

Initiatives and Facilitation Training Manual



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Dear Facilitator,

A long, long time ago, I started out on my journey in “teambuilding”. The first group I ever worked with was made up of ten teenage boys in an alternative-to-incarceration program. I was literally handed a manual, given a couple of hours to prepare, and then my group would arrive and I would take it from there.

I sat down, read through my notes, and I was amazed! Did you know that by simply presenting a problem – whether it was an Initiative or a Low Rope element – that the team would automatically pull together? They would instantly learn to respect each other, support each other, and be capable of deep conversations about their emotions! It was like real magic, and all I had to do was to walk them out to the course and it would all happen with or without me!

Some of you are cringing now...

I had no idea what to expect. I had been a part of teambuilding programs since elementary school when we first played with a giant parachute. I had played team sports and knew how to work with others. I had even been through some “real” teambuilding as part of my training. But, I really had no idea how it worked, why it worked, or even what we meant by “worked”.

And then a van pulled in...with metal mesh covering the windows. Four armed guards got out, and that’s when I began to wonder if I might have a problem. Then ten students got out and I really began to question what exactly I was doing. But, it didn’t matter, right? I had a manual with some games! That’s all anyone doing teambuilding really needed!

And some of you are cringing even more...

The day was a learning experience – for the students as well as myself! I learned:

- Every time the students did well, the guards would rip on them about how worthless they were and the students would start misbehaving again. From that, I learned that definitions – how we see ourselves – matter. I also learned that many groups live up to – or down to – the expectations of those in authority.
- When I couldn’t handle the guards putting my students down, I asked them to move away. At that point, a student leaned in and said, “Good! Now that they’re gone, I can kill you.” Without batting an eye, I responded, “That’s fine. Can you wait until I explain the rules of the next activity first?” From the fact that I’m still alive, I learned that groups have hierarchies and that they don’t like to have that order “rearranged”. I also learned that the “leader” of a group may not be the best one...
- Throughout the day, I met the comments thrown at me by the teens with a smile on my face. They wanted me to get mad; I refused. From this I learned that some people are simply looking to be rejected because it’s what they know. I also learned the importance of having a good sense of humor when working with teambuilding groups.
- Finally, when they left, we were all still alive! (We had actually set some “records” that stand to this day!) From this I learned that at the end of the day, no matter how I may think the day went, the team can still learn. Some of the most profound days I’ve seen were with groups that took everything I had to keep them on task. In the end, though, it’s not about me and my experience; it’s about theirs.

So, why did I share this story with you? Because I want you to know that this manual is a little “different” than

your standard “teambuilding book”. Every activity in here is one that my teams and I have used consistently for a combined total of over 50 years! We have modified them to work with every group ranging from adjudicated youth to Fortune 500 companies. We have used them to work with all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and beliefs.

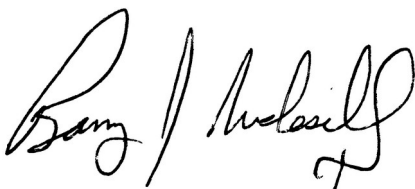
The reason there is so much detail included is because I know what it’s like to be handed a manual and told, “Figure it out!” May you never experience that, but in case you do, I’m hoping this will help you out! My advice to you, as you get started, is to find a few activities that you understand and feel comfortable with. Teach them, lead them, practice them, and modify them, if necessary, to match your groups. Then, when you have those down, add another one. Then another one. Each game has a purpose and the more that you have in your back pocket, the easier your life gets!

Also, know that you’re not alone. At Acedelmar Consulting, we know that sometimes you just need to be able to ask a question. If you have a teambuilding question, please pop us an email at info@whatiftheresmore.com. We usually can get back to you within 24 hours and you will not bother us if you ask a lot of detail questions. We’d rather have you do things safely than to assume something and have someone get hurt!

With that, before we get into the rest of the materials, I have a few disclaimers to get out of the way:

1. This training pack is for use ONLY by those who have purchased a Teambuilding / Community-Building Kit from Acedelmar Consulting. Please do not copy or distribute this either in part or in whole, by paper or electronic transmissions, etc.
2. This book does NOT represent a comprehensive Teambuilding program. It does NOT provide enough information to safely lead a Teambuilding program. It does NOT confer the ability to fly, run faster than a speeding bullet, look good in red-and-blue spandex, or have x-ray vision. Please use this as a reference ONLY; not a guidebook. Acedelmar Consulting shall assume no responsibility for accidents / injuries resulting from the misuse of this training manual. **Failure to receive proper training and certification prior to leading teambuilding activities will likely result in serious injury and/or death to program participants.**
3. Ropes Course obstacles and Initiatives vary widely in design, depending upon the Ropes Course Builder, location of the obstacle, composition of the group and weather conditions. The following information is complete, *to the best of my knowledge*.
4. Some of the material contained herein is copyrighted by other authors and is used in this manual simply to provide a condensed reference source for our staff. This copyrighted material – specifically the Project Adventure books – are included in our Kit. ***This material was assembled by Barry Rudesill and is the property of Acedelmar Consulting. All Rights Reserved.***

Have fun and happy teambuilding!



Co-Owner, Acedelmar Consulting
(Rev. 03/18)

Dear Facilitator,

Wow! You get two introductory letters in this edition! The first, though, is my “generic” letter to Facilitators. This one is a little more personal and will explain this aspect of our programs.

If you have been through one of our training programs, you will have read through the first section entitled, “Background and Facilitation”. This section gives you an overview of our Teambuilding programs, the rationale behind our efforts, and a framework to begin your Teambuilding experience. Unfortunately, it doesn’t give you many Teambuilding activities to use with your groups...

“Initiatives” is the second piece in our training series and is intended to give you some “tools” to start your programming. These activities are called “Initiatives” in our programs; although I have heard them referred to by a number of different names in different sectors of the Teambuilding community. For us, an “Initiative” is a small-prop/no-prop activity. These can be done anywhere, anytime, with little preparation required. (As opposed to a “Low Ropes Course” which is physically installed in a set location.)

Finally, depending on which Kit you purchased, there is a section called “Portables” which highlights some of the portable Low Rope elements that you now have.

If you are a new Facilitator, it can be easy to become nervous about the amount of activities in existence. Don’t be frightened and don’t assume that you need to know everything right away. What I encourage you to do is to take the activities that you are interested in and write them on an index card to carry with you in the field to “refresh” your memory before you begin. (Some of our Primaries still do that!) It’s more convenient than lugging this manual into the field with you...

For our returning Facilitators, the major updates in this portion are more cosmetic than safety-oriented. We have added new activities to the mix, based on some of our recent Teambuilding events. I have also included an index at the end to help you search through the material faster. As usual, we have grouped these activities based on the “3 C’s”.

Good luck and happy Teambuilding!



WHAT IS TEAMBUILDING / COMMUNITY BUILDING?

We have so much ground to cover and so little time. So, where exactly to begin? Hmm... Probably the best way is to figure out what you will be doing as a Facilitator! In other words, “What is Teambuilding?”

That seems to be the question of the decade! The one thing that I’ve found constantly in my experience is that few, if any, know what “Teambuilding” really means. For some, it’s a “corporate thing”; for others it’s clinging to a rope as you swing through the tree tops; still other groups think that it’s either a “magical cure” or “quackery”; and television sitcoms portray “teambuilding” as Trust Fall, chanting circles, and back massages.

While we won’t say that there aren’t elements of these in some “Teambuilding” programs, this isn’t what we mean. For us, Teambuilding, simply is the process of developing teamwork skills. More than that, through our shared experiences, to learn to live and work in a community. And that’s what we strive for: community building.

For all of us at Acedelmar Consulting, “community building” means that we respect each other both on and off “the field”; we seek to understand and accept each other, even if we disagree; and we support those in our community, despite – or even because of – our differences. Teams last for a season; communities are life-long, supportive environments. While teambuilding has its place, we would prefer to see communities built so that the change becomes a lasting part of the “DNA” of the group.

We do this by creating situations – sometimes artificial, sometimes real – in which the group must work together to accomplish the task. During the process of working together, groups learn to be creative, communicate effectively, respect each other, and focus on the goal (among other things). The emphasis is not on success or failure but learning through the circumstances. In fact, I’ve had teams learn more from “failure” than they ever would have learned had they accomplished the task.

The more a “team” has the ability to work together, the more they create “community”. Rather than view teambuilding as a one-time, shot-in-the-arm event, we prefer to see programs that last for weeks / months, with participants experiencing activities on a regular basis. That’s what we mean by “community building”.



WHY DO TEAMBUILDING?

Teambuilding offers improved group dynamics and leadership training in a unique format. Participants are encouraged to work cooperatively to accomplish a series of obstacles/challenges. Communication skills, cooperation, trust, and caring are heightened within the group by the shared “risks” and sense of achievement

through the completion of the obstacles. In no other activity are groups challenged in such a way, and nowhere else do those involved come away with such a team spirit.

WHAT BENEFITS DO PARTICIPANTS GAIN?

I was asked this question once and, after some consideration, I turned to my Facilitators for an answer. Together – as a team! – we came up with the top “seven” benefits we have seen based on the participants and programs we have worked with.

1. An enjoyable day of thoughtful, shared activity, where individuals can grow to know one another better and feel more comfortable as part of an effective team.
2. Improved inter-social and communication skills.
3. Enhanced problem-solving techniques.
4. Greater confidence and self-esteem.
5. Development of leadership skills.
6. Cultivated cooperation skills.
7. Greater group cohesiveness and support.

SOME STATISTICS ON TEAMBUILDING PROGRAMS...

Project Adventure, the originator of the modern-day Ropes Course program, conducted a series of studies based upon their activities with local school systems. The results are as follows:

“In Columbus, Ohio, Project Adventure has assisted in training and program development for two urban elementary Adventure magnet schools. Average Basic Skills tests have ***increased by 30 percentile points in reading and 40 percentile points in math*** since the program’s inception four years ago, this despite a turnover rate of approximately 30%.

The Challenge Program, a six-week alternative to incarceration, is designed to reduce delinquent behavior by developing the socialization skills, self-confidence, and motivation necessary to succeed in the schools and/or the work place. A three year evaluation (1983-1986) indicated that 94% of those who started the program completed it, that reading skills improved, on average, one grade level during participation and that the recidivism rate held at 15% for a three-year period. It has the ***Exemplary*** Project Award from the Georgia Governor’s Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

... Evaluation of [The Leadership Project] indicated significant change in the target communities. There has been a reduction in the adolescent use of marijuana and alcohol greater than the control group (a random sampling of the state of Vermont) which itself indicated a greater reduction than the rest of the country. Data after five years indicated reductions in the regular use of: beer-40%, hard liquor-49%, marijuana-28%, and wine-52%.

The Rainbow Lake School, an alternative school program, is for socially maladjusted middle-school students. It is a prevention effort to reduce delinquency and the school dropout rate. Students are enrolled for a twelve-week period and participate in a follow-up program for twelve weeks. Data shows that, of those who complete the program, 80% are reintegrated into the schools without disciplinary

incidents and 92% have no further involvement with juvenile court.”¹

In addition, there are other statistics documenting the success rate of the programs run by Project Adventure that are not covered here. However, this should stand as compelling proof of the necessity and validity of Ropes Course / Teambuilding Programs.

At Acedelmar Consulting, we are currently partnered with other nonprofit organizations and have begun developing long-term programs within the local school systems and with local government. In the meantime, we have the opportunity to work with local students not only academically, but also with a teambuilding emphasis. It is, therefore, imperative that we have a properly trained, professional staff of Facilitators so that we can make the most of the opportunities we are presented with.

It would be naive, however, to assume that we could undo years of conditioned responses in a one-day program. Because of this, we must work to do the best that we can to equip these students with the necessary tools so that they may be able to continue to refine the skills we have presented to them.

TEAMBUILDING BASIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The activities that you will be facilitating have many things in common. The first is that they can only be solved by teams. If your group is not a team, don't worry, that's what you're there for! (No pressure, right?) Here are a few things that you might wish to cover with the group, as it will help them to understand what it takes for teamwork, and will define the purpose for their activities:



TASKS AND GOALS

Tasks: An activity which the group is challenged to accomplish.
Goals: What the group wants to achieve overall.

The tasks for the groups will be such things as crossing a *Chocolate River* or passing through a giant *Spider Web*. Do you honestly care if they achieve these things? No. What is the goal of the group? Teamwork. This is the true reason the group is here! A group may forge themselves into a perfect team, and yet be unable to accomplish the task.

On the other hand, a group may hate each other, but still rapidly solve the task. I've seen groups almost come to

¹Information courtesy of Project Adventure, Inc.

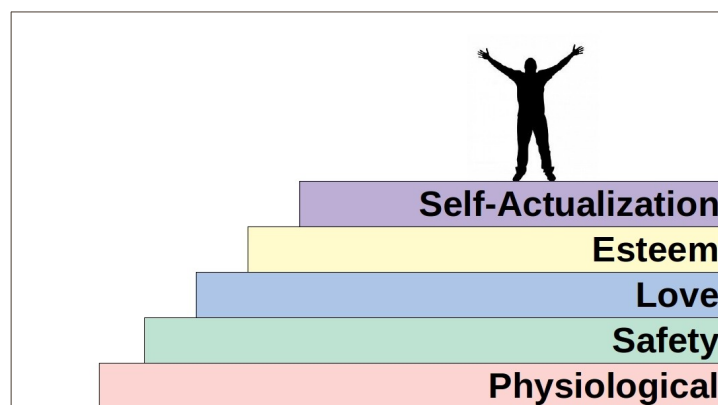
blows and yet still they completed the activity. This isn't success, however. It doesn't matter if they can do the activity. If they fail to achieve the overall goal, they failed. Your goal (you lucky person, you) is to see that they become a team. Good luck!

PHASES OF A RELATIONSHIP

- Honeymoon:** The group has just gotten together. They are excited, and are looking forward to getting out there and trying new things! Everybody is perfect, nobody has any annoying habits, and everybody gets along.
- Storm:** This is the critical phase of a relationship! It **MUST** be allowed to run its course! At this point, the group is working out its identity. Leaders are rising and falling, and the general atmosphere is discouragement. Encourage the group, and make sure you prevent a total falling out, but other than that, stand back! You may choose to sit the group down and mediate, but do **NOT** make the decisions for them. They will never form into a team with outside interference! It is a fine line to walk...
- Team:** If a group survives the storm phase, and believe it or not, most do, it will form into a team. For some teams, the storm phase is very brief and gentle, for others, they will be literally at each other's throats! If they survive, they will function as a team. If not...

PSYCHOLOGY OF PARTICIPANTS

To understand how to be an effective Facilitator, you must first understand how participants react to the program they are involved in. The diagram below illustrates a classic model called "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs". Very simply, Maslow stated that for an individual to reach the point of self-actualization (learning and being able to use what they have learned) they must progress through a series of stages. These are:



PHYSIOLOGICAL

A participant must have their physiological, or basic, needs met before they will be able to learn anything from the activities. In other words, if your group is freezing cold, has to use the bathroom, and has been working for ten hours straight without a meal, they are not going to learn anything from the activities! Bathroom/drink breaks are annoying – trust me, I speak from experience – however they are critical. Schedule them approximately every two hours. Obviously most groups will not require them at those times, but it serves to

give the group additional down time to process their experiences. **Note:** Obviously, if you are in the middle of an activity, don't drop everything simply because two hours have passed! Complete the activity first. (However, if someone in the group needs to go, you will have to find a way to take care of that problem...)

SAFETY

A participant must realize that the activities that they are involved in are safe. This does not mean that the group member needs to simply be protected from physical harm, though that is the most obvious safety factor in a Teambuilding program. It also means emotional safety: that their ideas have equal merit and that people won't make fun of them for giving an honest effort. Emotional safety is even more important, in many respects, than physical safety. If someone is injured physically, they will heal (hopefully).² If someone is injured emotionally, they may be scarred for life by the experience. (I will **NEVER** take part in Wind In The Willows. I think it is a tremendous Trust activity; however the last time I ever played it I was dropped face-first on a rock. This tends to destroy trust in people, and especially in the activity!) Watch the group interactions, and make sure that everyone has equal voice!

LOVE

Is "love" a central concern for our programs? Yes! It will just depend on the style of programming your leading. For Acedelmar Consulting, we can show love in our programs in two main ways:

- For our At-Risk / Adjudicated Youth programs, we are extending a helping hand to those who have fallen down. We don't judge them; others have done that. Our goal is to help them to stand again on their own two feet and to work more closely and effectively with those around them.
- For our Spiritual Teambuilding programs through the Camps that we partner with, we are role-modeling the love of Christ.

Obviously, the way you incorporate "love" into your programs will depend on who you work with and the style of interaction you choose.

Does this mean that the group must love each other? No. However, the group must have a sense that the other members of their group care for them. If you feel your team doesn't care about you, are you going to trust them? No. Will you care for them? Probably not. Will you cooperate as effectively as you could? No. Will you take the time to communicate your ideas and to fully listen to theirs? No. It's human nature. We usually don't try to start dialogues with those we dislike!

Can you, as a Facilitator, build caring into the participants? No. If it's not there, we can't simply "create" it. If it *is* there, we must do our utmost to encourage it; to help it to grow. The best way to do this is to model it in our speech and actions. You may not like the group you're working with, you might not like the weather, you might not like the activities, but every word that you utter has got to be to build up the group! Anything less and the program cannot be successful!

ESTEEM

For business personnel and others seeking to enhance their on-the-job teamwork skills, esteem is not usually a major factor. Most of these people already feel comfortable with themselves and their abilities. Occasionally, one participant may rise up to a new position of leadership within the group while a leader may choose to step down and simply follow. However, the dynamics of those who already work well with one another tend to be straightforward with respect to self-esteem.

²Note: This is **NOT** a license to freely injure people! It would be...detrimental...to your program if your survival rate was anything less than 100%!

Fortunately, there is another group you may have the pleasure of working with. These are the “At-Risk” teens, and their sense of teamwork, respect, and self-esteem provide for a wide variety of interactions that you will not see with a business group. According to one source, the number one problem plaguing teens in our society today is the lack of self-esteem!³ Let’s look at why teens may be struggling:

1 in 3	teenage girls will become pregnant before the age of 20. ⁴
1 in 5	lives in poverty ⁵
1 in 6	has seriously considered suicide in a 12 month time period. ⁶
1 in 8	has been diagnosed with a Major Depressive Episode. ⁷
1 in 12	has attempted suicide in a 12 month time period. ⁸
1 in 25	lives with neither parent. ⁹
1 in 39	has been arrested for a crime. ¹⁰
1 in 45	is born to a teen mother. ¹¹
1 in 109	will experience some form of abuse or neglect this year. ¹²
1 in 15,000	teens aged 15-19 will be murdered this year. ¹³
1 in 44,444	children 17 and under will die from abuse and neglect this year. ¹⁴
1,500,000	children witness domestic violence in their home each year. ¹⁵
3,400,000	children were referred to Child Protective Services Agencies in 2015. ¹⁶

25% of all girls are sexually abused before the age of 18.¹⁷

17% of all boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.¹⁸

3I went to Amazon.com and just typed “self-esteem” into the “Books” section. As of March 2018, there are over 100,000 books on self-esteem available from Amazon alone!

4*National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Why It Matters*, as cited by the March of Dimes’ *Teenage Pregnancy* © 2010. (I couldn’t find any updated figures on the rate of teenage pregnancy.)

5*Basic Facts About Low-Income Children*, by Heather Koball and Yang Jiang © 2018. (Published by the National Center for Children in Poverty) This mirrors the data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009*, Report P60, n. 238, Table B-2, pp. 62-7.

6*1991-2015 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data* by the Centers for Disease Control © 2015. This is up from the 1-in-7 ratio published in the *Suicide Fact Sheet* by the Centers for Disease Control © 2010.

7*National Survey on Drug Use and Health* by the National Institute of Mental Health © 2016. Please note that this is a dramatic increase over the 1-in-13 ratio reported in the same study in 2010. NOTE: Major Depressive Episode (MDE) is defined as a period of at least 2 weeks when a person experienced a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities plus at least four additional symptoms of depression (such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration and feelings of self-worth) as described in the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV).

8*Suicide Data Sheet* by the Centers for Disease Control © 2015. This is a dramatic increase compared to the 1-in-17 ratio published in the *Suicide Fact Sheet* by the Centers for Disease Control © 2010.

9*America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, 2017 by the U.S. Census Bureau © 2017.

10*Juvenile Arrest Rate Trends* by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention © 2017. This is a dramatic decrease compared to the 1-in-16 ratio published in the *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, October 31, 2009.

11*Reproductive Health: Teen Pregnancy* by the Centers for Disease Control © 2015. This is a ratio between the number of births to teenagers versus the number of births in total.

12*Child Maltreatment 2015* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services © 2015.

13*Teen Homicide, Suicide and Firearm Deaths* by ChildTrends © 2015.

14*Child Maltreatment 2015* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services © 2015.

15*10 Startling Statistics About Children Of Domestic Violence* by Childhood Domestic Violence Association © 2014. Please note that this does not take into account the number of children who witness domestic violence multiple times.

16*Child Maltreatment 2015* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services © 2015. Please note that these are a “unique count of child victims”. In other words, this does not take into account the number of children who are referred multiple times.

17*Raising Awareness About Sexual Abuse: Facts and Statistics* by the U.S. Department of Justice © 2015. Please note that it is estimated that only 30% of sexual abuse is reported according to *The Prevention Of Childhood Sexual Abuse* by D. Finkelhor © 2009.

18*Raising Awareness About Sexual Abuse: Facts and Statistics* by the U.S. Department of Justice © 2015. Please note that it is estimated that only 30% of sexual abuse is reported according to *The Prevention Of Childhood Sexual Abuse* by D. Finkelhor © 2009.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds and the third leading cause of death among 10- to 14-year-olds.¹⁹

Do we still question how important self-esteem is? We have 3.4 million children being reported as physically/sexually/emotionally abused and/or neglected each year; 1.5 million children who are living with domestic violence; 1 in 25 who live with *neither* of their parents; and 1 in 5 who are living at or below the poverty level. As you can see, for a lot of these children, there is little or no hope, and little family structure to provide them with a “normal” life.

Does it surprise us that gangs are on the rise? It shouldn't. Gangs are more of a family to many youths than their biological parents. Should we question the rise in violent crimes? No. These young people have no fear of death or dying, so why should they care? They are being raised in a society where life has little value, and where death is simply an ending. Does it bother us that many young people no longer have the capability to make appropriate choices between right and wrong? It should. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

We need to help these children succeed on their own; helping them to realize that they, too, can be a leader; and by giving them skills which will help them throughout their life. If we take the time to care for these participants, we *can* make a difference.

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

If a participant in our teambuilding / community-building program has their basic needs met (Physiological), feels safe with the activities and the group they are with (Safety), feels that the group and/or leader truly cares for them and their ideas (Love), and that they're ideas have merit and their participation can make a difference, they will experience what Maslow calls self-actualization: “The process of understanding oneself and developing one's capacities and talents.”²⁰



COMFORT ZONES...

Okay, so we now understand why people react the way they do. Now let's get into the “Facilitation” part of this manual. To begin with, however, you need to understand the concept of “Comfort Zones”. To discuss **Comfort Zones**, however, I need to have you play a game. (This is your first Teambuilding activity! Are you excited?)

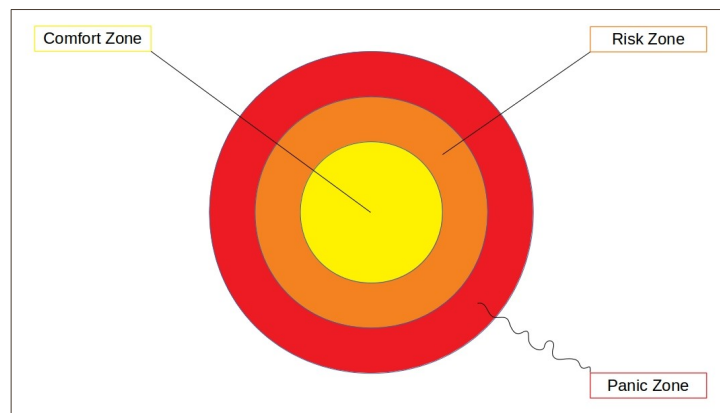
¹⁹10 Leading Causes Of Death, United States by the Centers for Disease Control © 2016.

²⁰Maslow carries this to odd extremes, including the thought of becoming “god-like”, but the steps leading up to “self-actualization” are remarkably sound.

Place two ropes or funnoodles on the ground approximately 10 feet apart. (When in doubt, you can use webbing.) Now, the area to the left of the funnoodles is your Comfort Zone. These are things you feel comfortable doing – they don't bother you at all and, in fact, you rarely think twice about them. This can include brushing your teeth, taking a walk, etc. The middle zone (between the funnoodles) is your Risk Zone. These are things you would be willing to try under the ideal circumstance. This can include skydiving, rock climbing, etc. Finally, the area to the right of the funnoodles is your Panic Zone. These are things you would never do under ANY circumstances! This can include public speaking, petting a snake, etc.

Now, based on your own personal comfort, move into the zone that best describes your reaction to the following:

- Babysitting two infants.
- Flying in an airplane.
- Giving a speech to 500 adults.
- Holding a spider.
- Skydiving.
- Walking through a forest at night in the dark.



When you're working with groups, have them actually go and stand in the zone that best represents their reactions. For example, I have no problem going to give a speech in front of 500 adults; however, others in my group will be plastered to the far wall in the Panic Zone. On the other hand, bring out a small spider and I will be clawing my way through the wall of the Panic Zone just to get away.

This works as a nice mixer. As Facilitator, make sure everyone is listening and then ask the people in the Risk Zone what the "ideal circumstances" are that they would require before being willing to attempt the task.

Okay, great game. We now know that I scream like a little girl and run away when spiders are in the room. So what does that have to do with Teambuilding? (Other than the fact that it's a great mixer that allows people to relax and start talking, you mean?)

The goal of our programs is to take participants out of their Comfort Zone into their Risk Zone – to be willing to try something new, to be willing to "risk" something in front of others. However, our goal is to not push them so far that they move into their Panic Zone!

That's why Facilitators are carefully trained. Participants, once they've reached their Panic Zone, are unable to function coherently and, instead of a positive experience, they can experience emotional distress which can last long after the event.

Risk-taking is the key to these programs because when people put take a personal risk, they will benefit on a personal level. Upon safe (successful) completion of the task, participants will expand their comfort zones and, by that action, improve their self-confidence.

As we discuss the concept of “risk”, it is important to understand the difference between “real” and “perceived” risk. “Perceived Risk” is what a participant believes to be at stake; “Real Risk” is when a participant is placed in physical jeopardy. We all, for the most part, are willing to take reasonable risks and, indeed, that is the basis of Teambuilding. However, the fundamental focus of our programs is to create perceived risk; we will never place participants in jeopardy for the sake of an experience!

All activities will be led according to established protocols. No Facilitator will EVER conduct a program outside of their training and experience.

Our goal is to provide a safe, fun, educational experience. It **MUST** be done in that order!



CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

That being said, the basis for all of the programs at Acedelmar Consulting is “Challenge By Choice”. We will NEVER force our clients to participate in something that they are unable or unwilling to do. We acknowledge that everyone is different and our goal is to respect everyone’s differences. While we cannot force your program to abide by our standard, we do strongly encourage it.

Now, that being said, with the At-Risk / Adjudicated Youth programs they can be required – within reason – to participate. It will be at the discretion of the Facilitator to determine what an acceptable level of participation for these groups is.

SAFETY FIRST...

We, at Acedelmar Consulting, believe that safety is not only important, but should be the primary concern in all of its Teambuilding / Adventure programming. To help us carry out the goal of “Safety First”, we have established the following criteria for working with teambuilding activities. These include:

TRAINING

All Facilitators will be required to recertify every **two years**, unless the Facilitator has been actively leading

groups during the *entire* time. Certification will involve attending a 1-2 day workshop (depending upon the Teambuilding / Adventure areas the Facilitator is to lead), passing a skills test, and working under the supervision of a Primary Ropes Course Facilitator prior to full certification.²¹

SPOTTING AND LIFTING INFORMATION

In the course of the activities, I have rarely seen anyone in danger from the actual attempt. I have seen people who are hurt because they attempted to lift someone/something improperly and I have seen “near-misses” from spotters who failed to pay attention. As a Facilitator, that is something you need to be aware of!

Spotting

Spotting is actively safeguarding the movements of another participant. The goal of spotting is to keep the activity participant from injury. However, it may not always be possible to physically “catch” a person. The primary area to be concerned with protecting is the head, neck and spine. Be sure to place spotters in appropriate areas to guarantee the safety of the program participants.

We actually explain the “Rule of 2’s” to participants. This means that they have two feet firmly on the ground with one braced back, if necessary; two hands up at an appropriate level;²² two eyes on the participant; two ears listening for commands; and two lips firmly closed! Spotters need to be prepared and anticipating where and when the participant may have problems!



As a Facilitator, you must accurately estimate the optimum number and placement of spotters for each obstacle. You should be able to teach the participants the various spotting positions required for each element use. As a Facilitator, you should encourage the “spotting crew” to change with each new climber. Get the group to devise its own rotation system for spotting.

Before any spotting occurs make certain that all participants go through the spotting commands:

Participant asks: “Spotters ready?”

All spotters respond: “Ready!”

Participant states what she/he is about to do: “Climbing/Leaning/Falling.”

Spotters answer what the participant is about to do: “Climb Away/Lean On/Fall On.”

All spotters ask the participant if they are okay by saying: “Center?”

If the participant is okay and able to walk away without assistance, they respond by saying:

²¹The standards of Acedelmar Consulting do not in any way constitute either a universal knowledge of teambuilding / ropes course procedures. All Facilitators should check with the program they are working with for specific guidelines relevant to their facility.

²²Ironically, the picture on this following page shows Spotters with hands in poor positions.

“Center”.

This “verbal contract” ensures that everyone is paying attention and ready to protect the participant. I have worked with Facilitators from other companies who have argued about the need for this as they feel that everyone in their groups is always focused and prepared. Unfortunately, my groups are not always perfect and, since someone’s physical safety may depend on it, I always do it...

Lifting

“Lifting” in this context is the acceptable means of assisting a climber to gain additional height to perform an obstacle, such as *Spider Web*. The lifter should stand erect, back straight, with knees bent. The climber steps up into the lifters clasped hands, grasps the lifter’s shoulders firmly, and is then lifted onto/over/through the obstacle. Two other spotters need to position around the climber to ensure safety. Always ask, prior to teaching the lift, whether there are any “bad” backs or knees in the group.

Prevent Injury

Some basic techniques to help you maintain the physical safety of your group are:

- All participants should participate in activities of their own free will (“Challenge by Choice”).
- Check each participant as they move through the activities for his/her physical, mental, and emotional state. Using an *Attitude Check* can help you determine how your group is feeling.
- Review the group periodically to keep a situational pulse on everyone.

JUDGMENT

As a Facilitator, you are responsible for the physical, emotional and intellectual safety of your group. This means that you need to use your own judgment to ensure that the participants have a safe, positive experience.

Personal

If for any reason you are not able to remain alert – including illness, lack of sleep, emotional state, etc. – you **MUST** remove yourself from the program. A decision to leave the program will not be held against you; injury of participants due to negligence on your part will be. (Please provide as much notification as possible so your facility can schedule a replacement.)

Professional

If for any reason you feel the group is **NOT** able to handle an activity – including difficulty with performing tasks, immaturity, lack of attentiveness, etc. – you **MUST** not continue on. Please seek other activities for your group to fill the time and return to the activity at a later time, if they can show that they can safely and responsibly handle it. A decision to leave a program area will not be held against you; injury of participants due to negligence on your part will be. Our policy at Acedelmar Consulting is that we will **NEVER** promise to do an activity with a group, as we don’t know if the group will be able to handle it when we get there.

Medical

Facilitators are responsible to review all relevant medical information prior to the start of their day. If participants do not have a medical form/liability form, the Facilitator can be held legally responsible. Please discuss any special needs with the group and keep restrictions in mind as participants go through the program.

Final Thoughts

If you do not know what you are doing, have questions or concerns, please ask. A saying that I have

heard is, “Ignorance breeds injury!” There are no dumb questions EXCEPT the one you didn’t ask! Our goal is to not have any injuries in our programs!



WHAT IS A FACILITATOR?

A “Facilitator” is simply the term we use to describe those who lead Teambuilding programs. (For the sake of this manual, we will call the teambuilding staff “Facilitators”.)

Teambuilding programs, in general, are made up of a series of trust-building activities, individual obstacles, and group problem-solving activities. Each activity or obstacle requires the group to work as a team in order to achieve results based upon pre-planned goals/objectives. Facilitators assist the group in becoming a cohesive and effective team.

A Facilitator is a person who enables a group to process information and to reach their own conclusions, rather than simply solving the group’s problems for them. In plain English? “A Facilitator is someone who stands in the rain/sleet/snow/hail/blazing sun and keeps their mouth shut, except when giving encouragement and defusing combat situations!” (Sounds like fun, doesn’t it?)

The style and attitude of the Facilitators have a great influence on how participants perceive the experience. A playful and lighthearted demeanor goes a long way towards making teambuilding appear as an adventure, rather than a threat. Safety is always a serious consideration, and should be foremost in the mind of a Facilitator.

You are in charge! Your significant role is to ensure that each participant has the opportunity to reflect on the individual and group challenges (what actually took place during the experiences). The effective Facilitator is an active listener. Active listening requires patience, the ability to be empathetic, and a lot of practice. Recognizing participant’s feelings is important.

The term “team” or “community” are the central focus of our program. Our goal is to take all conflicts, criticisms, and decisions directly to the team, and assist them in working out these challenges. Don’t suppress conflict. Stop the activity and begin to process what is taking place. Avoid imposing your decisions and issues on the group (don’t preach).

WHY DO WE NEED FACILITATORS?

A Facilitator needs to:

1. Present problems to the group in a clear and concise manner.
2. Enforce the rules and make sure the safety factors are in place.

3. Set the tone for the day through a positive attitude and encouragement.
4. Arbitrate disputes and assists any “factions” in becoming an integrated team.
5. Act as a sounding board for ideas. The Facilitator never tells the solution; he/she listens to the ideas presented by the group and comments on any safety concerns.
6. Bring the main goal (teamwork) back into focus through processing.

These are jobs that few groups (if any) could do on their own when faced with a problem that is outside their current skill set. If they tried to do teambuilding activities without a Facilitator, you would have a group of approximately 12 people jumping over obstacles with no concern for their safety or the safety of their fellow teammates. In other words, it would be chaos.

Facilitators are important. Properly trained Facilitators with a firm grasp of their role in the teambuilding process are absolutely critical.

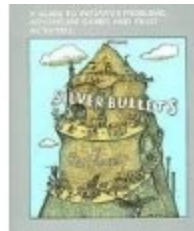
WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE A TEAMBUILDING FACILITATOR?

We recommend that all active Facilitators go through a minimum of eight (8) hours of training prior to leading activities. Also, whenever possible, new Teambuilding Facilitators should “shadow” an experienced Facilitator through a series of activities so that they can observe how to lead effectively. Finally, we do recommend that all Facilitators be certified in American Red Cross (or comparable) CPR and First Aid.

All Facilitators through Acedelmar Consulting must recertify every year unless they are actively engaged in leading Teambuilding programs during the entire year.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

When you go to the “Initiatives and Group Games” training, you will find that a lot of the games and activities are found in one of three books:



Strangely enough, I learned most of these games in Boy Scouts, youth group, and even Kindergarten when we played with our first parachute! I led some of these games LONG before I even knew these books existed, and my first draft of this manual was written before I had ever read these books! (It’s nice to see them all compiled into these resources, however, so that new Facilitators can focus on learning rather than researching new games from a million different books.)

These are put out by a company called Project Adventure, the originator of the modern-day Ropes Course programs, and are written by Karl Rohnke, the person who literally wrote the books on Teambuilding. Are these the end-all and be-all of Teambuilding books? No. (But they are pretty close!) I recommend everyone take the opportunity to read through these books as just about every training that I have ever been through has, in some way, been based on this material!

By the way, if you ever get the opportunity to go to Project Adventure for training...go! They really do an excellent job.

GUIDELINES FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR

We will explore more about being an effective Facilitator when you shadow your first group. However, there are some general guidelines that can prepare you in advance:

1. Find out as much as you can about the group before they begin.

Talk with teachers, leaders, etc. to determine what areas the group specifically needs to work with. Take any information you can find, but don't prejudge the group based on what you have heard. A group that has problems "caring" may simply have a problem with their communication skills, which leads to aggressive actions. It's pretty common. Take everything under consideration, but don't let it change how you run your program.

2. Carefully sequence program activities.

Contrary to popular belief, *Trust Fall* is not a great starting activity! The concept of "forcing" the group to work together by taking them to one of the toughest activities first is the equivalent to trying to cure someone of their fear of heights by kidnapping them, chartering a plane, strapping them into a parachute, and shoving them out at 20,000 feet. If they survive, they may have less of a fear of heights, but will they ever trust you or be willing to try something new again? No! Start with the basics. Do some stretching activities. These not only help the group get ready for the day, but also serve to instill a sense of the ridiculous into the program. Then, do some of the smaller initiative problems and work your way up from there! (Most groups I work with will **NEVER** reach Trust Fall! My philosophy to judge how they are doing is to ask myself if I think the group would be capable of catching me without outside assistance. If the answer is "yes", then they get to go.)

3. Develop strong assessment skills.

Find out what the participants *truly* need. Is it communication? If so, do activities that concentrate on communication. Is it cooperation? Give them obstacles where they have to work together. Is it caring? Start working on some more trust-based activities. Note: the only way you will ever be able to assess where groups need help is through experience. No amount of book work can teach it. It is something you will discover on your own!

4. Don't economize on training.

At Acedelmar Consulting, we require our Facilitators to recertify every **two years**, unless the Facilitator has been actively leading groups during the *entire* time. Certification will involve attending a 1-2 day workshop, passing a skills test, and working under the supervision of a Primary Ropes Course Facilitator prior to full certification. (The standards in place at Acedelmar Consulting do not in any way constitute either a full-knowledge of all ropes course procedures, nor does it mean that the Facilitator can operate any teambuilding program at any other site other than those where they have been trained.)

In addition, if you ever encounter an activity/obstacle with which you are not familiar or feel uncertain about, please do not attempt to do the activity! Instead, ask questions first. If you need additional training, seek out someone with experience to teach you the proper way to facilitate the element. This will help your organization to maintain high safety levels, while protecting the participants.

5. Contribute to routine maintenance.

All Facilitators are responsible for inspecting all pieces of equipment they will be using.

6. Stay up-to-date with current procedures.

The instructions detailed in this manual are accurate as of March 2016, to the best of my knowledge. If Acedelmar Consulting becomes aware of any significant updates, we will mail it to all Facilitators. If the necessary, we will offer a follow-up training session to cover the new/updated material.

7. Set a good example.

If you are unenthusiastic, your group will show it. If you have a bad attitude, don't be surprised if your group feels they are wasting their time. If you don't follow the same guidelines you ask your group to adhere to, they will disobey (and possibly be hurt as a result). Lead by example. (You can do it, I know you can!)

Some Cliché's To Live By...

Okay, okay! I know that I've said most of these at least 500 other times in other places in this manual – which is pretty impressive, since the entire book is less than 200 pages – but it never hurts to cover it just one more time:

1. Present the problem clearly, and be clear about what additional props or equipment are allowed. (If you don't mention it, they will do it!)
2. Support the group's efforts without telling them how to accomplish the task. (You don't know it all. Let them figure it out.)
3. Be patient.
4. Don't disengage from what is happening; pay attention, observe behaviors, and be positive.
5. Remember that a positive learning experience does not always mean successful completion of a task – no matter how much the instructor and/or participants may want that to occur. (Your goal is teamwork, not perfection.)
6. Trust is the toughest thing to build in a group, and the quickest thing to lose. Do nothing that will destroy their trust in you, your organization, or this outreach.



Processing

(Rev. 3.0)

PROCESSING

The most important part of facilitation – other than presenting the problem and keeping people safe – is processing. Processing is guided reflection on an activity to help participants learn and grow through challenges and teamwork. Processing, done well, should lead participants to greater self-awareness and assist them in applying what they have learned to other situations in life.

The activities we do are metaphors – they represent something else. If a Facilitator only focuses on throwing a ball around, the participants may have a positive experience, but they won't learn anything from their time. If that same Facilitator explains that the tennis ball is an idea (or a customer or a goal, etc.) and then ask the team to evaluate their performance based on the metaphor, they will draw a deeper meaning from the tasks.

The role of the leader is to facilitate meaningful exchange of thoughts, awareness, feeling, reaction, and support within the group. The leader acts as a guide and a lens. The principal tools of the leader are observation and questioning focused by specific goals and objectives.

RULES OF PROCESSING

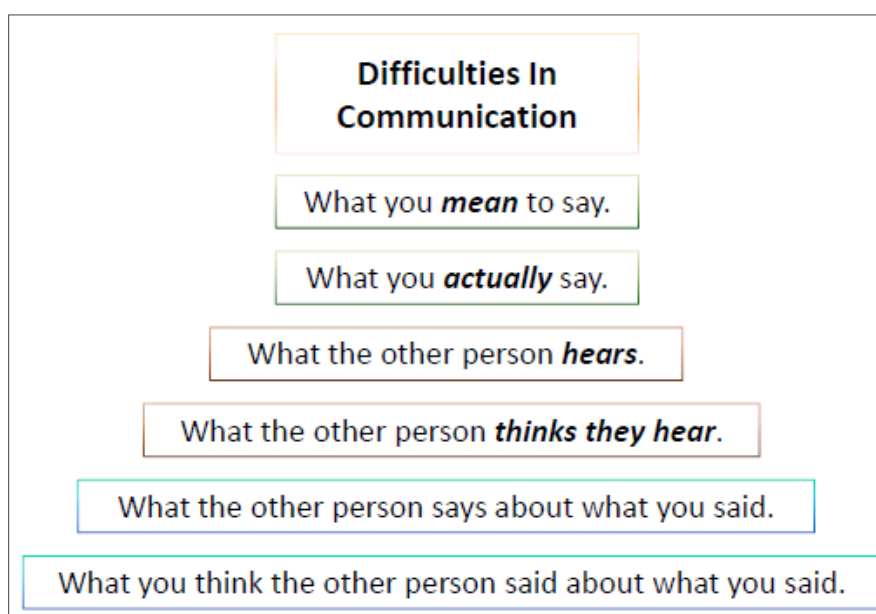
I have run into many different style of processing in my years as a Facilitator. However, to standardize our programs, Acedelmar Consulting has adopted the following rules for processing the teambuilding experience:

1. Everyone has the right to speak his or her mind. They are to be allowed to speak freely, without interruption or condescension from the leader and/or group. (Note: not everyone has to *agree* with each other; they just have the right to speak!)
2. Everyone has the right to not speak. If someone is feeling uncomfortable, do not call on him or her. Let them volunteer the information. (If the entire group is silent, call on the more “outspoken” members to get the processing started.) This rule may or may not apply to At-Risk / Adjudicated groups, depending on your circumstances.
3. Everyone has the right to not be attacked. Do not let the group gang up on someone! Remember: they succeed or fail as a *team*. There are no individual failures. This is something that you may have to stress many times before some people will fully understand.
4. The goal of processing is for the group to exchange ideas, not to have the leader tell the group how they did. The job of the leader is to ask questions and moderate the discussion. They are **NOT** to contribute to the group's assessment except to encourage them if they become overly negative. A Facilitator must never criticize the work of the group; you want them to be able to evaluate their performance fairly and objectively. If they are pleased with it, you are too; or you find some very...um...creative way to point out issues that they may have encountered along the way. (In the sections that follow, you will find many different approaches to processing with groups.)
5. Check your interpretation of what was said with the participant. Never assume you understood perfectly. To do this, rephrase the question. “So what you mean is...” This will not only serve to clarify their statement for you, but will also provide a clearer understanding for their group.²³

²³Be aware that people hear things in different ways! According to Neuro-Linguistic Programming, there are three different “channels” for communication: audio, kinesthetic, and visual. People who are audio use words like “hear”, “listen”, and “click”; kinesthetic people use words like “catch”, “touch”, and “build”; and visual people use “look”, “see”, and “show”. Sometimes YOU have to translate between the different language channels to help people understand each other!

6. Reward disclosure by thanking individuals and/or restating what they said in a supportive way.
7. I recommend (not critical) that the group sit (crouch, stand, etc. but try to get them all on the same level) together in a circle (there are no “leaders” in a circle because everyone is facing everyone else). Make sure that you, too, are on the outside of the circle. **Do not** make yourself the center of the discussion...
8. Do not skimp on processing. The activities, in and of themselves, are great for exercise and general problem-solving, however to allow the group to realize the full value of a teambuilding program, they must be able to stop and refocus from the activity to the goal! Your job is to help them to do just that!²⁴

The following are methods of processing activities. Which one is right for you or your group will depend upon a number of factors that I will not even *attempt* to detail here. Experiment with the different approaches; find the one you are most comfortable with, and be prepared to switch if the method you select doesn’t work!



(Taken from “Get The Message Across Clearly” by the University of New South Wales)

TIPS FOR PROCESSING

Processing is an “art” not a “science”. This means that you will get better with practice as you work with groups. That being said, there are some simple ground rules that you can follow to improve your skills:

1. Ask only one question at a time. (More than that can “overload” a group.)
2. Be willing to give them time to think carefully before they answer. (Don’t be afraid of silence.)

²⁴How much processing is necessary? This question can be answered by another question: how much does your group need? If you don’t process at all or you only spend a couple of minutes, you are depriving your group of a valuable learning experience. On the flip side, I sat for over an hour listening to a Facilitator process a ten minute activity. (I tried not to snore too loud...) Keep it short, sweet and to the point, however do not stifle the discussion. If the group is involved in a dialogue, do not cut it short in order to run off to the next activity. Judge for yourself how much time you need. You’ll know if it’s too long and, by the end of the day, if it was too short. Good luck!

3. Ask open-ended questions rather than “yes or no”; this will encourage conversation and give participants the ability to share their own thoughts and opinions.
4. Call on quiet people using their name. This is less threatening than simply pointing and will encourage them to contribute their thoughts and opinions.
5. Don’t answer their questions, unless necessary. Refer questions back to the team, itself. I like the phrase, “What do you think?” This allows them to learn and grow from these discussions and it takes you out of the “expert” role. You are NOT required to have all of the answers!
6. Refocus everything back on the group itself. If they are students, process in terms of bullying, acceptance, or any other issue that they are facing. If they are a business, process in terms of sales, marketing, production, promotion, etc. If they are a church, process in terms of spiritual concepts. Etc. (Sometimes this requires creativity to find a metaphor that relates to their purpose.)
7. “Matching” can help improve your team’s response. If you change your physical posture, tone, style of speech, energy level, etc. to match your team’s it will promote an environment where they are more likely to share. (This goes back to information from Neuro-Linguistic Programming.)

PROCESSING STYLES

The following are types of processing that we, at Acedelmar Consulting typically use as part of our teambuilding / community-building events:

3 C’s

When we reach the “Initiatives” section of this manual, you will see me refer to the “3 C’s” a lot. I usually use this as my main mode of processing; usually in conjunction with “Scale of 1-to-10”. The “3 C’s” are:

Communication

The ability to transfer thoughts and ideas to another person. The two components of communication are “talking” and “listening”. It takes, on average, four brain cells to be able to talk. Does that mean you’ll have anything important to say? Not necessarily. Do you know people who can talk for hours and say nothing? (Don’t point them out if they are in the group!) On the other hand, it takes a tremendous amount of skill to listen. This is the number one problem with groups. (Get used to it!)

My favorite example of communication is football. Not because I think football is the best sport out there, but because it truly is a team sport. In football, everyone goes to the huddle. How many people talk in the huddle? One. Why? That way everyone can hear what the play is. If everyone talked in the huddle, what would happen? The team would fail. No one would know when the ball would be snapped or even what play they are running!

Cooperation

The ability to work together. When communication works, cooperation is *usually* fairly easy to achieve. (Usually...)

My favorite example of cooperation is football. What would happen if the quarterback got sacked on the previous play, got up, decided he didn’t like his team, spiked the ball and walked off the field. First

of all, would this ever happen in real life? (Actually, I DID see that at a high school football game!) Second, what would happen to the team if they can't work together? They would fail. Everyone has to play, and everyone is important to the game. NEVER let the group leave anyone out of any activity – everyone contributes and, when all else fails they can still give encouragement!

Caring

The ability to watch out for and support each other. This means no criticizing or name-calling. It means, instead, that the group encourages one another and builds each other up. It means that if someone starts to fall, someone else holds them up. It means that if someone fails, the whole team gets up and starts over.

My favorite example of this is... Would you care to guess what it is? Football! Let me show you how caring works in football. How many of you can name an NFL quarterback, past or present? (Take answers.) How many of you can name a professional, NFL center, past or present? (You'll notice that fewer people can answer this one.) Why? A center only gets recognized at one time during the game, other than the starting line-up. When? When they make mistakes. What is a center's job? To snap the ball to the quarterback, get up, and stop the 350-pound man across from him from stomping him into the turf and killing the man behind him. Do centers get paid the most in the NFL? No. Do they get much recognition? No. Yet they stay in the game because they care for their team and want to see it win!

Final Note

Can a quarterback win a game and the team lose? No! How about the center? Not hardly! How about the kicker? Not even close. Each person needs the people around them. In other words, they win or lose as a... TEAM! Don't let them leave anyone behind! Don't let them alienate people from their group or bar someone from participating. Good luck!

COLORS (OR FACES)

This is great for nonverbal groups! Throw colored markers (paint chips, crayons, colored pencils, etc.) on the ground. Ask the group to pick a color that best represents their feeling in the last activity. Why did they pick the color they did? What does that color represent to them? Why did they feel that way? What could the group have done differently to meet their emotional needs? (The great thing is you can have two students take the same color and have it mean totally different things to each of them!)

Variation

Cut pictures out of newspapers of people's faces. Choose a wide range of expressions. Place those on the ground in front of the group and ask them to find an emotion that best represents them...



COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

Very simply, ask open-ended questions that either individuals or the group must answer. The questions listed below are basic and can serve to promote discussion. Pay close attention to what people say or how they act during an activity and then adapt your questions, accordingly. Some of these questions will also provide a deeper level of understanding about the fears of other group members, and will allow the team to rally around those who may have difficulties accomplishing a given activity.

“I am glad that...”

“I was scared when...”

“The first time I did that, I felt...”

“Success, to me, is...”

“A leader is someone who...”

“I learned that...”

Final Note

A long, long, long time ago, this was how I was trained to facilitate; and, while I still use it to this day, I will be the first to tell you that this will not work well with certain groups. Imagine a bunch of non-communicative sixth grade boys gathered in a circle after struggling on a task and asking someone to complete the sentence, “I was scared when...” (Crickets chirping. Lone wolf howling in the desert. Silence stretching out for the next fifteen minutes.) If you CAN use this with a group, do so! If not...well, that’s why we included so many different styles of processing!

FIST-TO-FIVE

If you have a non-communicative group, have them put out the number of fingers that represent the way they feel, with zero (fist) being “bad” and five (er..five?) being “good”. (Think of this as Paper-Rock-Scissors with a point.) Count to three and have them extend their fingers. Process the numbers in the same was as “Scale of 1 to 10”.



SCALE OF 1 TO 10

In my humble opinion, this is one of the simplest, non-threatening ways to achieve a dialogue with your group. It can be tailored to match specific questions that you want the group to answer and promotes discussion due to the nature of the processing style. This method also lends itself to a humorous perspective, as will be explained later. Very simply, it goes like this:

On a scale of 1 to 10...

- How well did you cooperate?

- How well did you communicate?
- How well did you talk to each other?
- How well did you listen to each other?
- How well did you trust each other?
- How much did you care for each other?

Now that the dialogue has begun, ask people why they said a specific number. Those who said that their group was a perfect “10”, why? Were they truly perfect? Those who said “1”, why? Was there nothing the group did right? Is there a general consensus as to what number best fits the group? What is it? Why? Can there ever be a perfect “10”? Why or why not? If yes, isn’t there always room for improvement in a group? If no, what about teams that function incredibly well? Is there no such thing as a perfect group? What if they got to pick who would be on their team, then could they come up with a “10”?

The way to add humor to the processing is to set the criteria for something being a “1” or a “10”. The typical way of doing this is by saying, “On a scale of 1 to 10, how did you do on Caring? One being that you hate each other’s guts and would happily allow a pack of rampaging kangaroo rats to stomp your fellow teammates into the ground the second I turn my back; and 10 being that you are best friends and would lay down your life, wallets/purses, favorite collection of Pez dispensers, etc. for the other members of the team.”

By doing this, you take the threat out of the dialogue. It takes some of the seriousness out of the discussion, but allows group members to feel more at ease as their answers, provided that they lie somewhere between the two extremes mentioned above. This also helps team to have a more realistic view of their performance, since they realize that they didn’t do as poorly as they could have (if they are, contact the National Guard to provide you with back-up) and gives them a goal (albeit somewhat unattainable) to strive for.

Remember, as with all processing, do not allow them to be too negative. If they made a mistake, that’s fine as long as they realize it! Your job is to also point out what they did *right*! Success in the goal (teamwork) is the overriding concern, and that cannot be accomplished if the group feels that they are a failure!

TARGET-SPECIFIC INITIATIVE PROBLEM DEBRIEFING TOPICS²⁵

In one of its books, Project Adventure recommended using these questions as a method of processing for groups. These questions, while great for mature, adult groups, lack something if you are dealing with immature and/or non-adult groups. (Remember: age is not a sign of maturity! I’ve had adults try to fight over activities, too!) Take them as a guide, not necessarily the final word!

Leadership and Follower-ship

Chiefs (leaders) and Indians (followers). How many were there? How many are necessary to a group? Does leadership ever change from activity to activity? Who was/were the leader(s) in this activity? Why?²⁶

Group Support

What is it? Where does it come from?

Peer Pressure

Negative or positive in its effects? (i.e. Did one member’s attitude sway the entire group?)

²⁵Silver Bullets, by Karl Rohnke, Project Adventure, Inc. © 1984.

²⁶Keep in mind that this was written a while ago and you should NEVER use “Chiefs” and “Indians” to describe a group!

Negativism-Hostility

How do you handle it? Why is it there? (Frustration? Fear?)

Efficiency

The step beyond just doing it... (Where could they improve in the activity?)

Competition

Against self, teams, a nebulous group or record... (Why did they want to accomplish the task set before them?)

Spotting

Why is it essential?

Sexism

Who plays what role?

Carry Over

Do these fabricated problems have real-life significance?

Fear, Physical and Psychological

Fear of height? Falling? Failure? Looking bad?

Joy-Pleasure

At the heart of it all – the *raison d'être*.

Final Note

Living and working with students from nearby reservations, I really am not sure I would ever ask, “How many Chiefs were there? How many Indians?” Actually, let’s face it, even if I didn’t live here, I still wouldn’t ask those questions! However, the two questions I use over and over from here is, “Do you know what “sexism” is? How did it play out in your group?” Why? Because any time there is lifting or supporting, it’s usually assigned to the guys; while encouragement and support is usually assigned to the gals. This is sexism.



WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

There is a theory called the Experiential Learning Model. It describes the way people learn from their experiences (Wow! Was that painfully obvious or what?). While there are a number of variations, the most basic approach stresses three main questions:

What?

What did you have to do? What was your task? What was your goal? How did you accomplish your task? Did it help to achieve your goal?

So What?

So what does it mean that you succeeded/failed? What lessons have you learned? Who was the leader? Were there too many leaders?

Now What?

Now what can you do with the knowledge you've gained? How will it benefit you in the rest of these activities? How will it benefit you in life?



CLOSURE QUESTIONS

At the end of the day, sit the group down once again. This time, the goal of processing is to find out how the group thinks they did overall. The following questions represent a sampling of closure questions:

1. What did you learn about yourself?
2. What did you learn about others?
3. How do you feel about yourself and others?
4. What new questions do you have about yourself and others?
5. What did you do today that you are particularly proud of?
6. What skill are you working on to improve?
7. How can you use what you learned today in other life situations?
8. Would you do anything different if you could restart the day with the knowledge you have now?
9. Was your behavior in the group today typical of the way you usually act in a group? Explain.

These questions serve to wrap up the day with a final group introspective moment. It also enables the group members to reflect on how far they have come throughout the course of the day.

PROCESSING QUESTIONS FOR SOME SPECIFIC GROUP TOPICS

CARING / TRUST

1. Were there any times in this activity where you had to trust someone in the group? (Be specific.)
2. Is it easier to trust some people than others? Why or why not? Are there certain types of people you don't trust? Why or why not? Are there times when it would be bad to trust someone else? If yes, when?
3. How do you increase your trust for a person or a team?
4. Starting today, how much did you trust your group? (Use "Scale of 1-to-10".) Now, how much do you trust your group? Is it better, the same or worse? Why?
5. What did you do today to show that you were trustworthy?
6. How much does your own personal fear affect your level of trust? Why?

COMMONALITIES

1. Have you discovered something new that you have in common with someone else on your team? If so, what? Do you think you have more in common with others that you haven't found yet?
2. In what ways are people in this group similar to others? Why? Does having things in common improve the overall performance of a team? Why or why not?
3. Are commonalities something that helps or hinders a group in completing tasks? Why?
4. Did anything in these activities help you to find others who have common ideas, fears, beliefs, etc?

COMMUNICATION

1. Did anyone have a time when they felt they had communicated effectively with someone – or everyone – in the group? What are some ways you can know that a message was successfully communicated to an individual or a team?
2. What were the primary channels of communication? (e.g. Nonverbal) How many different methods of communication were attempted? Which were the most effective? Why?
3. Did anyone have a time when they did not understand someone else when they were attempting to communicate? What went wrong with the attempt?
4. What can go wrong with communication? How can we fix these problems? If the problem is with the Sender, what could they do differently to try to improve their message? If the problem is with the Receiver, what could they do differently to try to improve their understanding of the message?
5. Did you learn anything about how you communicate as a team that you could use in later activities? If so, what?

COOPERATION

1. In what ways did the group cooperate on this activity? (Be specific.) How did cooperating benefit the team?
2. What are the benefits to cooperating with others?
3. Are there any problems with cooperating with others? Why or why not? What ideas were tried by the group? Were they successful? Why or why not? Did you have any ideas that were tried and then modified after discussion from the group?
4. Why is cooperation hard to do for some people?

CRITICISM

1. Why do people criticize the efforts of others? What are the most common ways that people express their criticism? Is criticism good or bad?
2. What are healthy, positive ways to express criticism of others? What motivates positive criticism? Have

you ever experienced positive criticism? If so, how did you react?

3. What are unhealthy, negative ways to express criticism of others? What motivates negative criticism? Have you ever experienced negative criticism? If so, how did you react?
4. Is it easier to offer constructive criticism or destructive criticism? Why?

DIVERSITY

1. In what ways are you different from others in your group? Are these areas important? Why or why not?
2. Do differences strengthen or weaken teams? Why? If there were no differences among teammates, would the team perform better or worse? Why?
3. When do differences prevent people/teams from succeeding? Why?



EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

1. Did anyone experience any strong emotions during this activity? If so, what? What, specifically, caused you to experience those emotions? Where did the emotions “come from”? (e.g. Head, gut, heart, etc.) What was the main thought behind the feeling?
2. Is the feeling one that you commonly experience? If so, why?
3. Do you normally express your feelings? Why or why not? What types of feelings are the easiest to express? Why? Are some feelings not appropriate to express in a group? If so, which ones?
4. What are the benefits to expressing your feelings? What are the risks?
5. Were any feelings expressed non-verbally during the activity? If so, how? Did the group notice the non-verbal communication? Why or why not?

FOLLOWING

1. Who was/were the leader(s) in this activity? Why?
2. How did it make you feel to take direction from them? Why?
3. What are the traits of a good follower? Are you good at following others? What does it mean when people have a problem following others? How can you improve your ability to follow others for future activities?

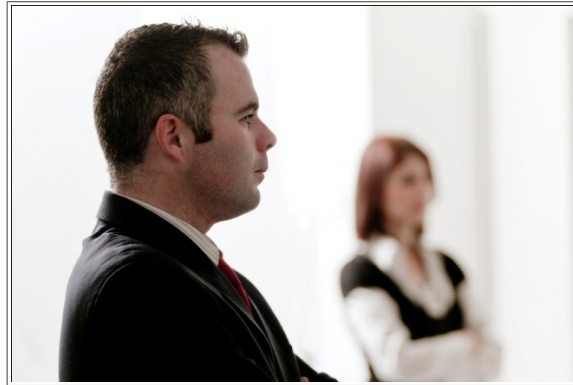
JUDGING OTHERS

1. Is it easier to work with a team you chose or one that was picked for you? Why? What ideas were tried by the group? Were they successful? Why or why not? Did you have any ideas that were tried and then modified after discussion from the group?
2. In what ways do we judge others? What are the common things that we look at?
3. If we judge others, what is the standard we use? Is it objective? Is it fair?
4. How does judging others impact the performance of a team? If you are judged by someone in your group (e.g. They don't think you're very smart.), how does that make you feel? What happens to your relationship with your team?

5. What are the advantages to not judging other people?

LEADERSHIP

1. Who was/were the leader(s) in this activity? Why?
2. How did it make you feel to be giving direction to others? Why?
3. What are the traits of a good leader? Are you good at leading others? What does it mean when people have a problem leading others? How can you improve your ability to lead others for future activities?
4. Do you always have to have the same leader for each activity? What are the benefits with having the same leader? What are the problems with having the same leader?
5. Did you always follow the leader, even if you disagreed with the idea? Why or why not?
6. Is it difficult to step up and lead? Why or why not?



LISTENING

1. Who had ideas that they shared with the group? Were all ideas listened to equally? Why or why not? Were any ideas ignored? Why or why not?
2. What ideas were tried by the group? Were they successful? Why or why not? Did you have any ideas that were tried and then modified after discussion from the group?
3. What are some things that can interfere with listening to others? How can these problems be fixed for future activities?
4. When you are given a task like this, do you find yourself listening better, the same or worse than you normally would? Why?

HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS²⁷

Lack of teambuilding spirit in the group:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Do: | Consider appointing a leader for activities.
Process during the activity and focus on the team.
Review initial group goals. |
| Don't: | Feed into it or encourage competitiveness within the group.
Ignore the lack of teambuilding spirit.
Lose your composure.
Single one person out or embarrass someone. |

²⁷Adapted from material developed by Craig Lee, BEST Teams.

Unsuccessful effort by the group:

- Do: Look at why it's not working, ask the group why.
Praise effort currently made. (If it can be done sincerely.)
Redefine success.
Refocus the group.
Stop the group and discuss or teach communication techniques.
- Don't: Give the group the answer.
Lecture.
Take it personally.
Use negative terms.

Group member makes disrespectful comments:

- Do: Always speak with the Lead Facilitator concerning the details and for any follow-up.
Model appropriate adult behavior and conduct.
Provide some guidelines for speaking and addressing you. (If the behavior continues with a youth group, have another adult take care of the situation after you have addressed it with the group.)
Review "Full Value Contract". (If used.)
- Don't: Ignore the situation.
Let it grow.
Let it hinder your ability as a Facilitator.

Participant refuses to participate:

- Do: Acknowledge the person's role and importance to the group.
Be empathetic, not sympathetic.
Be flexible.
Break goals down into easily accomplished tasks.
Check in with the person to see if they are willing to share with the group the reason for not participating.
Help them to find alternative ways to participate.
Listen and realize their limits.
Remember "Challenge by Choice".
Smile and use tension breakers
Take deep breaths.
- Don't: Assume that participant needs to do it all in order to have a successful experience.
Give them too much attention.
Humiliate.
Laugh at the person.
Ostracize.
Stop the activity.
Wait until it's too late to deal with the situation.
Yell at the person.

The advice-giving or controlling participant:

- Do:
- Acknowledge good advice.
 - Ask if everyone is being heard.
 - Give encouragement to try out a different role.
 - If the problem becomes too severe, discreetly speak with the person alone.
 - Move quickly to the next point.
 - Reinforce the emphasis on teamwork.
 - When soliciting input, go around the circle to ensure everyone has a voice.
- Don't:
- Expect the group to handle it on its own.
 - Ignore what they have to offer to the group.
 - Let them control the group.
 - Resort to sarcasm or embarrassing the participant.
 - Verbally attack them out of frustration.
 - Wait to address the problem.



Initiatives And Group Games

(Rev. 3.0)

HOW TO USE THE FOLLOWING PAGES...

Name of the Activity

Props: What you need to do this activity.
Space: How much room do you need to do this activity.
Credit: Where did I get this from?

Activity Level: See below.
Difficulty Level: See below.
Group Size: See below.

Activity Level

How much will participants move. The scale goes from “1” (sitting down, slight movement) to “5” (running around like crazy!) This will help you choose activities based on the physical condition of your participants.

Difficulty Level

How tough this activity is to do. The scale goes from “1” (easy for most groups) to “5” (be prepared for some stress and aggravation!) This will help you to choose activities based on the problem-solving capabilities of your participants.

Group Size

How many participants are recommended to play at any one time. The scale goes “Small” (8 -15 participants); Medium (12-24 participants); and “Large” (20+ participants). Please notice that there is an overlap in the categories, so the Facilitator will have to decide if, based on the performance of their team, they should lead the activity. A classification of “Any” means it can be adapted for any size group.

Story

Anecdotes, ways to frame the games, and just plain silliness.

Rules

What you need to know to play the game safely.

Facilitator’s Notes

Things to be aware of or ways to modify the activity.

Focus

What can you reasonably expect the team to learn from this activity.

Processing

Sample questions to ask. Feel free to ignore these and use your own!

Spotting

From a safety standpoint, what do you need to be aware of?

Records

These are records from other groups and camps. I sometimes use “records” to motivate groups to achieve. If you beat a record, let me know and I will update this manual.



MISCELLANEOUS

This section includes activities that don't fit in other categories. This includes ways to divide up teams, additional ways to focus on goals, etc.

ATTITUDE CHECK

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Church Youth Group

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S

Story

There are times when you will see/sense that your group is frustrated. This is a quick way to check their level and find out where they are at.

Rules

1. When someone in the group – and this can be participants as well as the Facilitator – calls for an “Attitude Check”, participants must immediately put their thumbs out. (If it’s safe to do so!)
2. “Thumbs Up” means that they are doing okay; “Thumbs Sideways” means that they are struggling but functioning; “Thumbs Down” means that they are struggling.

Processing

You need to be aware of the physical, mental, and emotional state of your group. If you see someone with their thumb anywhere other than up, take a break. Sit down with your group and find out what the problem is and determine what, if anything, can be done to fix it. By allowing the group to call it on themselves means that they will have a tool that they can use when they go back to the “real world”.



COMMONALITIES

Props: Pencil, Paper (Optional)
Space: Any
Credit: QuickSilver (pg. 76)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: All

Story

This is a game Maria picked up at a Project Adventure Training. PA – and Karl Rohnke in QuickSilver – use it as an “Ice Breaker”. We tend to use it as an ice breaker, too, but we also use it as a “transition game” or during break times. It helps to keep the conversation going. Feel free to shuffle the clusters frequently to allow participants to interact with others in their team.

Rules

1. Have the group divide itself into clusters. (You can determine the size of the clusters based on the

number of people in the group.) Give each group a pencil and piece of paper. (We don't use pencils and papers if it's a "transition game".)

2. Working together, they have to come up with a list of things that are common to all people in the group.
3. The list of common things cannot include items that are obvious just by looking at them. (e.g. We all wear glasses. We all have brown hair. Etc.) Also, they should avoid phrases like, "We all come from ____ school/group/business." (We know that already.)

Sample Commonalities

- Are vegetarians.
- Cat owners.
- Dog owners.
- Have the same number of brothers / sisters.
- Ride motorcycles.
- Speak a foreign language.



DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: M-L

Story

We had a group show up and they had not divided themselves into teams. Since the overwhelming goal of the group was to break down "cliques", we came up with this method of dividing teams. Note: You only get to use this ONCE with a group!

Rules

1. Figure out the number of teams you need to have (i.e. six).
2. Tell the large group to break into groups of ____ (in this case six). This is their chance to get together and hang out with their best friends! Good stuff, right?
3. When their group is together, have them stand, shoulder-to-shoulder, in a straight line. Have another group of friends line up behind them in the same fashion.
4. Spread the friends out so that there is about three feet of room between each person.
5. Now, you have to view the group of friends as columns of people instead of rows. Take the people in the left column off to the side. They are now a team. The next column is another team. Etc.

6. I know it's sneaky, but it causes groups to interact more with others, especially with people they may not know all that well.



DOLPHIN GOLF

Props: Soft Rings
Space: Open
Credit: Project Adventure

Activity Level: 3-5
Difficulty Level: 3-5
Group Size: S - M

Story

This game came back with Maria from a Project Adventure Training she went to. At camp, we always like “transition games” – activities to play while walking from one place to another. This is a great transition game!

Today, we are going to turn you all into dolphins. Are you ready? ***Poof!*** You are now dolphins! Wow! Something went wrong with that trick... You are all dolphins, but you seem to be a strange breed of short-nosed dolphins. Well, modern technology is good and we are going to provide you with an artificial “nose” to help you play in the dolphin games! (Put your arm up by your nose – like a “pit check” – and extend it out past your head. Angles are allowed...) We are now ready to play!

Rules

- One person is selected to throw the ring. (Do NOT use a weighted, dive ring!)
- The rest of the team runs ahead to catch the ring. Catches can only be made, however, by sticking your artificial “nose” (a.k.a “hand”) through the middle of the ring.
- If a catch is successful, that person becomes the new thrower and the rest of the team runs out in front of them. The team can only advance on a successful catch.
- If a catch is unsuccessful, the team returns the ring to the thrower and they try again.
- For fun, make this a competition between two teams.

DUCKS AND WATER

Props: Plastic Ducks, Glass of Water
Space: Any
Credit: Craig Lee

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: S - M

Story

I first learned this activity from Craig Lee, my Teambuilding Director at YMCA Camp Wewa in Apopka, Florida. I'm not sure if he found it elsewhere or if it is his own creation. Either way, I do enjoy this activity!

Rules

- Have everyone take a duck. Place the water in the middle of the group.
- Ducks represent the responsibilities of the group. Everyone must carry their responsibilities. You cannot hide from them (put them in a pocket), pass them off to other people (no delegating), or lay them aside (put them down.)
- Water represents the goals of the group as a whole. You never want to set your goals off to the side; they need to be with you at all times.
- Throughout the day, the group needs to all have their ducks and the water, even during meals. At no point can the group ever set these aside.

Processing

Communication. There is an interesting phenomenon that sometimes happens: one person has an idea (i.e. tie the duck into their shoelace) and, without speaking, others will follow suit. This gives you an interesting chance to process non-verbal communication.



GROUP CONTRACT

Props: Easel Pad, Green/Red/Blue Markers
Space: Any
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1 - 5
Group Size: S - M

Story

I have seen multiple variations of this activity. In Cowstails and Cobras II (Page 11) it's referred to as a "Full Values Contract"; I've seen it written out; I've seen it done with "thumbs-up/down"; I've seen it as an introduction; I've seen it... Yeah... Very popular activity. Here is the contract at its most basic and is applicable to almost any group you will work with.

Rules

Prior to the beginning of the teambuilding program, sit the group down as a whole and discuss the activities they will be involved with. Talk about the "3 C's", the challenges they will face, the opportunities they will have and their roles within the team. When you have completed explaining the experience, prepare a Group Contract as follows:

- On the first marker board, labeled “Goals”, have the group list their personal and professional goals for the day. These can be anything provided that they are appropriate. (I have had people – usually male – who say, “My goal is to drop someone and send them to the hospital. Obviously don’t include this.)
- On the second marker board, labeled “Sabotage”, have the group discuss what actions and attitudes can cause the group to fail. Process this list when completed. Most of the actions listed as Sabotage are choices made by individuals and that affect the whole team. (I have never had a group say, “We are all going to have poor attitudes.” However, I have had individuals with poor attitudes and that negativity has pulled down the entire group! Individual choices can have team consequences!)
- Finally, on a sheet of paper, have the group create an “I Will” contract. These are the ground rules they will propose and that all must agree to in order to have a successful experience. Before you write ANYTHING on the “I Will” sheet, make sure that everyone agrees to the statement. If not, modify it to become acceptable to all. If not everyone can agree, drop the item! (I have watched a Facilitator destroy a team before they even began because they could not “agree to disagree”; it was “all or nothing”!)
- When the “I Will” sheet is complete and all rules are agreed to, have everyone sign the contract. (I even have all teachers, Facilitators, etc. sign it so that all people in the group know what to expect.)

You can use this as a way to allow the team to judge its own performance or as a form of behavior modification, if needed. If someone is struggling, I usually take a break, walk them over to the posters and ask, “Did you agree to this statement? Is this your signature? How are you doing on this?” Usually, that’s all I have to say...



PRESIDENTS

Props: Pencil, Paper
Space: Any
Credit: Northern Lakes Impact Center Staff

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1 - 5
Group Size: S

Story

We were playing a game in which you had to shout out the answers. My team was asked, “Name the Presidents of the United States.” I shouted out a couple and then my brain seemed to shut off. During that pause, a teammate started rattling off others I had not said. She did pretty good but eventually stalled out. As she paused, another teammate began to fill in gaps. The timer beep after 30 seconds and, in that time, we had over 30 Presidents on our list.

A short time later, I was asked to do a Teambuilding presentation for a church. Trying to figure out what would be a good way to lead an activity for over 100 people in an enclosed space with no ability to move around, I remembered this game. A short time later, I was leading my first large-group, sedentary, collaborative

Teambuilding activity!

Rules

- Everyone is given a piece of paper and a pencil. The timer begins and they have one minute to list as many Presidents as they can. When the time is up, determine who had the most Presidents on their list.
- Now, they are to work together in teams of four, preferably using the people sitting around them. The timer begins and the team now has one minute to list as many Presidents as they can. (They can “recycle” their lists from the previous round, if they think of it!) When the time is up, determine which group had the most Presidents on their list.
- Repeat once more, if desired, with even bigger teams.

Processing

Were you able to come up with all of the Presidents on your own? When you divided into teams, how many of you had a teammate name at least one President that you had forgotten? What does this say about the abilities of teams verses the abilities of individuals?

QUESTIONS

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Maria Emmerich

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1 - 5
Group Size: S

Story

They say, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” And, while that is not exactly true, I usually do tend to stick to certain activities when I lead Teambuilding. I am a creature of habit and, whether good or bad, it is the way I function. So it may come as a surprise that I have a new-to-me activity in this manual!

My staff and I wanted to do some Teambuilding for ourselves. Rather than having one of us Facilitating – which doesn’t make them a part of the team – we brought in Maria Emmerich, a past Facilitator of mine. During lunch, she pulled out this game and I was hooked! This is a great way to get to know others and can be returned to throughout the day! (That’s why it’s in the “Miscellaneous” section.)

Rules

I am going to ask a question. As an individual – not a team – you are going to think about it and decide if it is something you want to answer. But, before we do that, there are some rules:

1. This is “Challenge By Choice”. I will not force you to answer.
2. You are allowed to share as much or as little as you want to.
3. You must be respectful with any responses you give to other people.

Sample Questions

- What is your favorite color? Why?
- What was the happiest moment in your life?
- What was the most embarrassing moment in your life?
- What was the saddest moment in your life?
- Describe a situation where you had to lean on others to get through.
- Complete the sentence: One thing I wish my team knew about me is ____.



WARM-UPS

I know a number of programs simply jump in to the bigger activities. Our programs ALWAYS start with some sort of group warm-ups prior to moving on. This will give you the ability to judge for yourself how participants interact with each other, how receptive they are to new ideas, where their comfort zones are, etc. One or two activities are all that you should expect to lead from this section prior to beginning unless you feel it is necessary for the group.

Do not expect to spend much time processing these experiences, although there are always exceptions to the rule. These are here to get people moving, laughing and interacting.

BUMPITY BUMP BUMP BUMP

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: Covenant Pine Bible Camp

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Setup

Circle the group with you, the facilitator, standing in the middle of the circle. Point decisively at one of the circled folks and say “Bumpity Bump Bump Bump”. The person you pointed to must say “Bump” before you finish. If not, they are in the middle. If they get their “bump” in, then you must go in search of other prey.

Pretty easy, right? Now, we need to add a variation: If you shout “Left Bumpity Bump Bump Bump.” The person you pointed to must respond by saying the first name of the person to the left, before you finish exclaiming, “Bumpity Bump Bump Bump.” If they flub the name or completely forget who’s who, that person takes your place in the center, and subsequently attempts to trap someone else. It obviously pays to know who is on your left... Unless, of course, the person in the center exclaims “Right!” before pointing and saying, “BBB,” then you must name the person to your right.)

Variations

For added fun, you can call out other things that involve three people to complete the shape. These shapes include:

- Elephant** The person pointed to crosses their arms, bends one elbow and grabs their nose (this is the trunk). The people on either side make half circles with their arms to become ears.
- Elvis** The person in the middle shouts, “A hunka, hunka burnin’ love!” while swiveling their hips. Those on either side becoming swooning fans.
- Hawaii** The person pointed to becomes a palm tree. The people immediately to the left and right become hula dancers.
- Monster** The middle person lies down and flat on their back. The person to the left shouts, “It’s alive! It’s alive!” The middle person begins to sit up stiffly (like Frankenstein) while the person to the right shouts, “Yes Master! Yes Master!”

Make up your own. When we played this with our camp, we had over 100 people doing this, multiple people in the center and over 15 variations to keep track of! (Talk about stressful!) There are, at last count, 20 trillion different shapes you can make. Be creative and have fun!

GROUP YELL

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Camp Game

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: All

Story

We are going to do something that requires stamina, skill, strength, concentration and that each of the

participants will have to pay me a million dollars for the sheer honor of being able to attempt! (I can dream, can't I?) We are going to yell...

Ready? Yell! Come on! My grandmother can yell better than you! Yell! Can't you hold it any longer? Yell! I bet I could out-shout you! Yell! Okay, now let's get to the less-serious work...



HANDSHAKES

Props: None
Space: Any (Depending on group size.)
Credit: YMCA Camp St. Croix

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: All

Story

It's terrible, but I don't know where this game came from. I can't find reference to it in any of my books. I do remember it being presented at a Facilitator Training at YMCA Camp St. Croix, but I can't recall where it came from before then...if anywhere.

Rules

1. Go up to someone in the group and introduce yourself. Preferably this should be someone you don't know well (or at all)!
2. Tell them one interesting thing about yourself that they would not know by looking at you. (This does NOT have to be a deep, dark secret!)
3. Make up an interesting "secret" handshake. It can be as short and simple or long and complicated as you want; the only trick is you have to be able to remember it! (If you see someone doing a 30+ second one, you may want to caution them to do something shorter.)
4. When everyone is done, repeat Rules 1 -3 two more times. The game is ready!
5. Now, when you say "go" (this is a timed event), they must run to the first person they met, do their secret handshake, run to the second one... Well, you get the idea. To indicate that they are finished, have them place their hands on their knees or on their heads, for those who can't bend.
6. Feel free to give them a couple of runs at breaking their own record!

Variations

YMCA Camp St. Croix played an interesting variation. In it, you had to pick from one of the "historical handshakes" that were presented. You also could not use the same handshake with different people, so you had to talk with others to figure out who you could partner with. (This is typically way too complicated for youth

programs; most adults struggle with it too!)

- Farmer** One person interweaves their fingers and points their thumbs down. The other person pulls on the thumbs to “milk” the cow.
- Lumberjack** Each person makes two fists, pointing their thumbs straight up. Person One wraps his fist around the thumb of Person Two. Person Two uses their other hand and wraps their fist around Person One. Etc. At this point, they pull their hands back and forth in a sawing motion.
- Miner** Uses same hand set up as “Lumberjack” but you point the hands to the side and pretend to shovel.

Again, as with “Bumpity-Bump-Bump”, creativity counts!

Records

Under 25 People - 7 seconds (3M Regional Sales Representatives – 2003)
25 – 50 People - 8 seconds (Thomson-Gale Sales Team – 2007)
50 People or Over - 11 seconds (Bluff Creek Elementary, MN – 2003)



I LIKE PEOPLE WHO...

Props: Spots, Carpet Squares, Or Other Markers
Space: Any (Depending on group size.)
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S - M

Story

This is one of those “the Facilitator should participate” activities. It doesn’t require much effort on your part, and is a very nice “mixer” (literally) activity for a group. Lay the spots on the ground in a circle, making sure to leave a few feet of space between each. Have each person stand on a spot around you. You stand in the middle with no carpet square beneath your feet. *Sniff* Do you feel left out? That’s okay; your situation will change in just a second...

Looking around the group, you make the statement, “I like people who _____.” The blank can be anything (e.g. shave, comb their hair, have black on their clothes, brush their teeth, are alive, etc.). When you complete your statement, the people in the group who match the criteria you set must leave their carpet square

and run for another one. At the same time, you, stuck in the middle, must try to get to a carpet square. The person left without one is the new “it” and must go to the middle.

Note: This game is a very good way to get to know people and tends to be very non-threatening for most groups. The running isn’t very much, and so can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. This can also be adapted to work anywhere. You don’t even need carpet squares; you just need to mark the floor somehow, though preferably in a non-permanent fashion.



JANEPAULSUEFREDIRADAVEPEGGY OR HUSTLE BUSTLE

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Cowstails and Cobras II (pgs. 66 – 67)

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S - M

Story

I use a slightly different set-up than Project Adventure does. Mine goes something like this: I bet you that I can make at least one of you forget your name. Want to bet? This is a very unique name game. It doesn’t do a whole lot for groups trying to learn and remember each other’s names, but it requires participants to at least know their own name, and that’s a start...

Rules

1. Circle the group.
2. Starting with yourself, say your name.
3. The person to your right says their name and so on until it gets back to you again.
4. Now, you are going to do this as a race. As soon as you say your name, the stopwatch begins; it stops when the person to your left (the final person) says their name.
5. For large groups, have teams compete against each other for speed.

Processing

How well did your group do? Can you do better? Of course you can! Try it again. Is there any way you can think of which might allow you to go faster? How? Does the group care to try it? Why do people sometimes freeze when it’s their turn? Why might they forget their own name?

THE MACHINE

Props: None
Space: Any (Depending on group size.)
Credit: Praxis Training

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 2 - 4
Group Size: S - M

Story

I first learned this game in my High School Theater program. (Thanks Sue!) I was reminded of it when I went through a Teambuilding event with a Facilitator who had been to Praxis Training. Someone told me PA also has a variation of this, but I don't know what it is called...

Rules

1. Assemble a list of different "machines". (I typically use copiers, computers, etc.)
 2. Have the team assemble the "machine" in as short of a time frame as possible. They must be able to show how something moves through the machine and duplicate its moving parts.
 3. The only "props" they may use to accomplish this is their own bodies and anything they have on them. (Remember: creativity counts!)
-

MIXER OR CATEGORIES

Props: None
Space: Any (Depending on group size.)
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: All

Story

None, really. I have seen variations of this game in a lot of different literature. "Mixer" is the camp game name; "Categories" comes from QuickSilver (pgs. 85 – 87). This is not a profound game; just something to get you all moving. It can also be used to divvy up teams, if you're looking for a creative way to accomplish that...

Rules

1. Have the group stand in a large blob in the middle of an open area.
2. Tell the group you are going to ask a question. They must decide how they would answer the question and then, as quickly as possible, need to form into groups with other people who answer the same way.

Sample Questions

- What do you like to drink in the morning: orange juice, milk, coffee or other?
 - What state were you born in?
 - What color are your eyes?
 - What is your favorite meal: breakfast, lunch or dinner?
 - What is your favorite television channel: ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, PBS or other?
 - When you reach for toilet paper in the bathroom, are you a folder or a scruncher?
-

ORANGE TEETH

Props: Oranges, Plastic Knives
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pg. 147)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S

Story

I learned this game long before I ever read Silver Bullets. (In fact, I used to do this all the time as a child!) However, I will give credit to Karl Rohnke for actually writing it down.

Tyme-Warner, the megalithic movie corporation, has a problem: their new movie, “Alien Dentists from the Great Beyond”, is waayyy over budget. The script has called for the roughly 3,400,192 pairs of artificial teeth and so, after looking through a few hundred reputable special effects dentists (none of which they could afford) they gave you the contract.

(Hand out an orange and a knife to each participant.) You each have before you an orange. These oranges represent the state-of-the-art, movie magic, artificial denture product and you must create a pair of false teeth. The group, as a whole, will decide whether or not they think your design is movie-quality or whether you should go back to the drawing board. You will have five minutes to create your teeth. Begin...

Note: Barring an EXTREME lack of creativity (e.g. setting the orange down and refusing to do anything), all entries should be judged “acceptable”. Encourage the group to point out the positive things about each set of fruity dentures. Have them leave their teeth in as you process this activity. It makes people laugh and it tends to lower defenses to the point that the group has fun and feels very much un-threatened!



SCREAM RUN

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: Boy Scouts

Activity Level: 5
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: All

Story

None. I suppose I could make one up about being chased by psychotic, slingshot-wielding chipmunks, but that would take too long!

Rules

1. Mark a line on the ground and have your group stand behind it.
2. One at a time, a participant begins to run, screaming at the top of their lungs.
3. When the participant runs out of breath, they stop and stay where they finished, marking the total distance they covered while screaming. (Only one breath per run, please!)
4. In a hurry? Have everyone stand on a line (football fields work very well), explain the rules and then shout “Go!”

SCREAMING TOES

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Crescent Lake Bible Camp

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: Any

Story

Want a quick, impromptu game to help people relax? Try this one! There is no setup, and there are no props needed, and the rules are very, very simple! While it may seem childish, it is a lot of fun. It’s also a great way to de-stress if the team is struggling.

Rules

1. Have everyone stand in a tight circle, shoulder-to-shoulder.
2. Tell everyone to look at their toes.
3. Tell everyone to look at someone else’s toes.
4. Tell everyone to look up.
5. If two players end up staring at each when they look up, they scream loudly and fall down.
6. The rest of the circle closes up and the game continues until you get down to 1 or 2 players left.



WHAT’S YOUR SIGN

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: North Park College

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S

Story

None. Just a great way to learn names for us kinesthetic-type people!

Rules

1. Circle the group.
2. I, the Facilitator, state my name for the group and then make a (polite) gesture that indicates something that represents me. (I'm an illusionist so I mime pulling a rabbit out of a hat.) We're not looking for deep, dark secrets; pick a hobby, interest, etc.
3. The group says my name as they are making my sign.
4. Go around the room like that. For an added memory boost, have them repeat all of the signs that came before prior to moving on to the next person!



WORDLES

Props: Wordles Sheet(s)
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pgs. 102 – 105)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

“Wordles” are a classic activity. I remember doing them in grade school which would pre-date the book Silver Bullets. However, I do have to hand it to Karl Rohnke for putting together a wonderful collection of them in one place.

Rules

1. Each Wordle – a word picture – represents a common word phrase.
2. Working as a team – or individually – figure out what each Wordle represents.
3. For a cooperative learning moment, have individuals work on their Wordle sheet. After a time, have them find a partner and work together. Merge groups as often as desired. Working together, they can come up with so much more than on their own.

Please see the Wordles listed in Silver Bullets. You can also find many different pages of them in Quiet Riot, by Darcy and Jody Kuhn © 2001. I've also found some online by Googling “Wordles”. One site that occasionally posts new sheets is <http://www.blipblog.net/wordles-for-kids/>. (I make no guarantee on the content from this website! It is for reference only!)

WORLD MAP

Props: Cone
Space: Any (Depending on group size.)
Credit: Uncertain

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: All

Story

I learned this game at a Facilitator Training down in Florida. I seem to remember Project Adventure having a similar game, but I cannot recall find it in my books. This is a great mixer game to promote conversations. Just be careful playing this with directionally-challenged people! (Or maybe that's the best group to play with...)

Rules

1. Place a cone on the ground in the middle of a wide-open area.
2. Tell the group that this cone represents the town that we are in right now. Point out which direction is north and then have everyone stand near the cone.
3. Tell everyone that they must now move to the area, based on the location in relation to the cone, which represents the place where they were born. Stress that they need to communicate so that they end up in the appropriate location.
4. Take a moment to process their answers and let them find some common ground.
5. Now, have the group find their favorite vacation spot, the place they would love to live, etc. Process the answers in between to build common ground.





GROUP CHALLENGES

This section is included to provide you with some games and activities that require more mental thought than physical activities. We typically use them in our programs as a “break”, as stand-alone activities or for programs that extend over multiple weeks. (We like to give them a challenge to work on prior to their next program date.) These can be adapted to work with participants of all ages.

BALANCE THE EGG

Props: Eggs, Flat Table (or Floor)
Space: Any
Credit: Uncertain

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

I was given this puzzle in high school and I have since played it at other Facilitator Trainings. I really don't know who to give credit to for this one, however. The task, itself, is very simple: all you have to do is balance the egg on the point without using anything other than the egg and the hard, flat surface. (Counters, tile floors, etc. work very well. Carpeting does NOT!)

Rules

1. The egg must remain "intact" (e.g. no egg innards leaking all over the floor).
2. You cannot hold the egg or support it in any way.
3. You cannot use anything other than the flat surface to balance your egg on.
4. That's it! (There are no real tricks to this activity; it's very straightforward.)

Solution

If you want the solution, read the next words from right to left:

.talf si tniop eht taht os yltneg gge eht paT

If done carefully, you won't have innards becoming "outards" and the "point" is now very, very easy to balance the egg on!

BALANCE THE NAILS

Props: Balance the Nails Activity
Space: Any
Credit: Teams Kit Manual (pgs. 155 – 156)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 5
Group Size: S

Story

This is a CLASSIC of Teambuilding. I did it in Boy Scouts and have seen it everywhere. I am giving credit to the Teams Kit Manual, by Learned Enterprises, Inc. since they reminded me of it, although I do play it a little differently:

Every thousand years, the test is given to a new group of adventurers; you have been chosen! Now is the time to pass the test, prove your worth, earn fame and fortune, make your mark in history, win every major sporting event, free Han from Jabba's palace, and, once and for all, prove that Elvis is still alive! (No small task...earning fame and fortune, that is.)

Okay, enough goofing off. (We'll do more of that later!) The object of this activity is to balance all twelve nails (or any even number of nails) on the single nail pounded into the block.

Rules

1. You are only allowed to use the materials provided.

2. All nails must balance on the single nail already in the block; not being propped up or supported by any means. (No nail is allowed to lean; all must be suspended.)
3. The nails must remain balanced for at least ten seconds.

Facilitator's Note

This activity, while possessing no immediate physical threat, can lead, quite rapidly, to conflict. Different people, different ideas and a lack of communication and cooperation skills can quickly tear a group apart. Do NOT use this as a, "Hi! Welcome to Low Ropes!" activity! Use this after you have done some communication training first!

Solution

In this case, a picture is worth a thousand words:



Records

Most Solutions - Union City Middle School "At-Risk" program, 1998. These boys – working independently during the week between programs – came up with seven distinct solutions! (Unfortunately, I can only remember two... I should have taken pictures!)

BRIDGES

Props: Sunday Newspaper, Tape
Space: Any
Credit: Boy Scouts

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 5
Group Size: All

Story

You are the best, the brightest – the cheapest – construction team in town. And, in this age of budget cutbacks, you have been kept very busy! Today, you have been hired to build a bridge and, since we are "green-focused", you need to build it out of (mostly) natural materials.

Rules

1. Divide the group up into teams of 8 – 10 participants.
2. Give the following materials to each team: an entire Sunday newspaper section and a roll of tape.
3. Using only these materials, the group must build a structure capable of supporting one of its team

members. For an added challenge, have them build a structure spanning a set distance – say 1-2 feet – that is strong enough to allow a person to walk across.

4. The time limit for this activity is as follows: five minutes to plan (with no construction allowed); fifteen minutes for actual construction; and a bonus of two minutes to “wrap up” constructions but only if ALL teams agree.

Facilitator’s Note

So, why is this Activity Level 2? Wait until you see how hard the group has to work to roll and/or fold the sheets of newsprint in a desperate attempt to complete their structure within the time allotted. (At times I’ve seen it become so frenzied that it could have reached a “5”!) If you are working with a group for an extended period of time, I would recommend posing the problem to them during one of the sessions, allow them time to think about it and have them attempt it during a following session.

Records

3’ Span - YMCA “P&P” Training, 2004. (One Sunday paper + one roll of scotch tape.)

BUILD A BOAT / SLED

Props: See list below
Space: Open
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

I’ve been doing this game for years. My only qualifier is that if you are leading “Build A Boat”, you NEED to have someone with current Lifeguard certification present. For the safety of your participants, there can be no exception for this rule!



Rules

1. If you’re working with a large group, divide them into teams of 5 – 10 people.
2. Give the following materials to each team: 2 large boxes, 1 roll of duct tape, 2 garbage bags and one paddle/oar. (This is the minimum amount of materials.)
3. Give the teams five minutes to plan. During that time they may look at their materials, but they cannot begin any construction until the construction time begins.
4. Depending on the time of year, they must either build a boat that will safely carry one of their teammates across a small body of water (pool, river, etc.) or a sled which will hold up as one (or two) of their teammates sled downhill.

5. The time limit for this activity is as follows: five minutes to plan (with no construction allowed); fifteen minutes for actual construction; and a bonus of two minutes to “wrap up” constructions but only if ALL teams agree.
6. Good luck and happy sailing (or sledding)!

Facilitator’s Note

I have recently stopped simply handing out materials. I put everything in piles of random size and shape. If there is less cardboard, I provide more duct tape or garbage bags or both. Better boxes receive less other materials. I then allow each team to look at the materials prior to the event to determine which pile they want. Then we play a game (e.g. Knee Coup) to determine the order for the teams to select their piles and the game begins. (This allows me to not have to scavenge for boxes that are all the same shape and size.)

EGG LANDERS

Props: Eggs, Soda Straws, Tape, Napkins
Space: Any
Credit: Boy Scouts

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 5
Group Size: All

Story

I’ve played this game since Boy Scouts and needed to pass it to get a grade in High School Physics. Other than that, this is also a classic of Teambuilding and a picture of it appears on the starting page of this section! So, with that introduction, here’s the story:



NASAL, the National Air and Space Administration, Ltd., is looking for a top notch team to help them land an astronaut on Mars. They scoured the world to find the best, the brightest (the cheapest) people they could. They found you. The goal is to build a “Lander” that will allow your egg to survive a fall from 5’, 10’ and, the supreme test, 20’ up in the air! (Or whatever heights you have available to you.)

Rules

1. You may only use the materials provided to build a Mars Lander. These include:
 - Twelve Stress-Transfer Reduction/Absorption Wires (“STRAWS” for short).
 - Two 12-inch pieces of Trans-lateral Adhesive-Propertied Edification (“TAPE”).
 - One napkin. (Sorry, no cute names...)
 - One Ersatz (“substitute” for those of you who are wondering) Government Guy/Gal (“EGG”).

2. If you mangle your materials, there are no “spare parts”. (NASAL is looking for cheap help, remember?)
3. The time limit for this activity is as follows: five minutes to plan (with no construction allowed); fifteen minutes for actual construction; and a bonus of two minutes to “wrap up” constructions but only if ALL teams agree.
4. If your Lander survives, it is allowed to move onto the next challenge. (If you have more than one survive through the end, do a good, old-fashioned egg toss to see who the winner is!)

Facilitator’s Note

Place a garbage bag below the “landing site” to speed up clean up.

HAMMEROIDS

Props: Carpenter’s Hammer, 12” ruler, 14” Rope
Space: Any
Credit: QuickSilver (pg. 160)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 5
Group Size: S

Story

I would like to deny anything to do with the naming of this activity. A man from Project Adventure New Zealand, created the name and the game. For all of the overly sensitive youth and adults that you work with, feel free to change it. Names such as “Hammer, Ruler and Rope” are more aesthetically pleasing, but lack the flair of the original. (Do with it what you will; you’re going to anyhow...)

Rules

1. The task is to suspend all the objects in mid-air.
2. Only the last inch of the ruler is allowed to touch the top of the desk, table, etc. That means the ruler must be on the top of the desk, not jammed into a drawer or other sneaky Initiative stuff like that.
3. You are only allowed to use the materials that have been provided.

Facilitator’s Note

If this is to be done with “At-Risk” youth, offer them a pizza party if they can solve the puzzle. It provides added incentive to accomplish the task and helps to unify the group toward a common goal. (These are ALWAYS good things!) If this is done over a long time – say in a classroom – allow the group to use any resources at their disposal. This can include asking teachers (other than you), looking up the answer in a Physics books (like this will happen), or any other idea they can use to accomplish the task.



Solution

This is a Physics lesson and it's the same reason that tightrope walkers who carry a large pole stay on the wire. By suspending the weight of the hammer under the table, it places the center of gravity under the table, as well. This holds everything firmly in place, despite how impossible it looks.

HANDCUFFS

Props: Handcuffs
Space: Any
Credit: YMCA Camp St. Croix

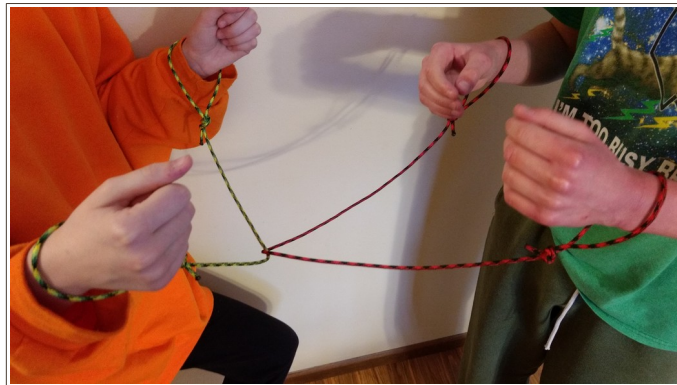
Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

Handcuffs is an old game. I think I might have played it in Boy Scouts, I'm pretty sure I played it in grade school, but I KNOW I played it at St. Croix, which is why I'm going to give them the credit! The game is very simple: two people are "handcuffed" together and need to escape.

Rules

1. One person puts on their handcuffs by slipping the loops over their wrists. (One per wrist.)
2. Their partner puts their handcuff between the first person's arms and then slips their loops over their wrists. At this point, they are tied together and must escape.
3. They cannot slip a knotted loop over their hand.
4. They cannot slip a knotted loop over their partner's hand.
5. They cannot untie the knots.
6. They must be sure to move SLOWLY, otherwise they can hurt their partner by jumping around!



Facilitator's Note

I love to throw this activity in after the group has been working as a team for a while. When one set of partners solves it, I wait to see what they are going to do. Do they automatically help the rest of their team? Do they stand back and watch them struggle? You can get a lot of processing out of this!

Solution

Make a loop in the middle of your handcuff. Put the loop you made under the loop on top of your partner's left-hand wrist, sliding it down from the wrist toward their fingertips. Have them put their hand through the loop and then slide your loop back up past their loop. (Are you "loopy" yet?) That's it! By the way, I do recommend experimenting with this before presenting it to a group!

INNER TUBE STACK

Props: Inner Tubes
Space: Open
Credit: Crescent Lake Bible Camp

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

I was looking for a good Teambuilding game for a Jr. High Winter Camp when someone suggested that we try this. It was a blast and the students loved it!

Rules

1. You may only use the inner tubes. No other materials are allowed.
2. The tower must be freestanding. You cannot support it when done.
3. You may use any method to attempt to stack the inner tubes. If it looks unsafe, however, it probably is and I will stop you from doing it.

Records

12 Tubes - Jr. High Snow Blast Weekend, 2009



MARSHMALLOW BRIDGES

Props: Marshmallows, Toothpicks, Supports (2)
Space: Any
Credit: Heather Campbell (née Elmatti)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

Well, ladies and gentlemen, it has finally come to this: the city is broke. We promised the voters more; a bigger, better city of _____, and that's what we've done. There are more taxes, bigger debts, and better ways to take your money. Unfortunately, the only campaign promise we weren't able to deliver on is that new bridge we were supposed to construct over the mighty _____ River. Gee! How can we fulfill our promise to the voters?

Rules

1. If working with a large group, divide them into teams of 5 – 10 people.
2. We scrounged around the City Hall cafeteria and discovered a case of unopened marshmallow and a box of toothpicks. These will be your building materials:
 - A. Give a handful of marshmallows to each team. (They will need about 20 – 30 to start with.) They are not allowed to EAT the marshmallows! (I usually rub them in the dirt to discourage snacking!)
 - B. Give a handful of toothpicks to each team. (They will need 40 – 50 to start with.)
 - C. Give two supports to each team. The Supports may only be used to prop the bridges off the ground and cannot be part of the actual structure.
 - D. You cannot use any other building materials for this task!
3. Using these materials, they have to build a bridge that can span the distance between their supports. This distance can be increased as the bridge is built, but the bridge cannot touch the ground in between them! If the middle sags to touch the ground, the bridge does not pass inspection and must be rebuilt.
4. Since we are on a deadline – Hey! When aren't we? – they will have the following time limit for this activity: five minutes to plan (with no construction allowed); fifteen minutes for actual construction; and a bonus of two minutes to “wrap up” constructions but only if ALL teams agree.

Records

18 Inches - Coldwater, Michigan Public Schools 5th Grade, 1996





GROUP GAMES

Group Games help to get teams moving and interacting in a fun way. These can be considered an extension of the “Warm-Ups” section and can be used in place of them. Again, our programs ALWAYS start with some sort of group warm-ups prior to moving on. This will give you the ability to judge for yourself how participants interact with each other, how receptive they are to new ideas, where their comfort zones are, etc. Since these are not (usually) heavily processed, only one of the games should be selected per group.

ALASKAN BASEBALL / CHUCK THE CHICKEN

Props: Rubber Chicken
Space: Open
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 4 - 5
Difficulty Level: 1 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

The legend goes that Alaskan baseball was invented as an alternative to regular baseball because of all of the snow in Alaska! What color are the bases? White! What color is the ball? White! What color is the bat? Usually not white! (Oh, well, you get the idea...) What color is snow? White! Yeah, so it's hard to play baseball in Alaska.

Rules

1. Split the group into two even teams and have them choose a team name.
2. Pick a team, hand them the chicken and have one person throw it as far as they can in a safe direction. (Watch out for roads, buildings, cliffs, etc.) This is the start to the game! After the throw, the following things happen:
 - A. The throwing team huddles tightly together.
 - B. The person who throws the chicken begins to run circles around their own team, counting out loud every time they complete a lap. (This counts as a "run" in baseball.) They keep running laps until they hear the word, "Stop!"
3. The receiving team runs to pick up the chicken. Then they:
 - A. Line up in a straight line.
 - B. The person with the chicken passes it over their head. The second person passes the chicken between their legs. The third person over their head. And so on...
 - C. When it reaches the end of the line, they shout, "Stop!"
4. Now, it is the Facilitator's choice: Do you wish to keep score?
 - A. If yes, then while everyone is paused, ask the throwing team how many runs they had and dutifully write it down. Then shout, "Go!" and have the receiving team throw the chicken and start the insanity all over again... (Determine how many innings you will be playing before you begin.)
 - B. If no, then have the receiving team IMMEDIATELY throw the chicken after it's been passed down the line. Do NOT actually stop, but, instead, have them turn and throw the chicken. (This makes it fast-paced and mass chaos, but a lot of fun!)

DAKPANAY

Props: Hula Hoops
Space: Open
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 4 - 5
Difficulty Level: 1 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

This game of tag comes from the Philippines. We play it not only for Teambuilding, but also as part of our

“International Christmas” programs. It is by far and away my FAVORITE game of tag! (Not to prejudice anyone toward this incredibly awesome game!)

Rules

1. Place hula hoops on the ground. (I usually use a 1-to-8 ratio of hoops-to-participants and a minimum of five hoops. Give younger children even more hoops to work with.) Spread the hoops out far enough so that people (hopefully) won’t collide with each other. For larger numbers or to slow down the game, use more hula hoops and place them closer together. This prevents runners from getting up to “full speed” while moving from hoop to hoop!
2. One person volunteers to be “It” and stands in the middle of the field of play. Anyone who is “It” cannot step into a hula hoop.
3. Everyone else must go and stand with one foot inside a hoop. When everyone is standing still, the game is ready to begin.
4. When “It” shouts “Go!”, everyone has to move from one circle to another. There is no order, you can repeat a hoop and if you hit all of the hoops, congratulations! Now, keep going!
5. As they are running between hoops, “It” is trying to tag them. The runners are safe as long as a body part is touching the ground inside the hoop, but outside they can be tagged. If they are tagged, they ALSO become “It”.
6. In this game, “babysitting”, “puppy-guarding”, or whatever else you want to call it IS allowed! In fact, if you’re standing in a circle, I can run up to you and start counting! If you don’t leave your circle before I count to “5”, you are automatically tagged!
7. At the start of the game, you have one person “It”; halfway through, you cannot tell who is “It” and who is not! How can you tell the difference? Well, there is one key way: whoever is “It” CANNOT step back into a circle! (They can stand next to one, though, and pretend!)
8. The game ends when one player is left. The winner becomes “It” in the next round.

Facilitator’s Note

As an asthmatic, I really DO hate to run around. Well, now I need to confess to you that Dakpanay – a tag game – is one of my favorite games! Why? Because you don’t have to be the fastest to win! In fact, if you’re smart enough, you may never have to run at all and you can still win the round.

Variation

If you want to make it more fair to the runners, have “It” start counting to five. On “5”, the runner HAS to run to a different circle. However, at the same time, everyone “It” has to spin around once in a complete circle before they can chase them!



DRAGON'S TAIL

Props: Handkerchiefs Or Pinnies
Space: Open
Credit: NLIC Staff

Activity Level: 4 - 5
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

This game comes from China. (Please do not ask me to attempt to say the original name in Chinese.) We play this game for both our Teambuilding and our “International Christmas” programs and it’s a great game. However, this is a game that requires a LOT of open space to play. I usually don’t even recommend playing this in gymnasiums – outside is best – due to how much movement this involves!

Rules

1. Divide the participants up into groups of ten. Have them line up in a straight, single-file line. Have each line place their hands upon the shoulders of the person in front of them. They are NOT to grab onto each other’s clothes or someone will get strangled!
2. Explain to the group that they are now one dragon. Do dragons live very well if they get chopped into little bits? (No. Dragon chunks are a bad thing!) So, they must move together. Let’s practice this. Have them move around a little bit, following the “head” of the dragon. See? That’s not too bad.
3. Well, we can’t have a dragon with a head and no tail, now can we? (No!) Have the last person in the line stuff a handkerchief into a back pocket. This is now the tail.

Variation One

If you have only one group, we will play “Head-to-Tail”. What must happen is that the head of the dragon is trying to steal its own tail. The tail, however, doesn’t want the tail to be lost, so it must move out of the way of the head. The fun part, though, is what the people in the middle can do to help either the head or the tail. If the person behind the head decided to help the tail, they can swing the head away from the tail before that person can reach the handkerchief. In other words, the tail will win. If the person in front of the tail decides to help the head, they simply have to not move. The tail is stuck and is going to lose.

Variation Two

If you have more than one group, have the dragon work together to help their head catch other dragons’ tails while at the same time trying to protect their own.

EAGLE EYES

Props: Objects To Hide (e.g. Paper)
Space: Any
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: All

Story

I have played this game for years, and it’s still one of my favorite “in-class” activities. I learned it at Kimball Camp, but I never really knew where they got it from. Recently, I bought a book called Games of the North American Indians, by Stewart Culin; and there, to my surprise, was a lot of games I had learned over the years, including this one!

This is a very simple, practical game for a hunter/gatherer people. If you were out in the forest hunting, would

it be possible to walk by a deer without seeing it? Of course not, right? Well, actually you could. Think about it: the deer is brown, the forest is brown. Neither of them is moving. You don't see the deer. (For a real world context, think of whether you've ever looked for your glasses only to find them on your face; or if you have ever looked all over for a pencil you had in your hands.) If you've ever done any of these things, then you understand the purpose of this game.

Rules

1. Before the group arrives, hide ten small objects in the room. For ease of play, do not actually "hide" them; place them in plain sight. Do not cover them with anything; place them high above the participants, etc.
2. The participants must walk around the room with their hands in their pockets or behind their backs. They should walk in silence!
3. If the participants find an object, they should simply put out one finger to help them keep count. They should not make a sound, point to the object, touch it, etc. Their goal is to find the objects, NOT help other people!
4. When they have found all ten, have them return to the starting point.

Facilitator's Note

I usually play two rounds of this game. The first is done looking for full-sized, blank pieces of white paper. The second round is pennies. Be sure to use "ordinary" objects as people tend to overlook them more easily.

Processing

If participants pay close attention, they can learn the location of objects by simply observing others. Almost everyone has some sort of "tell" that indicates when they have found an object. This is a great introduction to nonverbal communication.



GOLD RUSH

Props: Field / Court With Lines, Pinnies, Identical Throwables
Space: Open
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 5
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

Looking for "capture the flag" where more than one person can be "the hero"? This is your game! Unless you're looking for something to play with a large group in a gym... At that point, this is NOT your game! (I don't recommend playing this indoors with groups bigger than 30.)

Rules

1. You need ten “gold bars”. These can be anything, but you will need two distinct colors, five of each. In a pinch, I’ve used pinnies, colored playground balls, and once I used Crayola markers! Bigger IS better, though! (Let’s assume your gold bars are red and green.)
2. Mark a field with three lines: a center line and two “End Zones”. (Here’s where a football field or the basketball court lines in a gym are wonderful.) Place five green gold bars in the End Zone on one side and put five red gold bars in the opposite End Zone. That’s it for setup!
3. Split the teams equally and, using the center line of the court, put one team on each side. Use pinnies to mark the teams. (If time allows, the group is willing, and you want to get messy, grab red and green tempera paint and let each team decorate their faces to indicate their color.)
4. The game begins when the leader shouts “Go!”
5. The goal of each team member is to run across the center line, through “enemy territory”, to reach their End Zone on the far side. In the End Zone, the team member picks up ONLY ONE gold bar and attempts to get it back to their side without being tagged. If they can do that, their team gets a point.
6. On their own side or once in their End Zone, the team member is safe and cannot be tagged. They are allowed to move freely anywhere on their side or in their End Zone, but if they step across the line, into enemy territory, they can be tagged.
7. As I just said, if you are in “enemy territory”, you can be tagged. If you are tagged, you stop and kneel down where you were tagged. If you were carrying a gold bar when you were tagged, you hand it to the opposite team to be returned to the End Zone.
8. You can be set free if someone from your team runs over and tags you. At that point, you can run toward either your side or your end zone. You can be tagged even after being set free. (No “free backs”.)
9. Teams are NEVER allowed into their opponent’s end zone.
10. You cannot throw, roll or slide the gold bars; they must be carried by hand.
11. The game ends when one team has retrieved all five of their gold bars.

Facilitator’s Note

To have the game last longer, have teams place the gold bars they retrieve into the End Zone on their side rather than turning them in to the Facilitator. This way, the opposing team can either attempt to rescue one of their gold bars or they can choose to steal your gold back to prevent you from winning. If someone from the opposing team does retrieve an opponent’s marker, place it back in their original End Zone.

Warning: Use tempera paint, as it washes out with water. Other paints are “permanent”.

KNEE COUP

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: YMCA Camp St. Croix

Activity Level: 4
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

This game is modified from a game played by the Native Americans. We’ve used it as part of our “Voyageur Rendezvous” class, as it’s exciting, energetic, and a whole lot of fun! Eventually, given enough time, it became part of our teambuilding games, as well!

Rules

1. Mark a boundary on the ground using cones.
2. Everyone in the game is “It”.
3. To move around, you must be tapping your belly with both hands at all times.
4. You are only allowed to tag someone on the kneecaps. All other tags don’t count!
5. If you are tagged, you are frozen. You cannot move, but you can tag other kneecaps as people move by.
6. You CAN protect your kneecaps by covering them with your hands. You are not allowed to move while your kneecaps are covered! You cannot cover your knees for more than five seconds at any one time. And, yes, puppy-guarding, doggy-watching, or whatever else you want to call it IS allowed!
7. If you run out-of-bounds to try not to get tagged, you are automatically tagged!

Facilitator’s Note

Watch participants standing still and not moving for long periods of time.

MAMA COW / BABY COW

Props: Stuffed Animal, Rope Circle
Space: Open
Credit: Hillcrest Elementary

Activity Level: 4
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

This is a modification of the game, “Steal The Bacon”. There is no historical story behind it, no deep thoughts and no profound moments. On the bright side, it is a lot of fun!

Out west, if you were a cowboy, could you just pack up and go home for the night, leaving the cows out in the middle of a cattle drive? (No.) Why not? (Things would come out at night to eat the cows!) What type of things? (The answer you are shooting for is wolves. Lead them to say wolves if you have to, but wolves are what you want!) Wolves. (You got the correct answer!) Yeah, and wolves hunt in packs.

Other than cowboys, do you know what else helped to protect the cows? (Big cows.) Think about it, you are a wolf that stands 30" tall and weighs 150 pounds; do you attack a baby cow about your size or the ones that are 50" tall and weigh 1500 pounds? (You go for the babies!) But big cows don’t like you to steal their babies...

Rules

1. To get set up, mark out a circle on the floor approximately three feet in diameter. Mark an “X” in the middle of that circle and on the X place a stuffed animal. (I like to use a rubber chicken!) This is the baby cow. Now, mark a larger circle on the floor, approximately 30 feet in diameter. (You can use rope to do this or non-stick tape.)
2. Have the participants line up outside of the larger circle. They are the wolves. Now, how do wolves hunt? (In packs.) Number off the group so that there are between 6 – 10 wolves per pack. (I usually have them count themselves off to save time.)
3. Select one person to be the Mama (or Papa) Cow. They stand in the middle to protect the baby cow.
4. The Mama/Papa Cow calls a number and all wolves in that pack run in, try to steal the baby cow, and get back outside of the big circle. The Mama/Papa Cow is trying to defend.
5. If they Mama/Papa Cow tags a wolf, the wolf just got “stepped on” and has to limp dramatically out of the circle. They are done until the next time their number has been called. If they have the baby cow at the time they are tagged, they return it to the “X” and then leave the circle. If the Mama/Papa Cow

successfully tags all of the wolves, then they win that round.

6. If a wolf gets in, steals the baby cow, and gets back out without being tagged, they win and they also become the new Mama/Papa Cow.
7. Wolves MUST enter the large circle when their number is called – they don't have to run toward the baby cow, but they have to come in! If a wolf goes back outside the large circle for any reason, they are going hungry for the night and have to wait for their number to be called again.
8. The Mama/Papa Cow cannot run out of the big circle for any reason and they cannot reach or go inside the little circle. (In other words, if a wolf gets into the little circle, they are safe from being tagged!)
9. No throwing the baby cow.

Facilitator's Note

You can modify the game in two main ways: (1) allow the wolves to throw the baby cow (this helps the wolves to win); and (2) allow the Mama/Papa Cow to reach into the middle circle to tag a wolf (this helps the Mama/Papa Cow to win). Always keep the rule, however, that the Mama/Papa Cow can't step in, over, or through the middle circle, otherwise the wolves stand no chance.

METAMORPHOSIS/TRANSFORMATIONS

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: YMCA Camp St. Croix

Activity Level: 4
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

Does a butterfly always look the same? No? Why not? Because it changes shape through its life stages, and that process is called *metamorphosis*. There are two types of metamorphosis: complete (complex) and incomplete (simple).



Complete/Complex: Includes insects like butterfly, mosquito, fly, ant, bee, etc.

Egg → Larva (e.g. caterpillar) → Pupa (e.g. cocoon) → Adult (e.g. butterfly)

Incomplete/Simple: Includes insects like grasshopper, dragonfly, mayfly etc.

Egg → Nymph → Adult

Today, it is our goal to become beautiful butterflies. Everyone will begin as eggs.

Rules

1. You must act like the stage of metamorphosis you are. These include:
 - A. Eggs – Waddle with your arms stretched out, hand on your hips.
 - B. Larva – Put your arms above your head and swivel your hips when you walk.
 - C. Nymph – Bend your arms and hold them out away from your body and take big steps.
 - D. Pupa – Wrap your arms tightly around your chest and keep your knees together when you walk.
 - E. Adult – Strut around. You made it!
2. You can only compete against other people who are at the same stage of metamorphosis you are. (This means there will always be a “leftover” egg, larva, etc.)
3. When you find someone at your stage, you play a round of “Rock/Paper/Scissors”. The loser stays at their stage and must try again. The winner gets to metamorphose into the next stage of the life cycle.
4. This process keeps repeating until they’ve made it to a beautiful butterfly (the adult stage).

Facilitator’s Note

When I play this, I usually find the people who are stuck at each stage of the life cycle and play against them until they win. I also usually only do the Complete/Complex Metamorphosis path, because it’s what most people are familiar with.

MONSTER TRUCKS AND HARLEYS

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: “The Legendary” Bill Patterson

Activity Level: 4
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

If you have ever been around Harleys, you know they have a slogan. What is it? “Live to Ride!” If you’ve ever been around Monster Trucks, you know that I’m actually lying to you when I tell you that their slogan is, “Ride to Live!” (However, if I didn’t make up a slogan for them, this game would not work...)

Rules

1. Mark a square on the field using cones; the area should be large enough to allow the group to line up along one side without ending up three people deep.
2. Select two (or more) people to be Monster Trucks.
3. They stand in the middle of the field and yell, “Ride to Live!” The Harleys respond with, “Live to Ride!” and then attempt to run from one side of the square to the other without being tagged.
4. If a Harley is tagged, they are frozen and become oil slicks. As oil slicks, if they tag a running Harley, the motorcycle “has an accident” and crashes alongside of them, becoming a new oil slick.
5. If anyone runs out of bounds, they automatically become an oil slick, as well. The game continues until everyone is tagged.

Facilitator’s Note

I’ve had people question doing a game like this with a corporate teambuilding group. It works. If you present it as part of the program, people will play along. If people don’t join in, that will help you get information about

the group. (By the way, “The Legendary” Bill Patterson usually played “Toilet Tag” with corporate groups. It is ALL in the presentation!)



(Dedicated to my parents, the Harley riders!)

PREDATOR / PREY (A.K.A. CIRCLE STALK)

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: Children of the Earth Foundation

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

I had COTEF come to camp and teach tracking skills to my staff. It was a fantastic experience and there, in the middle of the skills, was a fantastic game! We routinely use this game as part of our “Night Hike” curriculum, but it is a blast played on its own!

If you were a Native American, you had to learn two vital skills for hunting: listening to the world around you and moving silently. If you could master these skills, they would serve you well in both peace and war!

Rules

1. Form into a giant circle and number off by “twos”. (If you have a large group, you may want to number off by “threes” or more.)
2. From this point on, I do NOT allow running, jumping, diving, etc. (Other Facilitators do, but it scares me to have people who can’t see moving at high rates of speed.)
3. Have the “ones” enter the circle. They are going to play the first round. They are to close their eyes and cannot open them again until the round ends or they are tagged. Their goal is to move silently, listen carefully to find the other “ones”, and tag them without getting tagged themselves.
4. If you get tagged, you are out. Open your eyes and move back to your original spot in the big circle. If two people tag each other at the same time, they are both out. (Mutual annihilation.) Both of them leave the circle.
5. Play continues until one is left or the final two take each other out.
6. Those on the outside must stand silently. If someone with their eyes closed wanders over to them, they reach out, grasp their shoulders – the person is not out and should keep their eyes closed – turn them around and send them back toward the middle of the circle.
7. If people are not moving, count to three. On “three”, all people who are still in must jump loud enough to make a “thump”. That way people can stalk them.

Facilitator's Note

I do not use blindfolds due to the time it takes to get them on, swap them with other people, etc. That being said, it becomes painfully obvious if someone cheats. When you notice that a participant walks casually from place to place, dodging tags, walking around people, etc., you can assume they are not playing fairly. If someone does cheat, they are automatically out.



ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS TAG

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: “The Legendary” Bill Patterson

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 4
Group Size: All

Story

I don't know who invented this game. All I can tell you is that this is one of the most entertaining games due to the “sudden pause” that takes place in the middle of it. Read on and you will understand. Watch and you will be entertained, too! Beyond that, this is a great game to break the ice and to get people running and participating.

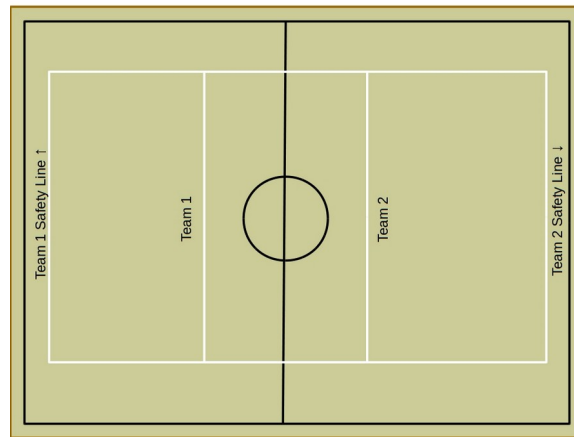
Rules

1. Mark four lines on the ground, two of them five feet apart and representing the center of the field. The other two are approximately twenty feet from the middle and represent the end boundaries. (I like football fields because I use yard lines. You can also use the lines in a gym.)
2. Split the group evenly into two teams. (This can be done guys vs. gals, mixed teams, etc.)
3. Each team goes past their “Safety Line” (see diagram) to discuss which sign they will make. They can either choose: paper (arms out to the side like an airplane), rock (squatted down with hands on head) or scissors (make giant cutting motion with arms toward other team). The only catch is that all of Team 1 must do the SAME SIGN; as must Team 2. (There are NO individuals here – they are a team and must all do the same thing, otherwise this is a FAIL – although a funny one!) They may want to talk it over softly, however. (Hint! Hint!)
4. When both teams are ready, they go to their center line. Everybody hits their closed fists on their open hands and shouts out, “Rock! Paper! Scissors! Shoot!” On “Shoot!” each team shows their sign.
5. Here's where the fun begins. If it's a tie, both teams go back to their far wall and try again. If Team 1 beats Team 2, Team 2 has to turn and try to run to their black Safety Line. If they cross it they survived that round. Team 1 runs after them, trying to tag as many on Team 2 as they can. Everybody they tag joins their team! (Nobody is ever “out” in this game – you just switch sides.)

6. After the round is over, have each team go past their Safety Line again and discuss their next sign.
7. This continues until all members of one team are tagged or until the Facilitator decides it's done!

Facilitator's Note

Have at least one Volunteer go with each group and make sure that they all are paying attention and all have the same sign! Do NOT tell them what to do, though! (We want them to learn to work together, not just follow orders!) Also, make sure the Safety Lines are far enough away from a wall that the participants can slow down in time! Finally, be aware that there is almost always a pause after the teams show their signs. That is because it usually takes a heartbeat for each team to realize whether they've won or lost and what to do about it. (You will also have the team that loses occasionally charge at the other team. Just makes them easier to tag.)



SLAP / PUSH

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: North Park College

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 4
Group Size: All

Story

This game comes from Korea. It's a great game in-and-of itself, but it also serves as a great "stress reliever". If your group needs a mental health break, consider "Slap".

Rules

1. Two people stand facing each other, toe-to-toe.
2. The object is to slap the other person's hands and knock them off balance. Contact can ONLY be made with the opponent's hands.
3. If one person takes a step, they lose. If they lean into you, they lose.
4. In "Push", you must gently push against the other person to bring them off balance. No sudden moves are allowed. In both games, contact can only be made at the hands.

Facilitator's Note

Size, in this game, is irrelevant. I have watched a 300 pound man face off against a 120 pound young lady. He was big and strong; she was tall, skinny and flexible. After a half-hour battle, he lost. Women can beat men, children can beat adults, etc. This game is a great equalizer!



TEAM BUCKET BRIGADE

Props: Buckets, Throwables, Clearly Defined Boundaries
Space: Open
Credit: Montello Sr. High

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 4
Group Size: All

Story

This is a game of strategy...and throwing things! It requires a lot of setup, a lot of clean-up and a lot of chaos in the middle. Because of that, you know it's going to be good!

Rules

1. Mark a giant square on the floor. On a football field, use cones and yard line; in a gym, use the volleyball court lines.
2. Inside the square, place as many different types of buckets, containers, totes, or boxes that you can. (Different sizes, different materials and different colors make it more festive and fun!) If possible, put a hula hoop or rope circle around each one. Spread the boxes out so that some are closer to the boundaries and some are further away.
3. Get at least 50 SOFT throwables and scatter them around the outside of the giant square!
4. Divide the group in half. Put half inside the giant square and half outside. Teams are NOT allowed into each other's area during the game!
5. The game begins when the Facilitator shouts, "Go!"
6. Those on the outside of the rectangle pick up throwables and try to toss them (gently!) into the buckets inside the white rectangle. If a throwable goes in, it counts as one point for the outside team.
7. Those on the inside of the rectangle work together to block the throwables from getting into the buckets. They CANNOT cover a bucket with their body, nor can they stand inside or lean over the hula hoop.
8. The game is played for five minutes. At the end of that time, stop, collect all of the throwables, and then count how many points the outside team scored. (You can award different points for different buckets.)
9. Switch roles and play another round.

Facilitator's Note

First, be sure to count how many throwables – and what type – so you can make sure you retrieved them all at the end of the game. Next, watch for participants whipping the throwables! They need to be respectful or they need to be removed! Finally, you can add "retrievers"; their job is to kick throwables on the ground inside the giant square back out to the outside team.



MAIN SECTION: COMMUNICATION

Our programs are based on “The 3 C’s: Communication, Cooperation and Caring / Trust. This section contains activities designed to promote and improve communication among teams. For the most part, when we Facilitate for “struggling” teams, their primary problem is an inability to communicate information effectively.

Also, at this time, you will begin to notice “Records” more frequently. These are included as a method of motivating teams, if desired. Not all activities have a record, and many do not need them. Beware of focusing so much on the competition that you neglect the needs of the group. Also, some activities can prove dangerous if a record is attempted!

ALL ABOARD

Props: Towel
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pg. 106)

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3 - 5
Group Size: S

Story

Mount <Insert Your Group Name Here> was thought to be an extinct volcano. Unfortunately, those silly scientists were clueless again, and the volcano just blew its top! Well, when I got out of bed this morning, I flipped on the Weather Channel and noticed that there was a high probability of lava today. “Lava?” I thought to myself. Just to be safe, though, I put on my lava-proof clothes. Unfortunately, I forgot to tell all of you! (Silly, silly me!) None of you are prepared. (Silly, silly you!)

Being the kind and generous person that I am, I have looked around and determined that this towel will be the only place within thirty miles (that way they can’t try to flee) that will not be covered by lava. If your whole group can stand on the towel with no body parts touching the ground for ten seconds, you will all survive.

Rules

1. No heroic deaths to help out the team. (You live or die together.)
2. No sacrificing people to the fire gods.
3. No body part can be touching the ground not covered by the towel.
4. No sitting or laying on the towel. (Look up the torture called “pressing” for reasons not to.)
5. No climbing on shoulders (unless you think they can handle it).

Facilitator’s Note

To begin with, I’m usually nice and will put the towel near a wall so that they can lean on it (though I don’t tell them they can use the wall). Then, when they solve it, move it to the middle of the room. If they solve that, fold the towel by a third and have them try it again.



Focus

Communication. Some groups will attempt a mad rush to get on the towel before anyone has a clear idea of what should be done. These attempts usually fail. I usually give the hint to struggling groups that if they want to succeed, they should start five feet away from the towel. (In other words, “Stand back and think first!”)

Processing

Did you solve the task? Why or why not? Was there a leader for this activity? Why? What does it mean to “start five feet away from the towel”?

Spotting

If it looks unsafe, it probably is... Be especially careful if you DO allow people on shoulders, as they can easily get off balance.

Record

22 Adults - Subway Regional Managers, 1994 (bath towel folded to 1/3)

ANIMAL (OR PLANT) ATTACK

Props: Animal Cards, Tape
Space: Any
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

While out on a mission for International Geographic (not “National Geographic” so they can’t sue me), you have chanced upon the mythical Castle of Sight. This castle, according to legend, possesses a unique power: any who enter in will be changed into some kind of animal (or plant); however, they will not be able to see it.

If you look down at yourself, you will notice that you look the same as you did when you came in. If you look at yourself in a mirror, you will see only yourself. Take my word for it, though, you’re all animals (or plants)! (Okay, maybe that’s a judgment call on the group you’re working with...) The only way to break this curse is to figure out what animal (or plant) you are. If you leave the castle before speaking aloud the name of your animal (or plant), you will become that organism forever!

Rules

1. Have the group form into a line.
2. Explain that you are going to put the name of an animal (or plant) on their back. This is done completely at random and is not done as a judgment call for that person. I say this because I once had a slightly overweight child get the word “Pig”. (It took a lot of explanation to smooth that situation over; and you will notice that “Pig” is no longer in my Kit!)
3. Participants walk up to each other, turn around so that others can read their card, and then begin to ask questions to determine what animal (or plant) they are.
4. Allowed questions are those that can be answered with either “yes” or “no”. You cannot ask open-ended questions – ones that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer – or specific questions like, “Am I a horse?” If you are asked an “illegal” question, you are not allowed to answer it.
5. After ten minutes, stop the group and have them gather around.
6. Ask each person what animal (or plant) they think they are. After they have guessed, pull the card from their back and show it to them.

Facilitator’s Note

For an added challenge, you can modify Step 6. Once everyone thinks they know what they are, have them come up one at a time, turn their back to the group, and announce their guess. If they’re right, cheer; if not, have them ask three more questions to see if they can figure it out. Then, play “Round 2”. The group needs to pick half of the participants to try to figure out what their specific animal (or plant) is. I may know that I’m an “owl”, but now I have to figure out “Great Horned Owl”. (The reason we do half is because some of them are very difficult!) The same rules still apply; you’re just playing the more advanced level.

Focus

Communication. People are learning to talk with each other and to ask specific questions that will allow them to figure out what they are.

Processing

Was it easy to figure out what you were? Why or why not? Is there a rule I should have changed to help you out? Why do you suppose I don't allow you to ask exactly what you are?

Spotting

Watch out for vicious paper cuts when playing with such dangerous materials...

BALLOON TOWERS

Props:	Balloons, Tape	Activity Level:	3
Space:	Any	Difficulty Level:	2
Credit:	Teams Kit Manual (pgs. 215 – 216)	Group Size:	All

Story

You have been hired to build a brand-new, state-of-the-art, artistic office building. The reason you were hired is because, well, you are cheap to hire, actually. But, before you get the contract to build the new building, you have to show a model to the town planning board. Oh, and you only have a few minutes to prepare. Oh, and you only have the building materials that we're about to give you. This should be easy for you with all of your experience...

Rules

1. If you are dealing with a large group, divide into teams of 8 – 10 participants each.
2. Give each group a large bag of balloons and a roll of tape. They may only use the materials provided.
3. The groups will have five minutes to plan (with no construction allowed) and five minutes for actual construction. (Longer than that and you will use a lot of balloons!)
4. When time is up, you are done. Any additional balloons you have inflated that are not taped onto the structure do not count! So, tape them on as you go!
5. At the end, the tower must be freestanding. It cannot be taped to the ceiling, support beams, etc. In other words, if, when it is unsupported, it tips over, you will measure the height of one balloon. So, building a tall, skinny tower is not necessarily the best idea...

Focus

Communication. If they do not take some time to figure out who does what, they will fail. Usually, most groups designate one person to rip tape. These groups build towers six inches tall! They need to divide their efforts.

Processing

Did your plan succeed? If not, did you have to change your plans as you went? (For most groups, this game is all about being willing/able to adapt your plans as you go.)

Spotting

It's tape and balloons. I'm sure if they worked hard enough they may find a way to get hurt...

Records

12' Tower -

Subway Regional Managers, 1996



BIRTHDAY LINE-UP

Props: Blindfolds (Optional)

Space: Any

Credit: Hillcrest Elementary

Activity Level: 1

Difficulty Level: 1

Group Size: S - M

Story

Project Adventure has a game called “Birthday Shuffle” in QuickSilver (pg. 148) although it’s not quite the same thing. But, I remember playing this in second grade so I’ll give credit to my elementary gym teacher!

Rules

1. Have the group line up in a straight line. Don’t sweat the order; just getting them in the line is the important part.
2. Now have the participants line up by last names; they are allowed to talk, and move freely. (Okay, that wasn’t terribly tough!)
3. Now, while they are standing still, cover your mouth and look up at the sky. Oh drat! That was an acid rain cloud that passed overhead. Acid rain, in Teambuilding, has a terrible effect: it makes you mute. No one in the group can now make a sound! They can’t even move their mouths!
4. They must now line up in order according to birth date by month and year. You **DO NOT** care how old they are. If my birthday is 12/03/65 – which it’s not – and someone else’s birthday is 01/05/92 – which it might be – they are first because January 5 comes before December 3 on a calendar! (Some groups will struggle with understanding this.)
5. When they think they have the solution, have them tell you. Start at the end they tell you and have them say their birthdays to see if they were right.
6. Next, you can have them line up by the size of their favorite animal, line up by the number of siblings, etc. You can be creative in any way you want to. My favorite variation, however, is to blindfold them, tell them they are mute, and have them line up (without sight or sound) by favorite color of the rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet (Roy G. Biv). If their favorite color isn’t one of these, have them pick one of these colors for this exercise. Believe it or not, this activity can be done without cheating! (By the way, do NOT play all of these back-to-back-to-back! It would get old...fast...)

Facilitator's Note

Watch closely because many groups will try to cheat by mouthing the information. Stress that you want to see if they can do it without cheating, but that it really doesn't really matter. It's not like there's \$1 million for a prize if they can. (If there is, I'll come and play!) If the cheating becomes too bad, stop the activity and re-explain to them that it doesn't matter if they accomplish their task; only the goal (teamwork) is important, and a true team doesn't need to cheat. It doesn't matter if they succeed or not; trying is all that counts.

Focus

How is this communication? You can't talk after the first time! Communication is defined as the sharing of ideas. Can you define other modes of communication other than speech? By the way, these are also questions I ask for processing...

Spotting

Watch out for blindfolded people doing, shall we say, "inappropriate groping"? Make sure everyone moves slowly to maintain a high safety level.

Records

7:28 Quincy Schools At-Risk Youth program did "rainbow" (without cheating).



BLINDFOLD DRAWING

Props: Blindfolds, Markerboard, Dry Erase Markers
Space: Any
Credit: "The Legendary" Bill Patterson

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

I was invited into the basement by "The Legendary" Bill Patterson to help with his team. I was placed on a stool in front of the group and then he introduced the activity. Being that he is an artistic type of person, a great Facilitator, and somewhat sadistic, it comes as no shock that he should combine all of his talents into one activity. I'm not sure where he got it from, but I still remember my introduction to "Blindfold Drawing"!

Rules

1. Hang a piece of poster board on a wall, preferably one that can be drawn on without too many problems. (Marker boards on walls are spiffy to use, too!) When in doubt, there is laminated paper in the Team's Kit that can be used for this activity.

2. Blindfold one member of the group and give them a marker.
3. The remainder of the group must communicate (no touching) to guide the “artist” to the poster board, help them find the appropriate colors, and draw the head and/or face only of the Facilitator (or group leader) on the paper.
4. After the head is drawn to the satisfaction of the group, the “artist” puts down the marker, removes the blindfold and hands it to the next person. The group guides them in drawing another portion of your artistic creation. Feel free to be as detailed as possible, but avoid anything risqué.

Focus

This is Communication on a simple, entertaining level. This is good for groups that are just starting to work together, as it requires little Caring/Trust and yet reinforces teamwork concepts.

Processing

How well did you communicate your ideas? What worked and what didn’t? Did you find times when the communication was blocked by the sound of too many voices?

Spotting

Don’t let the group run someone blindfolded into the wall?

Record

Rumor has it the Mona Lisa was painted in this fashion... (Da Vinci and Friends, 1503-1506.)



BLINDFOLD HOUSE / SQUARE / STAR

Props: Large Rope, Blindfolds (Optional)
Space: Any
Credit: Cowstails and Cobras II (pgs. 81 – 82)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

None. Sorry about that, but this is one of those that doesn’t really need one...

Rules

1. Lay a rope along the ground.
2. Have the team pick up the rope up; making sure they are spaced out along the entire length of the rope. (You just don’t want everyone two inches from each other.) From this point on, they are not allowed to slide their hands along the rope.

3. At this point, blindfold the team or simply have them close their eyes.
4. Without letting go of the rope, have them find a way to move themselves to form the shape of a house, square, star or whatever other simple shape – one that can be drawn with only one, continuous line – you want.
5. If anyone slides their hands or lets go, the whole group starts

Focus

Communication. How did they share their ideas of what their shape was?

Processing

Was there a main leader? Would it have been easier if there had been one? How could this have been done faster? How difficult was this to accomplish? Why?

Spotting

Make sure all movements are gentle to prevent accidentally poking someone.

GROUP JUGGLE

Props: Tennis Balls / Throwables
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pg. 112)

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

I was sent out by the famed nature magazine, International Geographic (not “National Geographic” so they can’t sue me), to search for the extremely rare, living tennis balls. I found them – and some of their cousins – and brought them back to show them to you.

Living tennis balls, however, have proven to be incredibly allergic to most items in our country. For example, they are deathly allergic to grass, dirt, concrete or whatever surface you happen to be leading this activity on. (What a coincidence!) You see their heart beats normally after they are removed from the crate (squeeze the tennis ball to simulate a heartbeat), but, if the ball touches the ground (demonstrate this), the ball goes into anaphylactic shock (show the group the “dead” tennis ball). However, it is not a critical thing, since all Facilitators are required to learn TBR: Tennis Ball Resuscitation. (Do some “chest” compressions, and *Poof!* Heartbeat!)

Rules

1. Circle the group. Take out a tennis ball and hand it to the person on your left. Continue passing the tennis ball all the way around the circle until it comes back to you. Be sure you remember who you got the ball from and who you passed the ball to.
2. Have the group mix themselves up so that their order is random. You cannot be standing next to someone you were standing next to before!
3. The order that the ball travels is still the same, however instead of simply handing the ball to the person next to them, they need to throw the ball to that person.
4. Start a tennis ball. If it makes it all the way through, add a second one. If they get 50% or better of the throwables through, add another one. (e.g. One out of two, two out of three, two out of four, etc.) If a ball touches the ground it is out; leave it down.
5. As a “Final Test”, give each participant a ball. The order remains the same and their goal is to get 100%

of the throwables through the circle. Based on that, which ball has the longest distance to travel? (Mine. It has to be thrown to everyone else in the circle.) Which ball has the shortest distance to travel? (The person who throws to me. When they throw to me, that ball is done.)

Facilitator's Note

After the group understands the pattern, you can either play or step out. If I do play, I usually add the rule that I will not throw my item while the person I throw to has an object in their hands. (It helps add some chaos to the "Final Test".)

Focus

Communication. These throwables represent ideas. How hard is it to keep track of one idea at a time? How hard is it if multiple ideas are moving around your team at one time? (One person talking at a time is understood by all; anything higher than that results in miscommunication.)

Processing

See Focus for the start to processing this one. Did you get all of the tennis balls through on the final time? Why or why not? Was everyone always watching for the person to throw a ball to him or her? Why or why not? Did the group blame someone for dropping a tennis ball?

Spotting

The main concern is people throwing the tennis balls at high speeds.



GROUP JUGGLE (MODIFIED)

Props: Tennis Balls / Throwables, Rope, Totes (2)
Space: Any
Credit: YMCA Camp St Croix

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

Can't get enough of "Group Juggle"? Let me show you a "Round Two" that is actually MUCH better than the original! I know we played this as a staff at St. Croix, but I also know that we modified the activity quite heavily after we left. This version is the Rabbit Hat Productions version, but I still have to give YMCA Camp St. Croix credit for introducing this to us!

Play at least a couple of rounds of "Group Juggle" before pulling out this activity. Process how they did on "Group Juggle", what they learned, and what they can apply. When you're done, now it's time to modify it.

Rules

1. The order remains the same. This time, however, the Facilitator will not be playing.
2. Put a rope circle on the ground in front of the group. It should fill up most of the space in the middle of the circle.
3. Take a tote, fill it full of throwables of all types, sizes, etc. Place this next to the person you threw the ball to. They now can reach in, pull out any throwable, and toss it to the next person. They will control the flow of throwables for the group.
4. Take an empty tote and place it next to the person who threw the ball to you. When the throwable reaches them, they toss it into the tote and it counts as a “point” for the team.
5. Now, pull out the “Goals” sheet from the “Group Contract”. Remind the group of what they’re trying to do, what their purpose is. Ask them how they’re doing on reaching their goals.
6. When you’re done talking about goals, you’re ready to play a round with the new setup. Inform the group that they will have ___ minute(s) – I usually play either one or two minutes – to try to get as many throwables through as they can.
7. If a throwable hits the ground, it stays down, right where it fell! They cannot kick it, pick it up, move it, etc. (There is a point for this that they’ll find out soon!)
8. When time is up, have everyone freeze right where they’re at! If they’re holding a ball, they need to hold it. If their hands are empty, have them help either collect all the balls outside of the circle into one pile; or all the throwables inside the circle into another pile.
9. Now, here’s where we generate the metaphor. To do this, you will need some creativity. I’m going to give you some examples, but you’ll have to adapt the activity to your specific situation.

A. Service Club. All right, so you said your goal was to help people. These throwables represent students that you could help. Notice that they come in all different shapes and sizes. Were some easier to work with than others? If so, did you find yourself only focusing on those who you thought you could work with easily? Now, all the ones that ended up in the end bucket are the ones that you successfully worked with, whose life was made better by your efforts. Maybe they graduated, got jobs, went to college, or at least didn’t drop out. You had ___ students that you successfully worked with. The ones in your hands are ones you’re still working with – they’re “in process”, if you will. You had ___ students in process. The ones on the ground outside of the circle are ones that you’ve dropped. You lost contact with them, they failed to return calls, whatever. You can get them back if you work on them. You had ___ students that you dropped the ball on. The ones that landed inside the circle, however, are students who asked you for help and you refused. Or maybe you forgot about them. Or maybe you didn’t follow up. Or maybe... Whatever you did, they were desperate and you let them down and there’s no getting them back now; they’ve made their choices and those choices will affect the rest of their lives. You had ___ students that you failed. Please note that the failure was NOT because of their choices; it was because you failed to make or maintain the contact. The final group we have are all of those students still in the first bucket, potential students you could work with, if you only had the time. You had...a lot...that you could be working with. Overall, how did you do?

B. Anti-Bullying. All right, so you said your goal was to prevent bullying in your school. These throwables represent students who are being bullied, picked on, or even just left on their own and ignored by the rest of the students. Did you notice that they come in all different shapes and sizes? Were some easier to work with than others? If so, did you find yourself focusing only on those you could work with easily? Now, all the ones in the bucket at the end feel comfortable, feel connect, feel community because of your efforts. They are going to grow stronger and be able to pass the message along. You had ___ students that you successfully worked with. The ones that were still in your hands are the ones you’re still working with. You had ___ students in process. The ones on the

ground outside the circle are the ones that asked for help and were ignored or forgotten. They're upset, but they're not too far gone to help. You just need to reach out and reconnect with them. The reason they failed, however, is because you promised something and then didn't deliver it, and they're mad. You had ___ students that you dropped the ball on. Finally, the ones in the circle are the ones that asked for help, begged for help. They posted on social media that they wanted help, you saw them struggling every day, and you just ignored them. Now, they've dropped out, they've gotten hooked on drugs, they've attacked someone else, or they've killed themselves. All they needed was for you to show that you cared...and you didn't. You had ___ students that you failed. The starting bucket represents all of the students in the school, the hundreds more that you could work with, if you only had the time. Overall, how did you do.

10. Give them time to process their performance. What is their focus? What are they trying to accomplish? Is it realistic to think you can help everyone? Or maybe the focus is to never fail anyone to the point that you can't get them back. Each group will come up with their own definition of success, based on their goals and their intentions. (I worked with a Fortune 500 company's sales team and they decided that their only goal was to empty the first bucket. They didn't care how many sales were completed or lost along the way; they only wanted to make sure everyone knew their name. Another service club decided to slow it waayyy down and make sure that everyone they worked with was a success, since they couldn't work with everyone who needed their help.)
11. Once they have their goals in place, once they've talked about how they want to focus, then pick up all of the throwables and play another round.



Facilitator's Note

There is no "right" or "wrong" answer for the group. When we first played it, we came up with what we thought should be our focus and the Facilitator said, "Really? That's all you want to accomplish?" We tried again and were met with, "That's the best goal you can come up with?" It was intensely frustrating and we left feeling like we had failed somehow. Instead, your focus is to make sure the team talks through their purposes and that they agree with the plan. How you feel about it is irrelevant. By the way, if you plan on doing this activity, figure out what metaphor you will use before you begin!

Focus

Communication, plain and simple. I have literally led this activity and then sat back as the group had a two-hour discussion on what their purpose was. This sparks a great deal of conversation, however you need to use it after the group has settled into their "team" phase.

Processing

This one is odd because the processing will take place throughout the entire activity. In fact, you'll get the most mileage out of processing this by letting them have their own conversations and mediating if there is a strong

disagreement between two or more parties.

Spotting

Back to chucking things around at a high rate of speed!

HUMAN KNOT

Props:	Short Ropes (Optional)	Activity Level:	3
Space:	Any	Difficulty Level:	3
Credit:	Boy Scouts and Silver Bullets (pgs. 117 – 118)	Group Size:	S

Story

Karl Rohnke refers to this as “Knots” but it was “Human Knot” when I played it in Boy Scouts. But, whatever you call it, this is a “classic” of teambuilding and I have done it as part of work, school, in Boy Scouts, etc.

Rules

1. Circle the group.
2. Have everyone reach their right hands across the circle and grab someone else’s hand. (If there is an odd number, have one person reach out their left hand, as well.)
3. Now have everyone reach their left hands across the circle and grab someone else’s hand. It CANNOT be the hand of the person you are already holding on to!
4. They are now tied into one giant human knot and must untie themselves.
5. The group cannot let go of hands. (Watch for cheating on this!) They are allowed to *slide* their hands around to prevent them from twisting the arms of the people they are holding on to. (Watch out for this, too!)
6. When the group is done, they will be in either one large circle or two interlocked circles. The group must tell you when they are done. (But they can’t say it right at the start! They have to have the solution first!)

Facilitator’s Notes

If the group gets totally stuck, they can ask for a hint, let go and move one set of hands, **OR** let go and begin again! (Don’t let them have a hint *and* let go; it makes it too easy.) To give hints, simply pick one person as your starting point and follow where their right hand connects. If you go through every person before getting back to your starting place, it will be one giant circle. If not, it will be two interlocking. Knowing the pattern they will end up in will enable you to tell where the biggest tangle is. (Don’t tell them the final shape!) If people separate into small clusters, they grabbed someone next to them!

As stated in the “Props” area, this can be done using short pieces of rope rather than having participants hold hands. This prevents injury to wrists and gives the group “breathing room”, which is especially important for groups that do not handle physical contact well. Or, if you want something a little different, take a long rope and tie it in knots and snarls ahead of time. Have the team grab the rope at any point. Now, without sliding their hands or letting go, they need to untie the rope.

Focus

Communication. In most groups, everyone will talk at the same time and not listen. BIG mistake, but they must work on it. Caring. If you hear, “Ow!” the team lost Caring points!

Processing

Was anyone at the “bottom” of the pile? How did it feel? Who got into the most interesting (compromising?) position? For those who were freed right away, were you able to help out?

Spotting

“Hey! Let’s twist someone’s wrist off! Boy! That will be so funny!” Pull them out of the activity immediately if it’s a problem! Warn them once; if they continue, they are done! Watch out for those on the outside goofing off and pulling people around rather than helping their group solve the puzzle.



IMAGINATION STATION

Props: Tinker Toys (2 Sets), Towels (2)
Space: Any
Credit: Uncertain

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

None. Strangely enough, I don’t think I’ve EVER had a Facilitator come up with a story for this... Quirky!

Rules

1. Have the group talk it over and nominate a spokesperson that will be their Foreman. Have the Foreman go off into a corner away from the group.
2. Have the team divide the remaining members into two groups: Architects and Builders. Give each group a set of Tinker Toys and move them to opposite ends of the room.
3. The Architects begin by putting together a contraption using at least fifteen pieces of their Tinker Toys. They are allowed to use as much as many pieces as they want, but they can’t use less than fifteen! When they are done, they are to cover their design. (Give them a time limit, if necessary.)
4. The Foreman is called over and, without being able to see the item, the Architects describe their construction to him/her.
5. The Foreman goes to the Builders and tells them what they have to build. The Foreman is not allowed to actually handle the pieces or even see where the Builders are putting them! (Hence the need for the second towel!)
6. The Foreman may make as many trips as he/she needs to assemble the device. When all parties feel it is complete, have the Architects bring the covered original into the room and unveil both at the same time!

Facilitator’s Notes

I was involved in this activity recently with one of my Facilitators. She took the time to sit with the Foreman

and the Builders and played “Questions” without having the group move. It was really well done and kept people occupied – always a nice touch! (Thanks Emmerich!)

Focus

Communication. It takes a great deal of communication to convey the ideas from the Architects, to the Foreman and finally, to the Builders themselves. If there is a weak link in the communication, the object will not look like the original!

Processing

Did the objects look the same? Why or why not? If there is a difference, how could it have been better described so that the objects would have been the same?

Spotting

Don’t let people poke each other with the Tinker Toys.



JIGSAW PUZZLE

Props: Giant Puzzle, Blindfolds (Optional), Stopwatch
Space: Any
Credit: Teams Kit Manual (pgs. 200 – 202)

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

None.

Rules

For a one-sided puzzle:

1. Empty the puzzle pieces on the ground, making sure that all of the puzzle pieces are facedown. (Since they are now staring at a blank back of a puzzle, you can be generous and give them the box so they can see the completed picture!)
2. Start a stopwatch and tell them to “Go!”
3. Without flipping the puzzle over, the team must assemble the puzzle.
4. When they’re done, announce the time, process for a few minutes and then play “Round 2”. This time, flip the puzzle over, let them examine the pieces and the picture on the box, and then time them as they

attempt to assemble the puzzle.

For a two-sided puzzle:

1. Empty the puzzle pieces on the ground, making sure that some of the puzzle pieces are flipped over so that parts of both puzzles are visible.
2. Start a stopwatch and tell them to “Go!”
3. The team must assemble the puzzle.
4. When they’re done, announce the time, process for a few minutes, and then go from there.

Facilitator’s Notes

This game serves to reinforce the ideas of goal-setting and how it related to small tasks. If someone tells you to do something, but gives you no details, it’s like having a blank puzzle in front of you: you may recognize the outline, but you just have to fumble your way through it. If someone tells you to do something, but there are multiple ways to do it, it’s like having a two-sided puzzle in front of you: you have to try over and over to get the right pieces in the right places to be successful. If someone tells you do do something, but they give you guidance and direction – a picture to follow – it’s like having a one-sided puzzle in front of you: not only do you know what pieces you have to work with, you also have clear goals to accomplish it. By the way, for an added twist, blindfold half of the group. The group with blindfolds is the **ONLY** one that may touch the puzzle pieces. Those who have sight must direct the actions of those who cannot see.

Focus

Communication. Make sure you don’t use this as a warm-up activity for Communication

Processing

How hard was it to understand what the group was telling you to do? How many of you had a piece on the ground and somebody took it away from you? Was this task frustrating for you?

Spotting

Any time you put a blindfold on someone, you are opening up a chance for injury.

Record

1:28 - Saint Croix Teambuilding Facilitators, 2002 (blank 24-piece puzzle)



KEY PUNCH

Props: Numbered Spots, Rope Circle, Stopwatch, Funnodles
Space: Open
Credit: QuickSilver (pgs. 167 – 169)

Activity Level: 4
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

If I had to pick one that is the “reigning champion” for popularity, fun, inclusiveness, etc., this is the one! I don’t recall ever leading this for a group and having them say, “Eh, that was kind of boring...” Instead, if you’re not careful – or in control of the group – you could end up playing this for days on end!

Rules

1. Prior to the arrival of the group, put the rope circle on the ground and spread the numbered spots (usually 1 – 30) randomly inside.
2. If you have a large team, divide up into smaller groups of about 8-10 participants each. Mark starting lines for each group about 30 feet away from the central circle.
3. Line up the groups at their starting line. Pick one team to go first. Tell them that when you say, “Go!” they must run down to the circle and touch the numbers in order and then return back across the line.
4. The timer starts when the first person crosses the line and ends with the last person returns back across the line.
5. Everyone is required to touch at least one number.
6. If a number is touched out of order, the team will receive a five second penalty per time.
7. If more than one person is in the circle at the same time – even if they only break the plane of the rope circle – there is a five second penalty per person per time.
8. After they’re done, share their time with them, talk about their penalties, and then have them sit down and wait while the other teams make their first run.
9. Before giving any team a second chance, give all teams five minutes to plan a new strategy, to learn from other teams, and to discuss how they will perform differently.
10. Then, give each group another try.



Facilitator’s Notes

Make sure groups pay attention to the attempts of another group. This is a cooperative learning experience, and they can pick up ideas of what to do – and not to do – if they watch the others and learn from them.

Focus

Communication. It is critical for the group be able to determine who moves when and where.

Processing

How did individual movements affect the whole group? How could you improve on your time? Did you learn what to do by watching another group? Did you learn what NOT to do by watching another group?

Spotting

I have seen people slip on the disks and many people trip running either to or from the circle.

MINE FIELD

Props: Blindfolds, Throwables
Space: Open
Credit: Silver Bullets (pg. 24)

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

None.

Rules

1. Before the activity begins, lay out a maze of spots, throwables, and any other low-profile objects within definite boundaries. (Don't use buckets, totes, etc. as they are easy to trip over.)
2. Have the participants partner up and have one of the partners put on a blindfold.
3. The person who is blindfolded must follow the directions of their partner. The person who is sighted cannot leave the starting line but must attempt to lead their partner faithfully through the maze.
4. If a blindfolded person steps on a carpet square or out-of-bounds, they must pay a forfeit. (Either start over, or be led somewhere else in the maze.)

Facilitator's Note

The more people participating in the activity, the more confusion will be created. Feel free to change the maze once half the group is blindfolded. That way they can't rely on memory to guide them through, but forces them to rely on their partners. For an added challenge, prohibit speech. Give partners time to come up with a new way to communicate by sounds, but they are not allowed to use actual words!

Focus

Communication. We usually define communication as talking and listening, but is that all there is? Is sign language communication? What about writing? Touch? How did you modify your communication to help your partner to understand you?

Processing

Was it difficult to hear your partner with everyone talking at once? Did it help when you weren't allowed to use words? (Surprisingly, most groups will say yes. It's easier to listen to a distinct sound than the mass of words from the guides.) Is this activity impossible?

Spotting

Avoid having blindfolded people running. Make sure you watch the people giving directions to verify they are telling them the truth! (You will occasionally have a practical joker.)

MINE FIELD (HEAT SEEKER)

Props: Blindfolds, Throwables, A Chair
Space: Open
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

None...still.

Rules

1. Before the activity begins, lay out a maze of spots, throwables, and any other low-profile objects within definite boundaries. (Don't use buckets, totes, etc. as they are easy to trip over.)
2. Have the participants partner up and have one of the partners put on a blindfold.
3. The person who is blindfolded must follow the directions of their partner. The person who is sighted cannot leave the starting line but must attempt to lead their partner faithfully through the maze.
4. Take three sets of partners and place them on the starting line; place a chair at the far end of the maze; and choose one pair to be the guided missile and the remaining two pairs to be the heat seekers.
5. When you say, "Go!" the guided missile begins to be directed toward the chair at the far end.
6. After ten seconds are up, you say, "Go!" again and the heat seekers begin to "track" the guided missile.
7. If the guided missile reaches the chair at the far end and sits down, the guided missile team wins. If the heat seekers "intercept" (pronounced "tag") the guided missile, they win for that round. If someone touches a square in "Heat Seeker", have him or her stand in one place for 10 seconds as a penalty!

Focus

Communication. This time, however, the inability to communicate could have consequences to your partner. You need to make sure that all communication is quick, efficient, and accurate.

Processing

How did your conversation change when you knew that a mistake could cause you to "lose" the game? Were mistakes more critical? Did you ever find yourself upset when you couldn't understand what was being said?

Spotting

Avoid having blindfolded people running. Make sure you watch the people giving directions to verify they are telling them the truth! (You will occasionally have a practical joker.) Finally, because one person is trying to sit in the chair, make sure they are "aimed" correctly before they sit down!

OVER EASY / TARP FLIP

Props: Tarp (Large)
Space: Any
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

Mount <Insert Your Group Name Here> has blown up! (At least it has if you have already done "All Aboard".) This tarp is a safe zone which, thankfully, your group has reached in time. You do have a slight problem, however. (Don't you always?) Somebody put the tarp down with the lava proofing on top, instead of underneath! The lava-proof tarp simply can't work if it's upside-down, right?

Realizing that it will only be a short time before the lava eats its way through the tarp and then through you (which is a bad thing), you also realize that you must flip the tarp over so you will be protected again until the next time we give you a lava-based activity.

Rules

1. No heroic deaths to help out the team. (You live or die together.)
2. No sacrificing people to the fire gods.
3. No body part can be touching the ground not covered by the tarp. While standing on it the team must flip the entire tarp over.
4. No leaping onto the nearby trees, stumps, etc.
5. Be careful. There are no wrong solutions, only unsafe ones.

Facilitator's Note

Be nice. Put the tarp near a wall so that they can lean on it (though don't tell them they can use the wall). If they solve that, then move it to the middle of the room.

Focus

Communication. Some groups will attempt a mad rush to get on the tarp before anyone has a clear idea of what should be done. These attempts usually fail. This activity ideally needs to be talked over before beginning.

Processing

Did you succeed in the task? How about the goal? Who was the leader of this activity? Why?

Spotting

If it looks unsafe, it probably is...



QUOTATIONS

Props: Index Cards, Quotations
Space: Any
Credit: Maria Rudesill

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

Maria brought this one back to us from a training that she attended, and it is a great game! Maria's good at sharing with others, and for that we thank her!

Rules

1. Prepare a number of quotations ahead of time. On separate cards write the quotation out with only a couple of words per card. If you want to be nice, include capital letters and punctuation; if you want to be evil, don't.
2. Mix up the cards and place them face-down in front of the group.
3. When you say, "Go!" they are to flip the cards over and assemble the quotation in the correct order. Let *them* tell you when they are done.
4. The quotations – in order of difficulty – included with your Kit are:
 - **"None of us is as smart as all of us."** – Japanese Proverb
 - **"When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion."** – Ethiopian Proverb
 - **"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."** – Helen Keller
 - **"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."** – Winston Churchill (There is some debate over whether it was Churchill or someone else.)
 - **"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."** – Henry Ford
 - **"We are most effective as a team when we compliment each other without embarrassment and disagree without fear."** – Unknown

Facilitator's Notes

Feel free to create new quotations, depending on the needs of the group. Business groups can have quotations from recognized experts, sports teams can have quotations from athletes, church groups can have Bible verses, etc. Adapting your quotations will make the activity that much more powerful. For large teams, split them into groups, give them each a quotation to solve, and then have them share with the rest of the team what they think the quotations mean.



Focus

Communication. Depending on the quotations you choose, there will be a lot of discussion as to the proper order.

Processing

What hints did you have to determine the correct order? What do these quotes mean?

Spotting

I have nothing... They could possibly throw the laminated cards...

TEAM TIC-TAC-TOE

Props: Hula Hoops, Pinnies, Funnoodles
Space: Limited
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 3-5
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: Any

Story

Okay, I'll be completely honest: I have NO idea where this game came from or even when. I just know that I really like this game! It's fast-paced, obviously simple, but surprisingly complex! (That last sentence will make a lot more sense when you play it!)

Rules

1. Divide your team into two groups. If you have a very large group, split them into four groups. You want, at most, ten people per group.
2. To set up the game, you need to: (1) put a funnoodle down as a starting line for each group you will be working with; (2) tie pinnies into a tight knot – you will need 3-4 per group; (3) lay out nine hula hoops about 20 feet away from the starting lines in three rows of three to make a large “Tic-Tac-Toe” grid.
3. When you shout “Go!”, the first person from each group runs down and drops their marker in any circle they want, and then runs back to the starting line.
4. After the first person crosses the line, the second person from each group runs down and drops their marker in another circle. And so on...
5. If a marker bounces out of a circle, the person who placed it must go back and place it in a circle.
6. No team may have more than one person in front of the line at any time! (If you're really mean, make them wait while you count to ten as a penalty!)
7. You cannot move another team's marker(s).
8. After all three markers are placed, the fourth person running out may move one of their group's markers from one circle to another. This continues until a group gets “Tic-Tac-Toe”.
9. To make the game faster, add a fourth pinnie for each group.

Facilitator's Note

Watch out for groups ripping on each other. The person who makes the final move is NOT the person who caused them to lose! Remember, there were other people out there putting down markers, so winning or losing is very much a “group effort”! Also, watch teams that only have the “athletes” going and leave everyone else to sit and watch. This is VERY common with Middle School students.

Focus

Communication. Okay, this could be a “Group Game”, “Cooperation”, etc.; but, I've found that in the middle of the competition, people need to rely on their teammates to help them figure out where to place the pinnie.

Processing

Did you ever get confused on where to place a pinnie? Why is it difficult, in the middle of racing down there, to think about where it should go? Did it help to have your team yelling directions? Why or why not?

Spotting

I've seen over-zealous people run into the hoops and slip. Other than that, running at high speed is always something to pay close attention to!

TOXIC WASTE

Props:	Bucket, Tennis Ball, Bicycle Tube, Ropes (Heavy Ropes)	Activity Level:	2
Space:	Limited	Difficulty Level:	4
Credit:	Boy Scouts	Group Size:	S

Story

A nuclear reactor, in the process of being cleaned, has gone critical. The control rods were removed so that technicians could safely dust them. Unfortunately, someone left one sitting out. Now, it's created an area that's 5,000 °F and filled with radiation and – more importantly – they failed to dust it! To do that, you will have to get it outside of the “Circle of Doom”, first. (Because, for some unknown reason, the “Circle of Doom” won't follow the control rod...) You need to retrieve the control rod which, strangely enough, looks like a tennis ball that is sitting on top of a bucket. You need to bring it out of the “Circle of Doom” without dropping it so that it can be dusted appropriately. Good luck!

Rules

1. Mark a large circle on the ground with the larger climbing rope. The circle should be 10 to 15 feet in diameter (wider is tougher). Place the bucket upside-down in the middle and place a tennis ball on top.
2. Hand the team the bicycle tubing and a bunch of ropes – preferably enough for one per person. (If you don't have enough rope, blindfold half the group and let them touch the ropes while the sighted person gives directions. I usually explain that the people holding the ropes don't want to look directly into the reactor, as this could be bad.)
3. Using only these materials, the group must figure out how to get the bucket, pick it up, carry it outside of the circle, and place it delicately down inside the other area, all without stepping into and/or touching the inside of the main circle!
4. If someone steps inside or reaches inside either circle, the group starts over.
5. If the tennis ball falls off, the group starts over.
6. If the group restarts multiple times, you can give them penalties, such as: only using one hand on the ropes, making people mute, etc. (Start small and work your way up!)

Facilitator's Note

If you are feeling nice, you can tie the ropes to the bicycle tube for the group. If you want an additional challenge – and don't mind the mess – you can have them retrieve a full bucket of water from the circle. Even more vindictive, you can have them transport the full bucket of water to another circle where they need to work together to pour the water from one bucket into another. (That was the way we originally played it.)

Focus

Communication. How do you piece the different components together to accomplish the task? They will spend a great deal of time working on this (unless, of course they've already done something like this before), and it is very important that the communication be constructive. Watch for people being excluded and ideas being neglected. Cooperation is simply the implementation of the plan. (Note the word: “simply”.)

Processing

Were you able to do it? Why or why not? What was the hardest part of this task? Did the planning go well, or are there areas you need to work on? If you could do it again, what would you do differently?

Spotting

Inspect the bicycle tube for cracks, tears, etc. prior to each use. That and one whole side deciding to let go at one time are about the only safety concerns that I'm aware of.



MAIN SECTION: COOPERATION

Our programs are based on “The 3 C’s: Communication, Cooperation and Caring / Trust. This section contains activities designed to promote and improve cooperation among teams. After Communication, Cooperation is the area we usually strive to develop.

As with Communication, you will also notice “Records” in this section. These are included as a method of motivating teams, if desired. Not all activities have a record, and many do not need them. Beware of focusing so much on the competition that you neglect the needs of the group. Also, some activities can prove dangerous if a record is attempted!

ALL SCREWED UP

Props: Threaded Rod, 12 Nuts
Space: Any
Credit: Teams Kit Manual (pgs. 192 – 193)

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

This activity is one of the “oldest” that I’ve done. I used it with my first group ever, and I’ve used it with hundreds of other teams since. I don’t know where the directions came from originally, but I found it in the Team’s Kit Manual later, and so that’s why they get the credit.

Rules

1. Divide the team into two groups.
2. Hand each group a small threaded rod and six nuts.
3. As a team they must thread the nuts from the top of the rod until they fall off the bottom.
4. Give the group a few minutes to talk their ideas over, and then when they are ready, start the timer. Stop timing when all nuts have been threaded over the length of the rod.
5. Now, go for “Round Two”. Hand the group the larger threaded rod and 12 nuts.
6. As a team they must thread the nuts from the top of the rod until they fall off the bottom.
7. Give the group a few minutes to talk their ideas over. They have each had experience with the activity and they have both found ways that work and that didn’t work, so hopefully they will have a good idea of what to do. When when they are ready, start the timer. Stop timing when all nuts have been threaded over the length of the rod.



Facilitator’s Note

Be careful how you present this activity. Not to be crude, but I was working with some “At-Risk” boys and I mentioned, “You now have a nut.” One boy responded, “Actually...” I cut him off, but it was too late. After that, all comments that came out were crude and inappropriate about “nuts” and “rods”.

Focus

Cooperation. Though there usually is a fair amount of communication going on, it takes a surprising amount of cooperation to work the nuts all the way down!

Processing

How long did it take? On your second attempt, did you improve? Who did the most work? What ideas didn’t get tried that might have helped the group out?

Spotting

If it is a large threaded rod, be careful it doesn't fall on anyone. (This may seem pretty basic, but it is a very real concern!) Make sure the rod is in good condition; nicks, cuts, and burrs can do a lot of damage to participants' hands.

Record

2:00 - Sunshine House, 1997 (12 nuts on a threaded rod)

AMOEBA RACE

Props: Rubber Chicken (Optional)
Space: Open
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

<Insert your current teambuilding location here> has a problem: some silly person has left a rubber chicken wedged dangerously close to its heart. Your group has volunteered for the special (pronounced: "dangerous") mission of being shrunk down small enough to enter <the location> and deal with the pesky chicken. To be ready to enter the heart of <the location>, you must be converted into a cell.

Rules

1. Mark a starting line and then turn and throw the rubber chicken as far as you can.
2. Have the team divide itself into two groups and ask for one group to volunteer.
3. Take the group that volunteered and have them link hands and form into a circle with the participants facing toward the *outside* of the circle, not the inside! Explain to the group that cells have two parts: the cell wall, which you have standing before you.
4. The second part to a cell is the inner "gooky" stuff. (I'm sure that's the scientific term.) The second group is the gooky stuff and must get inside the cell wall. Now, the group is ready to walk down and retrieve the chicken.
5. The group must move together; if the cell wall ruptures the whole group must start over.
6. Nobody on the cell wall is allowed to pick up the chicken; it must be done by the inside.
7. When the chicken has been picked up, explain to the team that the added weight has caused the cell wall to become unstable and it begins to shrink. Now have the cell wall link elbows, instead of hands. The group is now ready to return to the starting point.



Focus

Cooperation. Moving in a blob is a tough scenario.

Processing

Who had the toughest job to do? Why? How much more difficult was it when the cell wall shrunk? Were you successful?

Spotting

Watch people who are walking backwards, they are prone to slip. Watch out for those on the inside because they can get trampled. Is this a race? (No.) You may wish to point this out to the group if they are having problems with attempting a 200-meter blob-dash.

BALLOON TROLLEY

Props:	Balloons	Activity Level:	2
Space:	Any	Difficulty Level:	3
Credit:	QuickSilver (pg. 147)	Group Size:	S

Story

The U.S. Government wants you! Yes, you! (Who else did you think I would be talking to?) Uncle Sam has a shipment of top-secret, highly volatile, bottled lung-air. This lung-air is very, very toxic and must be handled with extreme care! (Simple, chronic halitosis is a terrible thing to expose people to.) Due to typical government efficiency, it has been decided to transport the lung-air by human couriers. It has been determined, however, that hands cannot be used to transport the lung-air and, even more important, it has been decided to ship all of the containers of lung-air at the same time!

Rules

1. Everyone must stand in a straight line. It will be up to the group to decide if they want to be single-file or side-by-side.
2. There needs to be one less balloon than the total number of people. Participants must now figure out how to wedge the containers (balloons) of lung-air between them so that they can be carried. Each person must touch at least one balloon and no person can carry a balloon by themselves.
3. The group is NOT allowed to touch each other, otherwise they must start over.
4. Working together, they must walk a pre-determined distance, usually twenty feet.
5. If the group drops a balloon, the entire group has to start over. (Unless they can figure out how to pick up the balloon without dropping any of the other balloons.)

Facilitator's Note

If the group does this with ease, have them retry with two balloons between each person! Or, for any even better time, have the group attempt this while negotiating an obstacle course! (Blindfolds are nice props for this activity, too.)

Focus

Both Cooperation and Communication are very important to the accomplishment of this activity.

Processing

What was the task? What was the goal? Was it possible to accomplish the task without accomplishing the

goal? Why or why not? Did you drop any balloons?

Spotting

The only problem I've seen was people stepping each other's shoes off.



THE BUCKET

Props: Blindfolds, Rubber Chicken or Bucket
Space: Open
Credit: Heather Campbell (née Elmatti)

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

If I remember correctly, this is the very first Teambuilding game I ever “officially” played in. We were a brand new group of Facilitators who were learning to lead the activities, when we were introduced to this. I’ll be honest, this activity drove me nuts... So, because of that, I have to include it here!

Rules

1. Blindfold the group (or have them leave their eyes closed).
2. Place a rubber chicken or a bucket in the middle of an open area.
3. The group must now work together, while blindfolded, to retrieve the object. The group can stay together or separate. They must determine their own solution.
4. No one is allowed to run under any circumstances!
5. If you shout “Stop!” everyone needs to freeze until you correct the problem.

Focus

Cooperation. If the team splits off and runs in all directions, they will fail. Together, systematically, they stand the best chance of beating this activity!

Processing

Did you work together or split up? How many of you think this was the best choice? Why? Was there any way, short of cheating, that would help you find the object faster?

Spotting

You have anywhere from 6-600 blindfolded people moving around an area. Be prepared to sideline any participant who is running around and endangering the other participants!

Records

5:38 - Kimball Camp Staff, 1994 (One bucket found in a regulation football field.)

CHOCOLATE RIVER

Props: Spots
Space: Open
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

You are sent out on a mission for International Geographic (not “National Geographic” so they can’t sue me) to explore the wonderful world of Candy Land. (Probably should have a different name so they can’t sue me, either. Hmm... How about, “The Landy of Candyness”?) As you navigate your way through, you come across a beautiful chocolate river. To continue your quest, you need to find a way across. Thankfully, there are marshmallows nearby which you can use as improvised flotation devices.

Rules

1. Mark a starting line and finish line about 30 feet apart (for 15 participants).
2. The team must move from the starting line, cross the river, and arrive successfully on the other side; all without falling into the chocolate river.
3. Spots are only allowed to move forward, never backward.
4. Participants must also keep human contact with the spots at all times. If they lose contact – even for a moment – the Marshmallow Bird will swoop in and steal the spot.
5. If anyone steps into the river, the whole group must start over. (On the bright side, the spots are returned.)



Facilitator’s Note

You can limit the number of spots, to make it more challenging. The fewer spots, the more people have to hold onto each other as they move. For a group of 15, you could use as few as six spots. If you have a larger group, split them in half and have one group start on one side and the second group starts on the other. In the middle, they can work together and share spots.

Focus

Cooperation. They have to work together moving across the river in order to keep full human contact with all the spots. This lends itself to some very interesting physical contortions.

Processing

(Some teams get this quickly, some take forever, and some even self-destruct. Watch for reactions when they lose spots as well as the effort made in pre-planning.) How many had no concept of what you were about to try until you saw it work once? What mistakes were made? What would you do differently?

Spotting

Watch for people taking huge steps, spots sliding, or losing their balance backwards.

CIRCLE THE CIRCLE / WEBBING PASS

Props: Webbings or Hula Hoops (2)
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pg. 60)

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S - M

Story

Today, we're going to have a race! This race is for fame and glory! If you win the race, you will be counted among the top...um...racers in this country! This is all about competition, plain and simple! Your team will be competing in a...um...competition! For fame! Did I mention that? Okay, are you ready to start competing?

Rules

1. Have the team hold hands and get into a circle.
2. Put a webbing (or hoop) over each arm as you link hands with those next to you. (Feel free to introduce the webbings – mine are Fred and George – to the group; it makes them – the webbings – feel special.)
3. Tell the group that you are going to have a race with the two webbings around the circle. Be sure to cheer for your own webbing! Fred is going to my left, so people on my left, who do you want to root for? George is going to my right, so people on my right, who do you want to root for?
4. You cannot let go of hands.
5. The webbing must pass over your body.
6. The webbings cannot touch the ground of they start over. (Optional.)
7. You cannot use your hands to move the webbings. If you use your hands, the webbing will start over. (I have included a drawing of a hand for reference...) Feel free to use noses, toes, teeth, etc.
8. The first team that gets their webbing to the finish line, wins!



Quick Anatomy Lesson:

Please note that fingers are part of the human hand!

9. Ready? Go!

Facilitator's Note

If you want to really ratchet up the stress level, when a webbing gets to you, do NOT pass it over you. I usually

step through and prepare to finish the race and then stop and wait. When one “team” says, “We won!”, I explain that the webbing has to complete crossing over to me before they win. This gets a lot of people yelling at me to “finish the race”. Instead, I wait until the second webbing arrives and I pass them both over me at the same time so that it’s a “tie”. This will give you a lot more material to process with, depending on the group!

Focus

Cooperation. The group will learn from watching others and will, hopefully, find new and better ways to move the webbing. Ideas are shared, and the group will improve as they continue.

Processing

How many teams were there? How many teams are in a circle? Why do I like circles? (There’s only one team.) Did anyone try to fight against “someone else’s” webbing? Maybe they said, “Let’s slow this down so that our webbing will win!” If they did say that, who are they hurting? (Their own team!) Did those around you help you or did they leave you to do this one by yourself? Why did we do this activity? (It shows how many teams the group will need for the day: ONE!)

Spotting

Watch for people tripping over the webbings. Watch, also, for people squeezing each other’s hands too tightly. Be careful about people moving too fast, especially in patterns which force those next to them to move in ways their body was not designed to allow.



GIANT HOOTENERAINATANEIOUS

Props: Ropes
Space: Open
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 5
Difficulty Level: 4
Group Size: S

Story

You are sent out on a mission for International Geographic (not “National Geographic” so they can’t sue me) to explore deepest darkest Africa and to photograph the mythical, the vicious, the incredibly fun to say, Giant Hootenerainataneous (henceforth referred to as “Hoot”). These creatures are exceptionally rare, and what few expeditions who have discovered them were wiped out! (These things are VERY vicious!). Your group accepts the challenge, and heads off into the jungle.

Within a week, you discover (oh joy!) the lair of a Hoot! You explore the inside, find remnants of friends who were on other expeditions, and get to study Hoot dooky up close! I know it’s gross, but then again, you’re

scientists and “guano of the world” is your specialty!

You complete your studies, take priceless photos, and prepare to leave, but it is a shame you didn’t actually get to see a Hoot. Well, wait! You’re in luck! Between you and the front of the cave, apparently coming back from a failed hunting trip, ravenously hungry and not just a little irate at having found company before it had a chance to clean, stands a Hoot! (Instinctively, you shoot pictures!)

Now, however, you have a slight problem. You need to get out. You only have a few seconds (give them as long as they need) to save yourself. You must quickly assemble yourselves into a Hoot and walk out, because Hoots, as vicious as they are, would never pick on another Hoot. It’s a slim chance, but it’s all you have.

Rules

1. No magical weapons or heroic sacrifices! You must survive together.
2. You are allowed to have only one Hoot. If there are more than one, the real Hoot will feel threatened and immediately attack. This means that everyone must be connected to each other, somehow. (Yes, fingertips touching counts.) If one person breaks from the group, everyone starts over.
3. Everyone must make the noise of the Hoot. (This is the fun part!)
4. Now, here is the important part! The Hoot – is everyone paying attention – has two legs less than the number of people in the group. In other words, 12 people have 24 legs but can only have 10 of them touching the ground!
5. Working together, you have to cross a distance of 20 feet.



Facilitator’s Note

It is the Facilitator’s call to decide what a foot is. My rule of thumb (or foot) is that a foot is a foot. Anyone laying on the ground saying, “I have no feet touching the ground!” automatically counts as about 7 feet. Putting your feet together doesn’t count; it’s just two feet side-by-side. If you put one foot on top of another, that would work. Facilitator, it’s your call! (Don’t be too nice. They can always come back later if they wish.) This activity can be dangerous (you’ll see some interesting configurations) and has the potential of creating group ill-will. Don’t use this one as a starting activity! When I began teambuilding many years ago, I had two male teachers come to blows on this, just to give you some idea of how much stress it can create.

Focus

Cooperation. This takes a LOT of teamwork to finish the task.

Processing

If they do fail, you should discuss the difference between tasks and goals, and see if they met their goal without accomplishing the task (or vice versa). Did you pre-plan this or just jump in? Did you not listen to someone who had a good idea? Finally, when it came time to doing the heavy lifting, did you rely on the guys to do it, or

did everyone share the burden?

Spotting

Watch for dangerous configurations. Watch, also, for tempers! Groups can get easily frustrated by the discussion phase of this activity. Avoid putting too much weight on one person. Remember: if it looks unsafe, it probably is...

GROUP JUMP ROPE

Props: Large Climbing Rope
Space: Open
Credit: Hillcrest Elementary

Activity Level: 4
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S

Story

None. I did get the idea for this from “Jump Rope For Heart” and watching how they did it! (Is anyone else old enough to remember the JRH tour teams that used to visit schools?)

Rules

1. Participants enter one at a time. The goal is to get everyone into the rope by adding them one by one.
2. If the rope gets stopped, either have everyone start over, or just continue where you left off. (Trust me, approximately 20 people, untrained, jumping rope at the same time? That’s challenge enough!



Facilitator’s Note

If your group is consistently having troubles, you can go for “Plan B”. Have everyone line up beside the rope. When the rope begins to move, they must all jump at the same time. You never truly realize how hard it is to get 20 people to jump at exactly the same moment...

Focus

Cooperation. It takes a lot of work to get everyone in jumping rope!

Processing

Don’t over-process this one unless you get profound reactions from the team.

Spotting

This is an activity *not* to play on a gravel or black top surface! (I like soft, grassy areas!) Also, watch out for

people running into each other when you do multiple people jumping at one time!

GUTTERBALL / MARBLE MADNESS

Props:	Quarter-Round, Marble	Activity Level:	2
Space:	Any	Difficulty Level:	4
Credit:	Teams Kit Manual (pgs. 223 – 225)	Group Size:	S

Story

Nope, sorry, I don't have a story for this one. Anyhow, hand out the pieces of quarter-round to the participants. What the group must now do is roll the marble from the starting piece to the end as fast as they can! This is a race, but they will have a couple of "practice rounds" to perfect their teamwork.

Rules

1. No one's gutter can be skipped.
2. Gutters can never come into contact with each other.
3. When holding your piece of gutter, your hands must ALWAYS be in contact with each other. In other words, you cannot hold the piece of gutter by both ends!
4. The marble cannot be touched by participants!
5. If the marble falls from a gutter, it must be restarted.

Facilitator's Note

During the activity, if one participant really struggles to do this, allow the group to move them to a different location. (Usually being the first one is the best for cases like this.)

Focus

Cooperation. The goal of the group is to work together. Anything less, they will fail in this activity. That's okay, though; if they are happy, you are happy!

Processing

Who had the best idea? Why? Did the group listen to their idea right away? Why or why not? If you could have one thing, be able to do one thing to improve your speed, what would it be? Why? Did your time improve as you worked? Why or why not?

Spotting

Stepping on the marble has, in fact, happened and is definitely a tripping hazard! Watch out for sword fights erupting from younger groups as they seek to bash each other with the molding.

LEVITATION

Props:	Hula Hoop	Activity Level:	2
Space:	Any	Difficulty Level:	5
Credit:	Rabbit Hat Productions	Group Size:	S

Story

I was taught this at a Facilitator training in the Twin Cities. I don't remember who led it, but I came to quickly realize that this is the single-most evil activity in all of Teambuilding. And that's why I love it so much!

Rules

1. Everyone must get into a circle around the hula-hoop.
2. Raise your hand and extend your pointer finger. (I used to say, "Make a gun with your hand." It was easy and everyone understood what I meant. Nowadays, I don't say that phrase with schools...)
3. The hula hoop must simply rest on the last knuckle of your outstretched pointer finger. You cannot tilt, grab, or hook your finger. The Facilitator will put the hula-hoop horizontally on the outstretched fingers of the team.
4. Everyone must maintain contact with the hula-hoop. If someone loses contact with the hoop for a short time, the whole group starts over.
5. Now, all the team has to do is simply lower the hoop to the ground.

Facilitator's Note

This sounds so simple, but it's not! If I move faster than you, I come off the hoop. When I move back up to make contact, I knock the hoop off your finger. You move your finger up and knock the hoop off mine. And so on. I've literally seen a hula hoop fly into the air because of the quick movements! Also, people tend to yell at the wrong people – not that they should be yelling at anyone. The highest end is usually high because the people on the opposite side of the circle have lowered their hands too quickly and the people in the middle are not lowering their hands fast enough. Because of all of this, it can be a very frustrating activity! If you want to make it even more frustrating, keep repeating the phrase, "Make sure your finger is in contact with the hoop!"



Focus

Cooperation. The hoop will seem to float, like magic, and keep rising despite the best efforts of the team. If the group cannot work together, the hoop will not come down!

Processing

Did you have difficulties lowering the hoop? Why or why not? Why does the hoop keep rising when the group is trying to lower it? Did you finally reach a solution?

Spotting

Beware of tempers in this activity! People in your team can get pretty frustrated with this activity. If people get verbally abusive, frustrated, etc., you may wish to stop and process the experience. You can wreck your group if you put it too early in your sequencing!

MOONBALL

Props: Cage Ball / Beach Ball (Large)
Space: Open
Credit: Cowstails and Cobras II (pgs. 60 – 61)

Activity Level: 5
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S - M

Story

None.

Rules

1. Have the team get into a shape – any shape. (Most will pick a circle.)
2. When they are ready, you will start the timer and throw the ball into the middle of whatever shape they give you.
3. Working together, they must prevent the ball from touching the ground. The ball must be hit – catching and throwing are not allowed – and each hit must launch the ball at least two to four feet into the air (except, of course, if the ball is out of control, then any hit will count).
4. When the ball touches the ground or, if the group makes an illegal grab, the time stops.



Facilitator's Note

The first time you throw the ball into the middle of their shape, don't expect times longer than 2-3 seconds. After about four rounds, most teams will break the ten second mark. For a group of fifteen people, an average score is 1:15, with exceptional scores over the two-minute mark!

Focus

Cooperation. You will find teamwork to the extreme on this activity! It takes a lot of effort to keep hitting the ball up in the air. The unusual thing you will find, however, is that when you begin this activity, you might find it hard to drag the group away from it. Most people want to "set the record". Let them go, if you have time. However, do not sacrifice teambuilding for the sake of "pure fun". Remember, this is fun with a purpose!

Processing

Did you break the record? Why or why not? What could you have done differently to help keep the ball up in the air longer? Who had the best "save"? Do you think, if you came back to this later, that you could get the record? Why or why not?

Spotting

Don't let the ball come down on just one person, if possible. Watch out for people crashing into each other, not that this can be helped. If the group is exceptionally hyperactive (running people over, jumping into the ball, etc.), you might want to have them come up with an organized structure for how they are to keep the ball up in

the air!

Record

3' cage ball is 4:51 - Kimball Camp Summer Staff, 1997

4' cage ball is 2:49 - Collision Youth Group, 2016 / large group is 5:11 – Valders Football (32 people) 2022

6' cage ball is 1:43 - Explorers Program, 2000

4' beach ball is 11:32 - Sunshine House, 1998

NITRO CAN PASS

Props: Bucket, Water
Space: Any
Credit: “The Legendary” Bill Patterson

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S

Story

A nuclear reactor has just gone critical. Unfortunately, some silly person left a bucket of nitroglycerin sitting right next to the reactor core! If it is not removed before the meltdown it will explode, throwing nuclear waste everywhere. (Basically, picture everyone glowing in the dark for the next few thousand years.) Realizing the plight – isn’t that a cool word? – you turn back to get the bucket so you can save the day.

Rules

1. Place the empty bucket coffee can in front of a person. They must now pass it around the circle. However, since the can has been in contact with radioactive material, you obviously don’t want to touch it with your hands! (That would be silly!) So, the group must pass it around the circle without using their hands. If anyone uses their hands or lets the bucket touch the ground, start over.
2. Now, have the team pass the bucket around the circle without using their arms at all. (For those who protest, explain that you want to keep the radiation as far from their attractive faces as possible, lest they melt off into a pile of goo upon the ground!) If anyone uses their arms and/or hands or lets the bucket touch the ground, start over.
3. Now, they are ready for the final step: fill the bucket about halfway with water. This water is the nitroglycerin. If a person uses their hands/arms, allows the bucket to touch the ground, or spills the water, they must now start over. If they spill the nitro, refill the can with even more water than before.



Facilitator’s Note

Don’t do this on a very cold day or with a group that has no sense of humor. A person getting wet is not necessarily a good thing if they are not going to be happy about it.

Focus

Cooperation. Those that can work together will succeed; those who can't, won't.

Processing

What did it take to solve this? Was there an easier way to do this? Did it help that you got to “practice” a couple of times before the water was added? Why or why not?

Spotting

Avoid having the group use their teeth; it's bad for dental health.

ONE FISH, TWO FISH...

Props: Tennis Ball, Hula Hoop, Rope
Space: Open
Credit: Northern Lakes Impact Center

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S - M

Story

We had a wonderful young lady interview to work with us. When it came time to test her skills, we asked her to lead a teambuilding activity with us. This was what she chose:

Rules

1. Determine a starting line and, on the opposite side of the room, place a hula hoop on the ground. You will also need a tennis ball.
2. The Facilitator goes and stands in the hula hoop and holds the tennis ball in open hands in front of them. The participants stand behind the starting line to begin the game. The goal is to get the ball from whoever is standing in the hula hoop over the line where everyone starts.
3. The participants can only move when the person in the hula hoop says, "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish!" because their eyes will be closed. (From here on out, I'm only typing "One Fish..." to represent the entire saying.)
4. After every time the person in the hoop says, "One Fish..." they will open their eyes. If the person in the hula hoop sees someone move AT ALL, they will be sent back to the beginning. Participants must stand still until the person in the hoop starts saying, "One Fish..." If they move before they start saying that phrase and are seen moving, they will go back to the starting line.
5. After the ball is stolen, the Facilitator is allowed to move around the hoop to see if they can figure out who has the ball. After each time of saying, "One Fish...", the Facilitator will get one guess as to who has the ball. If they guess correctly, the person gives the ball back to them and they go back to the starting line. If they guess incorrectly, then nobody moves and the Volunteers says, "One Fish..." again.
6. The ball cannot be hidden in their clothes, It must stay in their hands.
7. The ball cannot be tossed, rolled, etc. It can only move in someone's hands.
8. If they ball is ever dropped on the ground or thrown, everyone goes back to the beginning.

Facilitator's Note

To make the game “easier” on the participants, have the Facilitator face away from the starting line when they say, “One Fish...” They have to spin around to try to catch people moving. If you want something really random and different, use a toy that makes noise, like a rubber chicken. It makes the game that much harder! If you want to be really tough on the team, the person in the hoop can ask the participants questions, taunt them,

etc. to see if you can get them to move. They want to be still and quiet – practicing self-control! - to work together, get the ball to the starting line and win the game.

Focus

Cooperation. Teams where one person tries to be “the hero” and do it all by themselves usually end up failing. The best way to win is to secretly pass the ball when the person is speaking.

Processing

What did it take to solve this? What was working for you? What was the toughest part of this puzzle? Did it make a difference having a team help you?

Spotting

There is a potential for people colliding with each other or the Facilitator.

PARACHUTE PLAY (BASICS)

Props: Parachute
Space: Open
Credit: Ms. Cakerice’s Kindergarten Class

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S - M

Story

None. But I do want to take a moment to explain why we use military parachutes, rather than “gym ‘chutes”. First, I have never had a military parachute fail, get holes in it, be damaged, etc. These are designed to be basically immortal and the first military ‘chute I ever bought for teambuilding is still being used! Second, military parachutes are dome-shaped, which means you can get a greater height for when you duck under the ‘chute. Finally, the rim sewn into the military parachute is designed for the real world, not gym class, so it’s more resilient. Then only catch to using a military ‘chute is that you may have to reach in a foot from the rim, flip the ‘chute into the air, and then grab the rim to start the activity.



Rules

1. Spread the parachute around the group and have the group stand around it.
2. Activity One: With the parachute held tightly, have the group practice the basic parachute move. Shout “Up!” When you say that, everyone must flip the parachute above his or her head, holding it high as it begins to drift back down. Now, shout “Down!” At this point, everyone must drag the ‘chute back to the ground. (Hands should be on the ground!) Make sure they go all the way up and all the way down; it will be very important for later parachute activities. Play for a few minutes; it’s a lot of fun!

3. Activity Two: Flip the ‘chute up into the air, have everyone lay flat on their backs with everything but their heads under the parachute and then have them pull it back down to earth. Now everyone is snug and warm under a large blanket!
4. Activity Three: Flip the ‘chute up in the air and simply let go!

Focus

Cooperation. It takes a fair amount of teamwork to move a parachute! However, since this activity is non-threatening, it’s a great way to “slow down” in the middle of the day, while still working on the group’s teamwork goals.

Processing

Don’t bother. You can ask a couple of questions, but it’s not that critical. Use this activity, instead, as a springboard into other parachute activities...

Spotting

When playing with a parachute, always beware of people being “clothes-lined”.

PARACHUTE PLAY (THE SWITCH)

Props:	Parachute	Activity Level:	4
Space:	Open	Difficulty Level:	3
Credit:	Ms. Cakerice’s Kindergarten Class	Group Size:	S - M

Story

None. As a cautionary tale, play with the “Parachute Play: Basics” before you attempt this!

Rules

1. Circle the group and practice the commands “Up!” and “Down!” a few times to make sure that everyone is ready.
2. Spread the group out evenly around the edge of the parachute (this is very important!).
3. Assign everyone a number based on the size of the team. (I prefer to only have 5 – 6 people moving at any one time for this activity.)
4. The Facilitator shouts “Up!” and calls a number (or group name, whatever). Those who have that number must let go of the ‘chute, leave their positions, and walk to their left to the place vacated by the nearest person with the same number. When they have all reached their new places, grabbed the parachute and are ready, shout “Down!” (Do this two times with every group, just so that they are sure of what they are to do!)
5. Now it becomes competition. You will shout “Up!” and call a number as before. This time, you will count to three and then you will shout “Down!” and the people on the outside will try to trap the group underneath the parachute. After a few have been successfully trapped, let them go.

Facilitator’s Note

Parachute play is often regarded as “simple” or “juvenile”. I have played these games with adults, students, families, businesses, adjudicated youth, etc. If you present it well, you can use parachute games with any group. Besides, most people like to giggle and be a child again!

Focus

Cooperation. It takes a great deal of coordination on all parts. If you are running under the ‘chute, you hope that those around you run the right direction (or remember to run at all!). For those on the outside, it takes a great deal of control to not collapse the parachute prematurely and it takes a tremendous effort to actually bring the ‘chute back to the ground.

Processing

What made people successful in not getting trapped? What caused people to be trapped? Honestly, was there anyone on the outside who brought the parachute down before they were supposed to? Did it make a difference in who got trapped? Who had the longest run to get to their new spot? Did they get caught? Why or why not?

Spotting

Watch for people being clothes-lined by the edge of the ‘chute! (As always...) Also, watch people running the wrong way and colliding with each other under the parachute! (This is pretty common, so make sure the first few times you have people *walking* through it!)

PARACHUTE PLAY (WASHING MACHINE)

Props:	Parachute	Activity Level:	3
Space:	Open	Difficulty Level:	1
Credit:	Ms. Cakerice’s Kindergarten Class	Group Size:	S - M

Story

None.

Rules

1. Circle the group and practice the commands “Up!” and “Down!” a few times to make sure that everyone is ready.
2. Spread the group out evenly around the edge of the parachute (this is very important!).
3. Assign everyone a number based on the size of the team. (I prefer to only have 5 – 6 people under the parachute at any one time for this activity.)
4. Shout “Up!” and, while the canopy is in the air, have the first group go under the parachute and lay down flat on their backs toward the center. Let the ‘chute settle down on them.
5. The Facilitator tells those who are left holding the parachute to begin filling the washing machine. To do this, you gently flutter the parachute up and down over those lying underneath. (You want the ‘chute to be lightly brushing their face.)
6. After a moment, then you explain that it’s time to start the wash cycle. Begin to move the parachute by having everyone push it to his or her left and then pull it back to the right. (Just like an agitator in a washing machine.) Do this for a while, and then prepare to rinse.
7. To rinse, do large flutters of the parachute over the group. (This is a bizarre sensation.)
8. When you are done rinsing, then you spin dry by making large movements from left to right.
9. When the clothes are done, shout “Up!” and flip the parachute off the clean participants. Substitute another group in, and feel free to have someone else lead the activity!

Facilitator’s Note

It takes a bit to get a team to be able to move the ‘chute left and right for the wash and spin cycles. If necessary, slow down and role-model what they need to do. Practice it a few times and they’ll do fine! This is an easy activity that is very low-key and yet helps get everyone moving at the same time, so have fun!

Focus

Cooperation. This activity focuses primarily on the group's abilities to follow directions.

Processing

Again, don't be too intense. This is designed for fun! Ask a few questions, and then move on.

Spotting

Be understanding about those who are claustrophobic. Otherwise, have fun.

RIGHT ON TARGET

Props:	Hula Hoop, Shock Cord Circle, Blindfold, Throwables	Activity Level:	3
Space:	Middle	Difficulty Level:	3
Credit:	YMCA Camp Ihduhapi	Group Size:	S

Story

None. But, we did steal this idea from YMCA Camp Ihduhapi, who presented it at the Spring 2002 Adventure Learning Training. (Not sure where they got this from, though.) Special thanks to them and kudos for a wonderful activity!

Rules

1. Blindfold a participant and have them stand within the hula-hoop.
2. The remaining team members grasp the shock cord circle and stand ten feet behind the blindfolded participant. (In the original rules, you did not have to be behind the participant, merely ten feet away. It's up to you...)
3. On your signal the blindfolded person attempts to toss a throwable through the rope circle. The team holding the circle can give directions to the thrower, move themselves to get under the throwable, or try to assist in any way they can, but they are not allowed to let go of the hoop to do so.

Facilitator's Note

Use soft throwables. About the hardest I use are tennis balls.

Focus

Cooperation. The rope-circle-group will have to coordinate their efforts to get under the throwables. Communication is important, as well, to help the thrower determine where the location of the circle.

Processing

How did it feel to be the person throwing the objects? Did you have a system for moving the rope hoop? Was wind a factor? Which objects were easier to catch? Could you catch more than one object at a time?

Spotting

People could get bonked by throwables. It is safer to not use solid objects like baseballs, bowling balls, shot puts, etc.

TOUCH THE CAN

Props: Pop Bottle, Tennis Ball, Small Rock, Etc.
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pgs. 108 – 109)

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 1-5
Group Size: S

Story

Most people don't truly realize just how lonely it can be being a pop bottle. You spend most of your life waiting for someone to come along, to remove the horrible, gassy build-up within your soul. When the moment comes, they pick you up, hold you, treat you as if you were their best friend, and then callously discard you to a life of loneliness in a ditch somewhere or dispatch you to a higher plane of existence where you will wait for your next incarnation, perhaps within the body of a toaster and/or a new car. So, to boost the self-esteem of pop bottles we have decided to help one suffering Diet Dew bottle. (I provided an empty one in your Kit. Wasn't that nice of me?) In counseling there is a technique called "touch therapy" that says if you want to make someone feel better about themselves, simple physical contact can be a powerful method.

Rules

1. To begin, have the group stand in a circle. (They don't have to stay that way.)
2. Everyone must have a body part (preferably fingers) touching the can at the same time.
3. No one is allowed to touch anyone else while touching the pop bottle; not even clothes!
4. They need to be able to maintain contact for 10 seconds without touching anyone else.
5. Process the experience. Then...
6. Tennis balls also have rough lives too. (You can keep going to progressively smaller objects until you get down to the ridiculously small and/or you are bored and ready to move on.)



Facilitator's Note

For a multi-day program, I usually have them tackle one item per day, getting smaller as the team progresses. For a single-day event, I usually have 2-3 objects waiting and use them.

Focus

Cooperation. You have to be able to work together to pull something as complicated as this off!

Processing

Were you faster each time, even though the objects were progressively smaller? Why is that? How much does practicing on larger items first help you as things get smaller?

Spotting

If you use a pop can, avoid placing your fingers inside as there may be sharp edges.

Records

Golf Ball -	19 people (Lighthouse, 2013)
Moon Rock -	25 people (Clintonville Schools, 2014)
Ping Pong Ball -	19 people (Lighthouse, 2013)
Pop Bottle (20 oz) -	23 people (Union City Schools At-Risk Program, 2000)
Tennis Ball -	23 people (Ogema Youth Group, 2009)

WARP SPEED

Props: Tennis Balls, Stopwatch
Space: Any
Credit: Cowstails and Cobras II (pg. 83)

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 1
Group Size: S

Story

I first played this with a Summer Camp Staff before leading it for a group of at-risk students. I have to confess, the “juvenile delinquents” did better at it than we did.

Rules

1. Have the group get in a circle.
2. Have everyone place his or her right hand within the circle.
3. Put a tennis ball in the hand of one person.
4. Explain to the group that they must move the tennis ball around the circle as quickly as they can.
5. Each person must have an opportunity to hold it by themselves.
6. No throwing the ball.



Facilitator's Note

A typical group of 20 should be able to pass the ball around the circle in under 20 seconds. Give them a few chances, allowing for time in-between each try for the group to discuss ways to increase their speed. By the way, the fastest I ever saw was a group that built a ramp out of their hands and simply rolled the ball down it. Everyone touched it, they all had it individually, and the ball was not thrown. It was a brilliant strategy...come up with by the at-risk students I mentioned above!

Variations

If you use this after “Group Juggle”, you can ask them to move the ball as fast as possible through their established pattern. Don't tell them they have to remain in the circle; let them figure out the best way to stand.

Focus

Cooperation. A team has to work together for it to be able to beat 20 seconds. If the group works very well together, they should be able to beat ten seconds!

Processing

What was your time on the first try? How about the last? Did you improve? Was the improvement gradual or sudden? Why? Are there ways that you can move the ball faster?

Spotting

Watch out for people throwing tennis balls. Other than that...

WORM HOLE

Props: Worm Hole Prop
Space: Any
Credit: YMCA Camp St. Croix

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

You are a worm. Not just any worm, though; I'm sure you are a nice worm! I really mean that. It's a compliment. Anyhow, it has just rained and you have decided you want to get above ground to work on your tan. (Isn't that why worms come out after it rains?) But first, you need to get out of your hole in the ground.

Rules

1. The group should stand in a circle, holding hands.
2. Place the worm hole around the hands of any two people in the circle. (This should remind you of "Webbing Pass".)
3. The group must not break contact with each other at any time.
4. Each person must pass through the "worm hole".
5. The person passing through the hole cannot touch the worm hole. If a person touches the worm hole while going through it, they must go through again as well as the person who went before them.
6. If anyone releases hands, the team must start over.

Facilitator's Note

In your Kit, you'll notice two different-sized "worm holes" made out of shock cord. If you want to work with someone larger or who is in a wheel chair, use either the larger "hole" or the "Right On Target" circle.

Focus

Cooperation. It does take a lot of help to keep the worm hole from touching your teammate!

Processing

Have you noticed any patterns in the way this group solves problems? Are they productive? Unproductive? What are some specific ways you cooperated to complete this activity?

Spotting

Beware of snapping the worm hole! If people let go quickly, it can really hurt!

YAEGER STAGGER

Props: Blindfolds, Throwables, Stopwatch, Rope
Space: Open
Credit: YMCA Camp Ihduhapi

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 4
Group Size: Any

Story

None. But, we did also steal this idea from YMCA Camp Ihduhapi. This was also presented at the Spring 2002 Adventure Learning Training. (I took a lot of notes from that weekend!)

Rules

1. Use the rope to mark a starting line on the ground.
2. Spread 12-18 throwables on the ground, in shrubs, etc. in an area up to 50 feet in front of the starting line.
3. Groups divide into teams of three. (If you need to, you can have 1-2 teams of four; they just put two people into the game field at one time.)
4. Blindfold the first person and have them stand on the starting line. Their job is to walk out and pick up as many throwables as they can in three minutes. The first person cannot see, but can move and talk.
5. The second person stands on the line, facing away from the first person and the throwables. The second person cannot move, but they can talk and see, but they may only face toward the third person and away from the playing area.
6. The third person faces toward the second person and is standing a few feet away from the line. The third person's job is to see where the objects are and to relay the information to the second person who tells the first person. The third person cannot speak or move, but they can see and find a way to communicate information to the second person.
7. The first round stops after three minutes or when all the objects have been picked up.
8. For a second round, have the group switch roles.

Facilitator's Note

Since learning this game, we have played a TON of variations of it! For example, have the blindfolded person retrieve only certain items without touching others. Or, and this is my favorite, make this a timed activity and in addition to a bunch of throwables, I toss candy. If the blindfolded person touches a throwable, they must drop the candy they've already collected. If they don't get the candy back across the line before time runs out, their group loses all of it!

Focus

Cooperation. With all of the limitations on the roles of the people, it really takes a great deal of teamwork to get the information conveyed properly!

Processing

What role did you like the best and why? Which role did you like the least and why? What was your level of frustration with this challenge? What worked and what didn't?

Spotting

People in blindfolds should be ringing bells! Make sure their partners are guiding them safely!



MAIN SECTION: CARING / TRUST

Our programs are based on “The 3 C’s: Communication, Cooperation and Caring / Trust. This section contains activities designed to promote and improve caring and trust among teams. This is the final stage of our programming and the potential for injury increases if your team is not performing adequately.

No records are allowed for activities in this section!

3D MINE FIELD

Props: Blindfolds, Obstacles, Throwables
Space: Open
Credit: Crescent Lake Bible Camp

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

Typically when I create a 3D Mine Field, I use funnoodles, buckets, throwables, and even the tarps and arachute to create obstacles. But, they guy who set the standard for this in my book was a Facilitator named ‘Shua who spent the entire previous day converting a room into the 3D mine field. There was stuff on the ceiling, hanging from the walls, etc. You don’t have to go that crazy, but it certainly was memorable!

Rules

1. Ahead of time, mark out a boundary on the floor, approximately 8' X 30'. Scatter a LOT of props in this area (rubber chickens, tennis balls, hula hoops, etc.). At different points along the way, run ropes across the Mine Field at various heights. Feel free to hang things from them (rubber chickens, tennis balls, hula hoops, etc.).
2. Have everyone find a partner and blindfold one person from each pair.
3. The sighted person can only direct the blindfolded person by verbal commands through the 3D Mine Field. Their goal is to lead the blindfolded person through the field without letting them come in contact with any of the items.
4. Sighted people must stay outside of the Mine Field as their partner goes through.
5. Penalties for touching an obstacle can include: making the pair start over or counting how many items they touch for later comparisons.
6. After a pair successfully (whatever that means) negotiates the course, switch the blindfolds and try again.

Facilitator’s Notes

If you are going to use any hard objects – like buckets – they need to go on the edge, near the wall. The wall is an existing “obstacle”, so you’re only adding to it. I never put them in the middle because they are simply too much of a trip hazard. Also, if you want to play a fun variation, add candy to the mix. Have participants work to pick up candy along the way or give it as a prize to the first team that can retrieve it. I even had one Facilitator send the group through the field to get a prize, but they needed to get it back safely, too. If they touched an obstacle on the way back, that group started over and the prize got put back on the far side of the field.

Focus

Trust and Communication. This is a nice “Intro to Trust” activity. You’ll find that the more people crossing at any time will create more chaos and confusion and it is up to the teammates to find ways to protect their blindfolded partners.

Processing

Did you run into anything? Why or why not? Was it harder having many people shouting directions to you at the same time?

Spotting

Watch people deliberately walking their partners into danger. If it looks unsafe, it probably is.

BLINDFOLD TRUST WALK

Props: Blindfolds (Optional)
Space: Open
Credit: Church Youth Group

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S - M

Story

None.

Rules

1. Have each person find a partner and line up next to each other. (This should form two lines.)
2. Hand out blindfolds (optional) to everyone on the left side of the line.
3. With the blindfolds securely in place, take the group for a walk. You lead, and let the sighted partner decide how he/she will guide their partner. They can do it in one of two ways: By touch ONLY or by voice ONLY. They cannot speak if they guide by touch, and they cannot touch if they guide with words.
4. After a few minutes of following you, have the partners switch roles.

Facilitator's Note

For less trusting people, you can allow them to keep their eyes closed. (Some people are very apprehensive about being blindfolded.) Another variation is to blindfold the entire group and lead them around using a rope. If you do this, the people closest to you will find it easy, the ones at the end will struggle.

Focus

Trust. There is little risk in this activity, but it will help to set the tone for later Trust exercises. This could be a great test to see whether or not your group will make it to the bigger obstacles.

Processing

Based on how your partner led you, do you feel you trust them more or less now? What could they have done differently? Did you fully trust your partner before the activity began? How hard did your partner work to earn your trust? (Would you like, just to be vengeful, to lead your partner through the forest again?)

Spotting

You, as leader, must constantly be looking back to make sure they are doing this properly! Occasionally you get the people who think running their partner into things is a fun time, so keep an eye out. My bet is you'll be able to tell who would do that pretty quickly! Keep the pace slow, smooth and gentle.



EVERYBODY UP

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Silver Bullets (pgs. 100 – 101)

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: All

Story

None.

Rules

1. Have each person find a partner, sit on the floor, and face each other. They must put their feet together, bend their knees, link their hands, and pull themselves up to a standing position.
2. When some of the groups have accomplished this, then have them split up into groups of three, four, etc. Finally, after they have mastered four, have the entire group try to pull themselves to their feet at the same time!
3. Some hints:
 - A. They must PULL themselves up, not stand individually!
 - B. All derrieres must leave the ground simultaneously. No standing and then pulling the other person to their feet!
 - C. In large groups, hand and foot contact must be in such a way that a current of electricity could pass through the entire group! (In other words, don't allow the group to split into tiny groups just to accomplish this activity.)
 - D. For an added challenge, you can have groups do it back-to-back. Do NOT allow them to link arms, though, due to the possibility of shoulder dislocation!

Facilitator's Note

While this activity may sound simple, it really does involve a lot of trust. You and your partner need to be willing to rely on the other person to hold your weight as you come off the ground. If you bend, if you don't trust your partner fully, you will be pulled off-balance.

Focus

Trust and cooperation. Communication becomes important with larger groups. Groups of 50+ will need to do some heavy-duty thinking to come up with a solution.

Processing

Did the group do it right? (i.e. Are they on their feet? Did they come up with a solution?) Does it matter how they did it, provided they didn't cheat? Do they feel good about themselves?

Spotting

Watch to make sure people have a strong grip on each other. Be aware of what people will fall on if they do slip. Again, as always, watch for people goofing off. If it gets to be a problem, remove the people from the activities or you can be their partner!

FEATHER FALL

Props: Webbings
Space: Any
Credit: Rabbit Hat Productions

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

None.

Rules

1. Tie water knots in two webbings. Hook the two webbings together to form a figure-eight with the knots on the top and bottom of the eight. (This is one of the things you will need to see in training. Do NOT attempt this on your own!)
2. Assemble the group in a circle and ask for a volunteer.
3. Have the volunteer sit down on the central knot and turn to lay down so that their body covers both webbings, their feet and heads should each be touching a knot.
4. Have them cross their arms across their chest, get comfy, and close their eyes. (This will create an interesting sensory effect in a moment.)
5. Have the rest of the group gather around, reach their hands underneath the person and grab, with both hands, on the webbings. As you do so, make sure the webbing at the feet stays under the participant's ankles and the one near their head stays under their shoulders. The person standing at the head will support both the participant's head, as well as grabbing onto the webbing. (You may need to take up slack in the webbings to make this possible.)
6. As soon as everyone is ready, you will give a three count. On three, the entire group will...**Slowly and Gently**... lift the person into the air, up to about chest level.
7. Hold them up there for a few moments and, again on your command, begin to rock them...**Slowly and Gently**.... from head to foot.
8. After a few swings, the team will...**Slowly and Gently**... begin to lower them back toward the ground, rocking them as they do so.
9. Make sure that they come in contact with the ground feet-first, posterior next and then finally their head and shoulders. (Are you sensing that I might be trying to warn you about a potential problem in the activity?) If done well, the participant will not even realize they were being lowered.
10. When they are on the ground, have them get up and select your next volunteer. To get more group involvement, have other people lead the count.
11. **AT NO TIME SHOULD ANYONE IN THE GROUP BE TALKING ABOUT DROPPING THE PERSON ON THE WEBBING!!!**

Facilitator's Note

This activity, if done correctly, is safe and is a lot of fun! However, if a person is small, their shoulders can slip between the webbing, dropping them headfirst to the ground. To prevent this, make sure that you take the webbing on either side of the head, wrapping the straps around your hands until there is enough slack removed so that the person cannot slip out. If done properly, your arms, when brought together, will make a "pillow" for the volunteer to lay their head against.

Focus

Trust, primarily. There are aspects of communication (Direct Communication = I talk, you listen) and certainly cooperation is needed, but the group must use this activity to begin to focus on caring for their teammates. If they can't focus, don't do more advanced trust activities!

Processing

How did you feel when the group first lifted you into the air? On a scale of 1 to 10, how much did you trust

your group before this activity? Why? How about after? Why? Was there anyone who didn't try it? Is it acceptable for someone to not do this activity?

Spotting

If they joke about dropping someone, don't do the activity. If they "accidentally slip", sit them down, talk about the risks, and then move on to anything other than Trust activities! Make sure the participants do nothing to destroy the trust of those in the group!

GROUP LAP-SIT / SITTING CIRCLE

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Boy Scouts

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: All

Story

Okay, I don't know who first came up with this, but I do know that it's in a ton of books and I see it in conferences, too! It's a very safe, very "easy" trust activity, and it is a cool Physics lesson, too!

Rules

1. Circle. By the way, in case you weren't certain at this point, the term "Circle" is used in place of, "Assemble into a circle, facing inward, and await further instructions."
2. Have the group turn and face clockwise so they are facing the back of the person in front of them. (Kind of confusing, I know, but picture a single-file line that just happens to be in a circle!)
3. Have everyone shuffle INWARD until everyone's toes are touching the heels of the person in front of them. Warning: They will attempt to move forward, thus shifting the circle around forever and ever. They must move in to shrink the circle to get everyone heel to toe.
4. The Facilitator (you) should then step out of the circle and tell everyone to pay attention. (It also helps to demonstrate this as you explain it!) You will count out loud:
 - A. At "one", everyone bends their knees slightly.
 - B. At "two", a little more.
 - C. At "three", everyone sits on the lap behind them.
5. It's very important that everyone sit in such a manner as to keep his or her knees together so that the person in front of them will have a lap to sit on. The number one problem that causes people to miss a lap is because there isn't one behind them!
6. If one person fails to sit, misses the lap behind them, or tries to support the group without sitting down, the whole circle will collapse! (This is a problem.) If it fails, have everyone stand back up and begin again. They must be able to hold the circle for 10 seconds. If done properly, have them sit for a time giving each other shoulder rubs. (See? Shoulder rubs CAN be a part of teambuilding!)

Facilitator's Note

If everyone sits properly, they will all support each other's weight equally and no one will get overloaded! (This is applied Physics.) My weight is on your lap, but someone behind you is supporting your derriere so my weight gets channeled all the way through the circle! Confusing, but definitely fun!

Focus

Primarily Trust. Communication is direct (you speak, they listen). Cooperation is there, but not central. Caring is important: you don't want to drop anyone, and you must make sure you give a good back rub.



Processing

What was the task? (To sit on each other's laps.) What was your goal? (Teamwork.) Did you accomplish your task? Did you accomplish your goal? How important were each of the 3 C's?

Spotting

Make sure the ground is free of all sticks and twigs and other painful things, just in case the group slips. Watch for those who are afraid of trusting the group. They will cause the downfall of the entire group. It's not their fault, however. They need to build trust, just like you and I!

Record

All right, I did say there were no records, but this is different. We had 180 participants do a "Lap Sit" at a Teacher In-Service.

LEAN SEQUENCE

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Craig Lee

Activity Level: 2
Difficulty Level: 2 - 5
Group Size: S

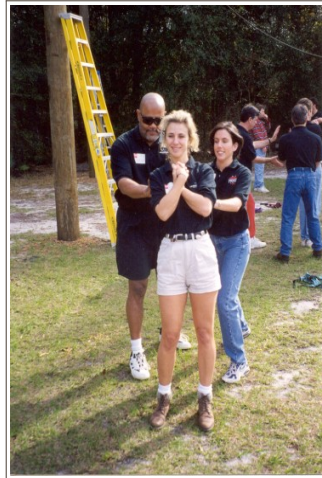
Story

None. The goal of this exercise is to stress "Challenge By Choice" as it relates to trust-building activities.

Rules

1. Have everyone find a partner. (If they are one person short, feel free to step in and assist.)
2. Have everyone stand with their right feet together.
3. Using right hands (reverse this for "lefties"), have them grip each other's right elbow.
4. Now, have the partners lean (not step) back; balancing by holding onto each other.
5. If the partners feel comfortable, they may grasp each other's wrists and lean back.
6. If they are still comfortable, have them hook their fingers together (not intertwined).
7. Finally, if they are doing well, they can hang onto each other by two fingers.
8. Now that we have established a basic level of trust, have one person step behind their partner. The back person should brace one foot behind them and raise their arms so that their hands are about a foot away from the front person's mid-back areas. The front person locks their arms across their chest, locks their

body straight and, at the command of the person behind, falls backward. If the front person is comfortable, the back person may take a step further away and the partners will repeat the process.



Facilitator's Note

First of all, notice the picture shows this activity being done outside in a grassy area. Do NOT do this over concrete, blacktop, or anything else that can cause damage if someone falls. If your group can't handle this, don't do it! You'll know pretty early on if they can be respectful. Trust is the toughest thing to build and the easiest thing to lose! Do nothing to destroy the trust in the group!

Focus

Caring. More importantly, this is trust, plain and simple. It is also a good way of working on trust within a "Challenge By Choice" framework.

Processing

Normally, this is used as to segue (isn't that a spiffy word?) into other activities. Process it as much or as little as you want/need before moving on.

Spotting

Watch those leaning at full extension! Before beginning, caution participants to not attempt a lean if they have a physical problem that could be exacerbated by the stress. Also, keep an eye on how far back people are moving during the "falling" phase. Do not let them move beyond what you think is safe.

TRUST CIRCLE / WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Props: None
Space: Any
Credit: Kimball Camp YMCA

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: S

Story

None. This activity can make or break a group. I use this when I don't think the group is ready for more advanced trust activities. It is CRITICAL that the group comes together for this activity, and the group should be guided into this one. Definitely not a starting activity!

Rules

1. Circle.
2. Have one volunteer stand in the middle, surrounded by the rest of the circle. AS SOON AS THE PERSON ENTERS THE CENTER, ALL EYES FOCUS ON THAT PERSON AND EVERYONE SEALS THEIR MOUTHS! (Except, of course, for encouragement!)
3. The volunteer locks their arms across their chest, stands rigid, and closes their eyes.
4. The Facilitator (you) says, "Bumpers up!" At this point, all those surrounding the person step in to shrink the circle and raise their hands to a ready position at around a mid-torso level. They should also, at this time, brace themselves by placing a foot back. I need to stress that the back foot should be at least two feet behind the front to give you the support necessary to catch someone who is falling.
5. When everyone is ready, you will say, "Begin." The volunteer then says, "Ready to fall." The group will concentrate solely on the person in the middle! When everyone is ready, they will say, together, "Ready." The volunteer will say, "Falling." The group will respond, "Fall on."
6. The volunteer will fall, keeping their body rigid. The group, IN ABSOLUTE SILENCE, will catch that person and GENTLY begin to pass them back and forth around the circle (the volunteer is able to move because they pivot on their feet). After about 10 to 15 seconds, catch the person, bring them to an upright position, and tell them they are done.
7. If someone bends, have him or her stand back in the center and start over



Facilitator's Note

If someone cannot take this activity seriously, make him or her sit off to the side in silence! There are to be absolutely no comments about dropping anyone! Trust is the toughest thing to build in a group, and is the fastest thing lost. Also, you MUST be paying attention! Set the example for the others! I have been dropped in this activity because of someone goofing off. After that incident, no one else would enter the circle and the activity was ruined. It is critical you keep everyone focused!

Focus

Trust! I cannot say it enough: Trust is the toughest thing to earn in a group, and is the quickest to lose! Caring is important and can be demonstrated by: encouraging the person who is nervous, understanding if someone chooses not to go into the circle, asking someone if they would be willing to try later and volunteering to go ahead of someone who has reservations.

Processing

Was this a difficult activity for you? Why or why not? Did you drop anyone? If you had been dropped, would you have continued to trust the group? Did you trust the group before going into the circle? Can anyone name some examples of caring which took place?

Spotting

Inattention! Here is where things start to get serious. If someone is laughing, joking around and not paying attention, someone could get badly hurt. I know it doesn't seem like a long way to fall, but believe me, face first? It hurts! Watch and make sure the group is ready at all times!

TRUST DIVE

Props: Stairs or Stair Steps
Space: Open
Credit: Silver Bullets (pg. 83)

Activity Level: 5
Difficulty Level: 4
Group Size: S

Story

I always had a problem with activities like "Trust Fall" because I have to thoroughly trust a group. I'm not saying that doesn't happen; I'm just saying that I'm less likely to trust others, and I know I'm not alone in that feeling! "Trust Dive" is the perfect compromise! I have to trust my teammates, but I do feel like I get to keep some measure of control.

Rules

1. Have the group line up in two straight, parallel lines.
2. Have them zipper their hands (see the diagram on "Trust Fall") and raise them up (the impact of the person jumping will drive their hands down).
3. Ask for a volunteer. They stand on the stairs, facing the group. The volunteer will decide how far away the group catching them will stand (I recommend having them start about a foot away until they're used to it) and how many stairs up they will stand. They proceed to assume a diving position with hands outstretched above their heads.
4. The "diver" says "Ready to jump." The group, upon checking their readiness, responds with "Ready." The diver then replies, "Jumping" and does so.
5. Have the diver dive "flat"! What I mean is that they are to dive parallel to the ground with as much of their body coming into contact with the maximum number of arms.
6. Upon completion of the dive, set the diver back up on their feet and let them try again, adjusting either their starting height upon the stairs or their distance from the team.

Facilitator's Note

This activity, while less dangerous than "Trust Fall" (due to the fact that the diver has some chance of saving themselves), should have the same rules enforced, namely: no talk of dropping people, make sure everyone pays attention and have everyone always being involved. Some general guidelines for safety also include: (1) don't do this activity if the stairs are slippery; (2) avoid excessive distances where it is a real strain for the diver to reach the group; and (3) avoid excessive height. It makes the person a LOT more difficult to catch!

Focus

Trust! (Hopefully that was obvious!)

Processing

Use this as a prelude to "Trust Fall". This is a great way of testing a group to decide whether or not they are ready.

Spotting

Watch arching when diving! They are not to dive, as into a pool, they are to dive as if a bunch of people were going to catch them! Make sure you always start slowly and work your way up to the more involved activities!

TRUST FALL

Props: Picnic Table, Bench, etc.
Space: Open
Credit: Boy Scouts

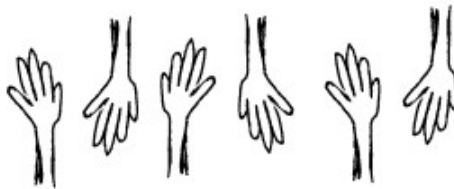
Activity Level: 5
Difficulty Level: 5
Group Size: S

Story

This is it. In my opinion – and in the opinion of those I work with – is the ultimate level of Caring a team can show for its members and the highest level of Trust a person can show in their team. It is a victory for a group to make it to “Trust Fall”, and they have already won by getting here!

Rules

1. If the group talks/jokes about dropping someone, the activity is over. (This is an Acedelmar Consulting policy and cannot be broken by our Facilitators.)
2. Have the group line up in two equal teams on either side of the platform. You will need *at least* four people on each side! (It really is “the more the merrier”.)
3. The catching team will stand tightly together in a line, with the first person touching the platform with their shoulder. Everyone else will be shoulder-to-shoulder down the line.
4. The catching team will stand with the foot closest to the platform back about 12 inches behind their other foot. (This is not critical, but makes it less likely a falling person will land on a knee.)
5. The catching team will “zipper” their arms. (Do NOT grasp hands, wrists, etc!) They are to keep their elbows bent slightly, their hands raised (the faller will push them down) and their hands at least to the middle of the forearm of the person across from them. (I discourage hand-to-elbow contact because it puts the catching team very close together!)



6. When they are ready, a catcher at the end will make sure the line is straight and even. Any adjustments to the line should be made **before** the falling person gets into position. At this time, the catching team leans back, looks at the platform and waits silently.
7. The falling person climbs to the platform (spot them as they go up) and then leans with their back to the tree. As soon as the catching team is ready, the falling person is to take their position.
8. They are to stand with their ankles just off the edge of the platform, feet tightly held together, body locked so that it is stiff and with their hands wrapped into the sleeves of their shirt. Caution the falling person to stay locked stiff from this point on! They are not to bend as they fall!
9. When they are ready to fall, they give the following commands:

Faller: “Ready to fall.”
Team: “Ready.”

Faller: "Falling."

Team: "Fall."

10. After the falling person is caught, set them upright before the catching team lets go.



Facilitator's Note

I explain to a group that their goal is to try to reach "Trust Fall". If they can, it's a mark of honor, because not many groups do. If the group DOES earn it, I sit them down before going to it and review their goals, their day, their successes, and their struggles. Then I explain that they have earned the honor of going to "Trust Fall", but that if anyone jokes about dropping anyone at any time, I will immediately end the activity and we will walk away. It's up to the team to protect the members. (By the way, "Trust Fall" is never promised in my world, nor is it guaranteed. If a group cannot earn it, they will not be allowed to do it!)

Focus

Trust. Nothing else matters if you do this activity.

Processing Questions

If your group has gotten this far, praise them! They have done very well! Even if you must remove them for someone talking about dropping someone, they still had to be very impressive to even reach the obstacle, so congratulate them! Praise team members for going and for not going. It is a choice that is acceptable for them, and so they should be proud for making that choice.

"Trust is the toughest thing to earn in a group and is the quickest thing to lose."

Are there times you have trusted someone with a secret only to find they told others? Did you go right back to that person when you had another secret? Why or why not? If we had dropped the first person, the ambulance had come, resuscitated them and took them away, how many of you would **not** have done this activity? Why or why not? Remember to keep the trust people place in you!

Spotting

Okay, there's a lot of them here. It's almost like a whole other "Rules" section, but this activity needs to be facilitated properly to protect your team:

1. *Quick Rule Of Thumb:* If you do not think that your group could catch you safely if you were the first person to go, they are not capable of doing "Trust Fall". Walk away! In my opinion, 9-out-of-10 groups

that I work with should NOT be doing this activity!

2. Make sure the platform you are falling from is safe, secured, and is not a ridiculous height! (I know of one “facilitator” who has people fall from bleachers, in a gym, over a concrete floor. The would NEVER be allowed to work with Acedelmar Consulting or anyone that we train!)
3. Be sure to check the surrounding environment for roots, stumps, branches, etc. prior to beginning. Watch out for wet ground and platform as this can make things slippery. Be sure to spot people who are climbing up as that is where they are in the greatest danger.
4. I have two swear words I do not allow the catching team to say. These are both four letter words that all of you are familiar with. The “D” word and the “F” word. “Drop” and “Fall”. (Shame on you for thinking of other things!)
5. If your group cannot handle this, they cannot do it! If someone jokes/talks about dropping someone, there is no second chance. The team is done because they have violated the emotional safety of their teammates.
6. Remember at all times, this is “Challenge By Choice”, no matter what a team leader says!
7. This is “Trust Fall”, not “Trust Flips”, etc. You may only do the stated activity!
8. Have people remove cell phones, pagers, jewelry, glasses, etc.
9. Do not allow a falling person to get in place until the team is silent and looking up.
10. Have people rotate in to give people a chance to rest from catching. Rearrange the group, as necessary, to protect the falling person. I usually allow them to place people where they want to so I can guarantee their emotional safety.
11. Review that they need to fall flat. Show them what it looks like if they bend and explain why they will only have two arms catching them if they do bend!
12. Position yourself under their bottom, and choose someone strong to stand across from you. If they bend, you want training and strength there to protect them!
13. If nothing else make sure the head and back are caught! If they break a tailbone, they will sue you, and I’m fine with that because they are alive to sue you. If they die...

TRUST SCAVENGER HUNT

Props: Opaque (Non-See-Through) Bags
Space: Open
Credit: Uncertain

Activity Level: 1
Difficulty Level: 2
Group Size: S - M

Story

Want a simple, low-risk trust activity that can be used by all ages and abilities? This is it!

Rules

1. Hand one bag to each participant.
2. Give them five minutes to find one random object to put into their bag.
3. When everyone is back together, mix the bags so that no one can get their own and hand them back out.
4. Ask for a volunteer to reach into their bag, feel the object and attempt to identify it.
5. Pull the object out and let the team decide if the description was close enough.
6. This can be done as a team competition with only two bags. Have each team fill their bag with multiple objects and then swap bags. Each person, one at a time, reaches in to touch a random object. They hold onto what they’ve touched and, if they can accurately describe the item, their team receives one point.

Facilitator’s Note

Usually (and I do mean “usually”) there is nothing gross and/or disgusting put in the bags. Watch out, though. If one team does pick up something slimy and nasty, it will destroy this activity and hamper the growth of the team. It is up to the team, however, to protect the emotional safety of their teammates.



Focus

This activity works very well as an “Intro to Trust” activity and a good lesson on teambuilding. Even though the team is split, did you ever say that this was something about “competition”? No! The team is still required to look out for its members. It sounds silly, but for a lot of people just blindly reaching their hands into a bag can be a tough experience.

Processing

What was it like sticking your hand in the bag? Did you automatically trust that your teammates would only pick up nice things? How many of you were a little nervous as you reached in for an object? Why? If, and I’m hoping this doesn’t happen, your side had picked up a nasty object, would that have made you trust the other group? Why or why not?

Spotting

Restrict them from selecting venomous, living things; non-venomous living things; and sharp, pointy objects. Otherwise, I do not restrict what they are allowed to pick up as I feel it indicates a lack of trust in the group. (I mean, think about it, if I dictate what they can and cannot put in the bag, where is the trust factor?) The group needs to draw its own conclusions as to what is acceptable and what is not.

TRUST WAVE

Props:	None	Activity Level:	5
Space:	Open	Difficulty Level:	4
Credit:	QuickSilver (pgs. 234 – 235)	Group Size:	S - M

Story

None. (Are you sensing a trend? Maybe I need to get creative and come up with something...)

Rules

1. Divide the group into two equal straight lines with team members standing opposite from each other. The lines should be just far enough apart that when the player’s arms are fully extended in front of them at shoulder height, their hands reach the wrist of the person opposite. (These are the spotters.)
2. One teammate, the runner, starts about ten yards from the group and asks the group if they are ready.

When the lines reply, “Ready”, the runner walks, jogs, or runs between the two lines of people. The runner needs to maintain their speed, slowing down isn’t a problem, but speeding up is. (If the runner wants to run quickly, they need to allow more than ten yards of approach for safety.)

3. The spotters in the lines do “the wave”, raising their arms before the runner reaches them and lowering them after the runner has passed. Spotters need to correctly judge the speed of the runner so they can lift their arms up in time.
4. The goal is for the runner to make it through the group without being smacked in the head by the team. (This takes some timing and coordination.) Have the runner walk the first time through so everyone becomes comfortable with it.
5. When in doubt, you CAN use funnoodles instead of hands!

Facilitator’s Note

Watch the people in the middle and end of the lines to make sure they are paying attention. The back half of the line may not see the runner approaching and may fail to react quickly enough.

Focus

Trust. You’ll notice some runners will duck their heads even though they are clear. Others will trust the team and run tall. This activity can be a good ending one. It isn’t as dangerous as “Trust Dive” and “Trust Fall”, but still illustrates the team’s trust in itself.

Processing

How hard was it to trust your teammates? Why? Did anyone duck their heads? Was anyone worried about being the runner? What would have happened if just one person were not paying attention? How would this affect the trust in the team?

Spotting

Watch for points already mentioned above and also for any lack of attention. Don’t be afraid to stop the activity if you decided the team might not be ready for it.

YURT CIRCLE

Props: None
Space: Open
Credit: Cowstails and Cobras II (pg. 73)

Activity Level: 3
Difficulty Level: 3
Group Size: All

Story

Different tribes of Native Americans across North America had an activity similar to this. They would assemble the braves (sorry ladies!) and do this activity. If they can do it with over two hundred men, your group has no excuse! But it isn’t as easy as it sounds...

Rules

1. Circle. (Circles mean that there is only one team, and that everyone is equal!)
2. Have everyone take hold of the hands of the people next to them and get a good grip! (The best thing I’ve discovered is to have people push their sleeves up and grab wrist-to-wrist; it’s almost unbreakable.)
3. Run (happily) around the circle, counting the group off by twos. If there is an odd number, you MUST participate. Trust me, this is really cool! (Would I lie to you?)
4. Take two other people from the circle and have them stand on either side of you. Have each of them get

a good grip, wrist-to-wrist, and then brace themselves. They're going to support you as you lean SLOWLY AND GENTLY in and out. (Be sure to tell them before you lean!)

5. To lean, put your feet together; lock your body absolutely straight; and lean your entire body! Your center-of-gravity has to move past your feet. (For all you Physics people out there!)
6. Have everyone stretches out so that the circle is tight, but not straining.
7. Say, "Ones fall in, twos fall out. Ready? Go." At this point, everyone must lean in the direction you indicated at the same time!



Facilitator's Note

There is a variation, shown in the picture above, where you tie a rope into a circle, place it in the middle of the group, have them grab hold, and then, with everyone leaning out, they stand up together. Don't be surprised if your group never gets it; it is very difficult. There are a lot of ways for the circle to fail: if someone slips, bends, lets go, throws their weight in or out (instead of gently leaning), too small of a person between two larger people, etc. Occasionally switch who falls which way; it's quirky, but sometimes twos fall "in" better than ones! If everything is done correctly, Physics says that everyone will balance the weight through the circle. If the team gets it, have them hold it for ten seconds and then stand back up as a group! This should NOT be used as a beginner activity, build up to it, instead!

Focus

Trust! If someone doesn't trust the group, they will continually bend (thus, not taking any weight and collapsing the circle). The other C's are factors, but not absolutely critical.

Processing

Did they succeed? If not, why not? Does it matter if they accomplished it? Do they want to come back to this obstacle? How many tries did it take? Why? Why were they absolutely perfect and managed to accomplish it the first time when I have eaten dirt before when doing this activity? (Sorry, just a personal grouse there...)

Spotting

The ever-annoying "let me yank hard on the hands of those I'm attached to and pull the whole circle off balance"! Watch out for people not leaning; don't blame them for this, but encourage them to participate and trust their group. Watch for people trying to maim each other's hands. Place teachers/leaders around them so that they can't hurt people for "fun"!

How To Use This Manual.....	5
What Is Teambuilding / Community Building?.....	6
Why Do Teambuilding?.....	6
What Benefits Do Participants Gain?.....	7
Some Statistics On Teambuilding Programs.....	7
Teambuilding Basic Background Information.....	8
Tasks and Goals.....	8
Phases of a Relationship.....	9
Psychology of Participants.....	9
Physiological.....	9
Safety.....	10
Love.....	10
Esteem.....	10
Self-Actualization.....	12
Comfort Zones.....	12
Challenge By Choice.....	14
Safety First.....	14
Training.....	14
Spotting and Lifting Information.....	15
Judgment.....	16
What Is A Facilitator?.....	17
Why Do We Need Facilitators?.....	17
What Are The Requirements To Be A Teambuilding Facilitator?.....	18
Additional Study.....	18
Guidelines For Being An Effective Facilitator.....	19
Processing.....	22
Rules of Processing.....	22
Tips For Processing.....	23
Processing Styles.....	24
3 C's.....	24
Colors (or Faces).....	25
Complete the Sentence.....	26
Fist-To-Five.....	26
Scale of 1 to 10.....	26

Target-Specific Initiative Problem Debriefing Topics.....	27
What? So What? Now What?.....	29
Closure Questions.....	29
Processing Questions For Some Specific Group Topics.....	30
Caring / Trust.....	30
Commonalities.....	30
Communication.....	30
Cooperation.....	30
Criticism.....	30
Diversity.....	31
Expressing Emotions.....	31
Following.....	31
Judging Others.....	31
Leadership.....	32
Listening.....	32
Handling Difficult Situations.....	32
How To Use The Following Pages.....	36
Miscellaneous.....	37
Attitude Check.....	38
Commonalities.....	38
Divide and Conquer.....	39
Dolphin Golf.....	40
Ducks and Water.....	40
Group Contract.....	41
Presidents.....	42
Questions.....	43
Warm-Ups.....	44
Bumpity Bump Bump Bump.....	45
Group Yell.....	45
Handshakes.....	46
I Like People Who.....	47
Janepaulsuefrediradavepeggy or Hustle Bustle.....	48
The Machine.....	49
Mixer or Categories.....	49
Orange Teeth.....	50
Scream Run.....	50

Screaming Toes.....	51
What's Your Sign.....	51
Wordles.....	52
World Map.....	53
Group Challenges.....	54
Balance The Egg.....	55
Balance The Nails.....	55
Bridges.....	56
Build A Boat / Sled.....	57
Egg Landers.....	58
Hammeroids.....	59
Handcuffs.....	60
Inner Tube Stack.....	61
Marshmallow Bridges.....	61
Group Games.....	63
Alaskan Baseball / Chuck the Chicken.....	64
Dakpanay.....	64
Dragon's Tail.....	66
Eagle Eyes.....	66
Gold Rush.....	67
Knee Coup.....	68
Mama Cow / Baby Cow.....	69
Metamorphosis/Transformations.....	70
Monster Trucks and Harleys.....	71
Predator / Prey (a.k.a. Circle Stalk).....	72
Rock-Paper-Scissors Tag.....	73
Slap / Push.....	74
Team Bucket Brigade.....	75
Main Section: Communication.....	76
All Aboard.....	77
Animal (Or Plant) Attack.....	78
Balloon Towers.....	79
Birthday Line-Up.....	80
Blindfold Drawing.....	81
Blindfold House / Square / Star.....	82
Group Juggle.....	83

Group Juggle (Modified).....	84
Human Knot.....	87
Imagination Station.....	88
Jigsaw Puzzle.....	89
Key Punch.....	91
Mine Field.....	92
Mine Field (Heat Seeker).....	93
Over Easy / Tarp Flip.....	93
Quotations.....	94
Team Tic-Tac-Toe.....	96
Toxic Waste.....	97
Main Section: Cooperation.....	98
All Screwed Up.....	99
Amoeba Race.....	100
Balloon Trolley.....	101
The Bucket.....	102
Chocolate River.....	103
Circle The Circle / Webbing Pass.....	104
Giant Hootenerainataneous.....	105
Group Jump Rope.....	107
Gutterball / Marble Madness.....	108
Levitation.....	108
Moonball.....	110
Nitro Can Pass.....	111
One Fish, Two Fish.....	112
Parachute Play (Basics).....	113
Parachute Play (The Switch).....	114
Parachute Play (Washing Machine).....	115
Right On Target.....	116
Touch The Can.....	117
Warp Speed.....	118
Worm Hole.....	119
Yaeger Stagger.....	120
Main Section: Caring / Trust.....	121
3D Mine Field.....	122
Blindfold Trust Walk.....	123

Everybody Up.....	124
Feather Fall.....	124
Group Lap-Sit / Sitting Circle.....	126
Lean Sequence.....	127
Trust Circle / Wind In The Willows.....	128
Trust Dive.....	130
Trust Fall.....	131
Trust Scavenger Hunt.....	133
Trust Wave.....	134
Yurt Circle.....	135

Final Notes

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Liability

Acedelmar Consulting, its Staff and Volunteers, is not liable for any injury or damage caused by the use / misuse of this manual and the Team’s Kit accompanying it. Groups are responsible for having their own insurance, safety protocols, training methods, check-out procedures, and more. While we will advise in these areas, as each program is different, we cannot set a “universal standard” to be used at all facilities.

Pictures

All pictures in this manual are from groups that we have worked with; or, in a few cases, are clipart. All participants signed a waiver allowing the use of their photos for publication. No personally-identifiable information – including, but not limited to: location, age, name, group, etc. – has been included. If you would like either you or your group’s image removed from this manual, please email us at info@whatiftheresmore.com.

Project Adventure, Inc.

Since much of modern teambuilding is owed to the works of Karl Rohnke and Project Adventure, we include copies of three of their foundational books with each kit we sell: Cowstails and Cobras II, Quicksilver, and Silver Bullets. Acedelmar Consulting, LLC. is not affiliated with Project Adventure in any way. We would encourage you to check out their program for more information, resources, or additional training by visiting their website at www.pa.org.

Training

Teambuilding programs, by their very nature, can become inherently dangerous if they are facilitated incorrectly. We STRONGLY ENCOURAGE all prospective Facilitators to participate in a minimum of one (1) day, on-site training before leading any activities. Failure to do so may result in injury or death to participants.

All other questions and concerns should be directed to Acedelmar Consulting at:

www.whatiftheresmore.com.