group?
3. What was most challenging about this experience?
4. What assumptions did you make about these passengers?
5. What values did you reference in making these decisions?
6. Was it easy to articulate why six people could board the lifeboat and four people had to stay on the ship? Why or why not?
7. Why is this type of exercise beneficial? How can you apply it to your life?
8. Did you learn anything about yourself through this activity? Values? Biases?
9. Have your values changed since coming to college? What values have changed and why? What values have stayed the same and why?