

# Three Pile Sorting Instructions

## What is it?

This activity allows participants to exchange information and discuss common water, hygiene and sanitation practices according to their good and bad impacts on health. The aim is not to test people's knowledge or to correct personal habits, but rather to provide a starting point for a discussion of local hygiene and sanitation beliefs and practices.

## Why use it?

This tool can be used to:

- assess people's understanding of water, hygiene and sanitation practices and the impact on health
- provide a way to explore issues about water, hygiene and sanitation
- start discussions about local beliefs and practices

## How to use it

1. If you intend to use this as a teaching activity with one group then one set of cards is suitable. If you intend to complete this using several groups at the same time, then print out as many versions as you need so that each group has a complete set of cards.
2. Give out the sets of three pile sorting drawings, and three heading cards – one with the word “good”, another with the word “bad” and third with the word “in-between”. (Symbols to represent these qualities are also printed on each card i.e.: smile, sad, no expression.)
3. Ask the participants to sort the pictures into three piles.
  - Good – those which they think show activities that are good for health.
  - Bad - those which they think show activities that are bad for health.
  - In-between - those which they think are activities that are neither good nor bad for health or which they are not sure about.
4. After 20 – 30 minutes ask the participants to explain their selections and why they made these choices. Let the group answer any questions that the other participants raise.
5. Facilitate a discussion on the way the participants have sorted the drawings. This discussion will provide a chance for participants to share what they know with the rest of the group. Clarify any misconceptions about disease transmission routes, and encourage the group to think carefully about the choices moving cards from one pile to another if necessary. The group may realize there are knowledge gaps and look for ways to fill these.
6. Ask the group to consider and discuss the common behaviours in its own community. Ask the group to consider whether these behaviours are similar to any of the good and bad practices it has identified.
7. At this stage or at a later session the group may start to discuss ways of eliminating the bad practices it has identified in its community. Encourage this discussion and have the group keep a record of suggestions made.

## Alternative method

- If two or more sets of three-pile card sorting drawings are available and the group of participants is quite large, the group can be split into two or more subgroups. Each

subgroup then carries out the exercise, and the facilitator encourages a debate between groups on why they made the choices they did.

### **Facilitator Notes**

- It is good to include some drawings which can be interpreted in a number of different ways. This helps to make the activity more challenging and stimulates discussion.
- Don't prompt or direct the choices of the group by giving information. If people ask you specific questions, redirect the questions back to the group for a response. If the group is unable to interpret any one drawing, suggest that it is set aside.
- If the group wants to know how many people practice good and bad behaviours, The Pocket Chart can be used to help find this information.

(Adapted from WHO, 1998)