

Double Agents Workshop: Steven Coles

Double Agents Workshop:
How to bring about change from within
the system

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What is a double agent? My thoughts

- Part of, and makes living from, the dominant psychiatric system
- Disagrees with (many or all) of the dominant values, how distress is thought about and how things are done in services
- Whilst part of the system – tries to alter the system – such as current ways of thinking, values and practices
- Often critically minded staff

Double agents and their advisors (handlers)

- In the workshop there will be questions for:
 - Double agents
 - Advisors / Handlers: People who aren't double agents, but who can advise the agent
- Top secret and sensitive information
 - Only share information you are comfortable with
 - Being respectful of the information that is shared with you

Your mission...

Discuss in groups of 2 – 4 people (try to mix double agents and advisors)

Questions for Double agents and Handlers:

- what do you think needs to change about the psychiatric system? What should the focus of a double agent be? What is their mission?

Tactics, Strategies...

Discuss in 2-4 people:

- If you are a double agent – how do you try to bring about change? What power and / or influence do you have? What strategies do you use?
- Advisor to double agent – what is your advice to the double agent to try to bring about change? What strategies could they use?

Secure doors...and dilemmas

- In 2 - 4 people:
- Double agents:
 - what are the barriers to change? How do you try to overcome them?
 - What are the dilemmas that you face?
- Advisors to double agents
 - What is your advice to the double agent about overcoming barriers? How can they address the dilemmas they face?

Agent debrief?

- Double agents – is there a cost to your role? Emotional? Practical? Career? How do you cope?
- Double agent – what do you think are the costs of being a double agent? What is your advice to the double agent?

How do we know we are not Triple Agents?!

- Triple agents: people who think they are double agents, but in fact are propping up the system. Does this apply to all double agents?
- Iron fist in a velvet glove...
- My hope is that we can we do some good, even if we are compromised
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