

## Activity: Role reflection with the Riemann-Thomann model



<b>Brief description</b>	Participants consider basic human needs for closeness, distance, change and constancy and reflect on their own priorities.
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand individual differences in roles, working styles and communication styles</li><li>• To recognize and appreciate the strengths of different approaches</li><li>• To harness individual differences in order to improve teamwork</li></ul>
<b>Time</b>	Approx. 90 min.
<b>Method</b>	Culturally unspecific; distributive/instructive
<b>Material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worksheet</li></ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>The trainer explains to the participants the four basic human needs according to Riemann and Thomann and emphasizes that each individual possesses all four tendencies, but that these are prioritised differently, and become visible in different contexts.</p> <p>Four tables are prepared, each with an orientation (proximity, distance, change, duration). Participants are divided into four groups and work through the following questions about the basic needs of their table's theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What priorities in terms of working style and conflict behaviour go hand in hand with this basic need?</li><li>• What is the added value/benefit/opportunity of each basic need?</li><li>• How can this need be taken into account and satisfied through collaboration?</li><li>• In which situations/contexts/relationship structures do you yourself strive to satisfy this basic need?</li></ul> <p>The results are recorded in writing. After 15 minutes, the participants are asked to rotate in a clockwise direction to the next table group and to work on the questions related to the basic need there. In the discussion, reference can also be made to the results of the previous group. The process is based on the World Café method.</p> <p>After four rounds, each group has worked on each basic need and the results are presented in the plenary.</p>
<b>Source</b>	Annika Schmidt



### Task

#### **Riemann-Thomann model**

Discuss the following questions in your group and record your findings in writing.

1. What priorities regarding work style and conflict behavior go hand in hand with this basic striving?
2. How does a focus on this striving enrich teamwork?
3. How can this striving be taken into account and satisfied in the cooperation?
4. In which situations/contexts/relationship structures do you yourself strive to satisfy this basic need?

Source: Annika Schmidt

## Implementation notes: Role reflection with the Riemann-Thomann model



### Introduction and explanation of the model

The Riemann-Thomann model is based on the findings of the two psychologists Fritz Riemann (1961) and Christoph Thomann (1988). It states that four different, seemingly contradictory basic needs can generally be observed in human behaviour and actions:

We all have a need for proximity - for other people, exchange, contact, harmony, for belonging. At the same time, however, we also have a need for distance - for independence, for space for our own individual development, for difference and uniqueness. In addition, we have a need for duration, for things to remain as they are. For example, we don't want to have to wonder whether we'll still have a roof over our heads tomorrow. It is a need for permanence, order, structure and control. On the other hand, we also have a need for change, that things don't always stay the way they are now. It is a need for change, for variety, for development, for the new, the unknown, for spontaneity and creativity.

We all have these needs within us, but prioritize them differently depending on the situation, context, background of experience, phase of life or area of life. Thus, in every situation and encounter, other needs can become relevant, which then show up in interpersonal behaviour as well as in dealing with crises, conflicts and everyday routines.

Source: Riemann, Fritz: Basic Forms of Anxiety. Ernst Reinhardt Publishing House, Munich 1961  
Thomann, Christoph/Schulz von Thun, Friedemann: Klärungshilfe 1: Handbuch für Therapeuten, Gesprächshelfer und Moderatoren in schwierigen Gesprächen. rororo-verlag, Hamburg 1988