



# Growing Together 2



# Growing Together 2

## Activities in this book:

### Icebreakers

Attention Getters	1	Mafia	25
Australian Jig	2	Meet and Greet	26
Bottoms Up	3	Moose	27
Chain Reaction Tag	4	Motion and Commotion	29
Clap Laps	5	Murderer	30
Questions for Concentric Circles	6	Nobody Knows	31
Eliminate	8	Red Handed	32
Find Your Feet	9	River Bank	33
The Fishbowl	10	Russian Finger Fencing	34
Fist to Palm	11	Scavenger Hunt	35
Go Bananas	12	Slap Happy	38
Gotcha	13	Steal the Bacon	39
Head, Hands, & Heart	14	String Theory	40
Hit & Run	15	The Rules of the Game	41
I Love You Baby	17	Transformer Tag	43
Killer	18	True Confessions	44
King Frog	19	What's in a Shoe?	45
Line-ups & Group Sorting Games	21	What's Your Numbah?	46
Loaded Questions	23	Yes cubed	48
Look Down, Look Up	24		

### Name Games

Jack-In-The-Box	49	I Sit in the Grass With My Friend	52
Name Ripple	50	Name and Action Game	53
Bippity Bop Bop Bop	51		

### Communication

A What?	54	Stepping Stones with a Twist	71
Alphabet Game	55	The Almost Infinite Circle	73
Captain Video	56	Circle Game	74
Balloon Trolleys	57	Common Practice	75
Blind Polygon	59	Veggie Basket	76
Bridge It	61	Affirmation Cards	77
Card Vote	64	Copy Cat, Copy Cat	78
Conveyor Belt	65	Map of my Allies	79
Equally Frantic	67	Walk in My Shoes	80
Getting It Right	69	You Fill Me Up	81
Misunderstanding	70		



# Growing Together 2

## Activities in this book (cont'd):

### Team Building

Crew Name	82	Don't Touch Me	102
Food Project Olympics	83	Evacuation	104
Fox and Squirrel	84	Flip the Duck	106
Sustainable Ag Charades	85	Key Punch	107
Tennis Ball Efficiency Game #2	86	Lily Pads	109
Three-Legged Soccer	87	Links In My Chain	111
1 2 3 = 1 2	88	Mass Pass	112
Alaskan Baseball	90	Nitro Crossing	114
Assemble the Square	91	Object Retrieval	116
Beach Ball Away	92	Pencil Drop	117
Bodyguard	93	Pick and Choose	118
Boop	94	Pipeline	119
Bridge It	96	Secret Agent / Guardian Angel	120
Bucket and Rope	98	Tire Pass	121
Chaotic Group Juggle	99	Turning Over a New Leaf	122
Circle Up	100	What Makes the World Go 'Round	123
Cluck and Clap	101		

### Trust

Circle of Friends	124
Mine Field	125
Trust Wave	128
Trust Box	130
Trust Pinball	131

### Closing

4-3-2-1 Goodbye	132
I Feel...	133
I Take...	134





## ICEBREAKERS: ATTENTION GETTERS

**TITLE:** Attention Getters

**IMPACT:** gets people's attention in a crowd

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** any

**TIME REQUIRED:** less than a minute

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Use a buzzword. Let the group choose a word that has some meaning for the group or the event (for example: respect, community or compost), and use it as a way to bring the group back together and keep it focused. When someone yells, "What's the buzzword", the entire group responds with the buzzword as loudly as possible.
- Use a cowbell. A cowbell is any device that can attract people's attention towards you. (For example: a bell, chime or routine noise).
- Clap 1,2,3. Clapping is one way to get your group quiet and focused on you. You should clap loudly once and say to your group, "if you can hear me, clap once". If this does not get the groups full attention, you can clap twice and repeat, "if you can hear me, clap twice ". If you do this a number of times with a group, they will become accustomed to it as a procedure.
- Hold up two fingers. At the beginning of the day tell everyone that you will be holding two fingers over your head when you want to get people's attention. People should be on the lookout for it and raise their fingers up to join you when they see it. They should stop talking as they do so.
- Hold up your arm, and make eye contact with people in the group.

## ICEBREAKERS: AUSTRALIAN JIG

**TITLE:** Australian Jig

**IMPACT:** fun, energizer, ice breaker

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 2 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 – 10 minutes

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Everyone should find a partner.
- The facilitator should demonstrate the Australian Jig with a partner first and then break it down for everyone else.
- Partners face each other, raise their right feet a few inches off the ground, and tap the insides of their right feet together. Then they return the right feet to the ground.
- Then they do the same with their left feet.
- Next they both turn slightly to their left and tap the outside of their right feet together.
- Then they step forward on the right foot and tap the inside of their left feet together. This move happens behind both of the partners' backs so they need to twist a bit and look over their right shoulders to make contact.
- Next they step back onto the left foot, and tap the outsides of the right feet together again.
- Finally they step back on the right foot again, which brings both partners into the starting position facing each other.
- Now the jig is repeated on the left side.
- Inside of the left foot, inside of the right foot, outside of the left foot, step forward on the left foot, tap inside of the right foot behind, step back on the right foot, tap outside of the left foot, step back with the left foot to the starting position.
- Everyone should practice it a few times until they are comfortable with the sequence.
- Once the pairs have mastered it, they should pick up the pace, eventually adding a hop in.
- Encourage the group to mix it up and find new partners. Get everyone involved.

**HINTS:** This works best in sneakers or low-heeled, tie shoes. Flipflops are tough, and clogs and high heels are definite ankle breakers. It is better to go barefoot, but both partners should be barefoot.

**SOURCE:** Mike Evans

**TITLE:** Bottoms Up

**IMPACT:** laughter; group may develop ideas about what effect, if any, their preconceived notions about gender, size, ability, etc. had on their ability to cooperate

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** any size

**TIME REQUIRED:** about 15 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group to get down and try to move our rear ends up!
- Split your group into pairs and have each pair sit on the ground facing one another, with the bottoms of their feet against the bottoms of their partner's feet (sole sharing, we call it). Legs should be bent, feet held high, and posteriors fairly close to one another. Then, while putting all their weight on their arms, have them attempt to push against their partner's feet until both of their derrieres come off the ground. They will notice a tightening of triceps muscles in their arms, considerable laughter, and not much vertical movement on the first couple of tries.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ask if the size or strength of their partners made it easier or harder to lift their posteriors off the ground.
- What kind of assumptions did they make about strength and balance? Were they valid?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.274-275)

## ICEBREAKERS: CHAIN REACTION TAG

**TITLE:** Chain Reaction Tag

**IMPACT:** energizes a group, gets participants warmed up physically, breaks the ice with a new group, and can be used as a name game

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5-10 minutes

**PREPARATION:** need a large space with running room and marked with boundaries

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Put the group in pairs of two and have each pair link arms. Tell pairs that once they have linked arms, they are “frozen,” and can’t move.
- Pick one pair and ask them to drop arms. Designate one person (person A) “it.” Person B then has to run away from A. B can run in and out around all the pairs that are standing in the playing area but cannot run outside the boundaries.
- B’s goal is not to be tagged by A. If A tags B, then B becomes “it” and chases A.
- In order to escape from A, B may attach him/herself to one of the pairs that is standing. When B links arms with one person in the pair, the person on the other end of the pair detaches him/herself and becomes the new B. That person now must run from “it.”
- The game continues with B running from “it” or attaching to a pair, thus setting a new B running.

### **HINTS:**

- In a variation of this game the stationary pairs spread out in the bounded area and lie down or sit on the ground. The person who is running from “it” then lies down next to one member of a pair and other member of the pair has to stand up and run.
- This can also be played as a name game. Whenever B joins with a new pair, s/he must introduce her/himself to her/his new partner.
- With a large group or an uneven number, there can be more than one A and B running at a time.

**TITLE:** Clap Laps

**IMPACT:** focuses and energizes a group, builds teamwork and develops individual initiative

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The group sits or stands in a circle.
- Two people who are sitting or standing next to each other begin by facing each other and clapping in unison.
- Then one of the two people 'takes the clap' and turns 180 degrees and claps with the next person in the circle. The clap then travels around the circle, always with two people next to each other, looking at each other, and clapping in unison.
- The clap should increase in speed and intensity as it travels around the circle. It is important that the two people who are clapping clap in unison. If they do not, the clap must return to the beginning of the circle.
- The game continues until either it has reached maximum speed or the facilitator ends it.

**OPTIONS:**

- If the group has mastered the Clap Laps in one direction, try starting it in the other direction.
- Clap Laps can also be played in two directions at once. The place where it crosses in the middle of the circle can be a challenge. You may want those in the middle of the circle to develop a strategy beforehand about how they will deal with it.
- Clap Laps can be played as a reversing game (think bing-bang-boom or slap happy). In this variation one shared clap continues the clap in the one direction. Two shared claps between the same two people sends the clap back in the other direction. For example, the clap is going clockwise and B shares the clap with A. A, instead of turning to the left and clapping with Z, stays facing B and claps with B again. The clap is then B's clap and s/he can either clap once more with A to send in back clockwise, or can turn around and clap with C and send it counterclockwise.
- This can be done as a group challenge in which the group tries to shorten its time with each trip the clap takes around the circle. The process can focus on teamwork, anticipation, staying focused.

**SOURCE:** Lily Perkins-High, Tracy Mackenzie



## ICEBREAKERS: QUESTIONS FOR CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

**TITLE:** Questions for Concentric Circles

### SYP/CREW LEADER TRAINING

- What is your favorite food and why?
- What would you like to do when you get older?
- What makes you happy?
- If you could be someone else for one day, who would it be and why?
- What is your favorite season and why?
- What is your favorite/ least favorite house chore to do?
- What did you do before coming to The Food Project?
- What first impression do you think you give others? Is it accurate?
- Think about one person you admire, respect, or look up to. Tell your partner about this person.
- Tell your partner about a day you would like to live over.
- Tell about a time when you were a successful leader.
- What do you see as the biggest problem in America? In the world?
- What do you see as your biggest challenges as you look to the summer?
- Tell about music that means something to you. A certain group or song?
- What is your astrological sign? What does it mean for you?
- What is your favorite boardgame/game?
- What is your favorite appliance/tool and why?
- What is your biggest pet peeve?
- What is your favorite thing to wear? Favorite outfit?
- Tell your partner something about yourself about which you are proud.
- If you had to sum yourself up in a few words, what would they be?
- Tell about a certain song or type of music that you associate with your childhood.
- Tell about the first time you remember being conscious of your race.
- Tell about the skills you bring to your job this summer?
- What makes you hopeful? What gives you hope?

## ICEBREAKERS: QUESTIONS FOR CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

### WORKSHOP ON INFLUENCE

- How do people influence each other?
- Would you rather be admired or liked?
- Is it harder to admire or to be admired?
- How do you feel when you admire someone?
- How do you feel when someone admires you?
- Whom do you work to impress or please, and how?
- If that person tells you to do something or does something you don't agree with, what do you do?
- Have you ever made a decision knowing it wouldn't make a person happy with you? Tell about it.
- Has the wish to please or impress someone ever gotten you in trouble or in a bind?
- Have you ever made a bad decision when you were trying to please someone? Tell about it.
- How do you feel when someone you admire is critical of or angry with you?
- Who is someone in your life who looks up to, admires, wants to please, or is influenced by you? Why or how?
- Have you ever influenced someone positively? Negatively? Describe.
- Have you ever given bad advice to someone?
- What is your responsibility, if any, towards a person who looks up to you or follows your lead?

## ICEBREAKERS: ELIMINATE

**TITLE:** Eliminate

**IMPACT:** breaks the ice in a new group; calms down a rowdy group; focuses attention

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Everyone stands in a circle with eyes closed and hands behind their backs.
2. The facilitator walks around the circle and taps one person on the hand. That person becomes "it."
3. Now everyone can open their eyes and hold hands.
4. The person who is "it" quietly squeezes the hand of the person to the right or left as many times as s/he wants.
5. The "squeezed" person passes the squeezes to the next person, but squeezing one fewer time than s/he was squeezed (i. e., if "it" passes 5 squeezes, the next person passes 4 squeezes, and so on).
6. The person who gets one squeeze announces it and guesses who was "it." If s/he guesses wrong, s/he is out. If s/he guesses correctly, "it" is out.

**TITLE:** Find Your Feet

**IMPACT:** icebreaker, energizer

**RISK:** low - medium, involves some body contact and trust

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** everyone must have shoes, blindfolds (optional)

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask everyone in the group to sit in a circle and place a blindfold on. (This can be done with closed eyes if no blindfolds are available). Once the blindfolds are in place, no one is allowed to speak except the facilitator.
- Ask everyone to remove one shoe and toss it into the center of the circle. The facilitator should then mix these up.
- When the facilitator says “go”, everyone must find a shoe and put it back on its owner without seeing or speaking.

**OPTIONS:** This can also be done as a race.

- Once the shoes are mixed in the center of the circle, the facilitator taps two people on the shoulder.
- When the facilitator says “go”, those two people race to find a shoe and return it to the appropriate foot. This means that they will have to crawl quickly around the circle trying to match the shoe in their hand with another one on someone sitting in the circle. In order to win, they must return to their empty place in the circle first.
- If one of the two racers chooses the shoe of the other racer, the pair will be even more challenged.
- Those who remain in the circle can remove their blindfolds so that they can watch, but they should keep silent.

**SOURCE:** Dylan Fitz

## ICEBREAKERS: THE FISHBOWL

**TITLE:** The Fishbowl

**IMPACT:** communication, listening

**RISK:** medium-high, depending on the topic of discussion

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** one more chairs than the number of people

**PREPARATION:** Set up to 6 chairs in the center of a larger circle of chairs.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask for five participants from the larger group to sit on the chairs.
- Pose a scenario or question. The five sitting in the chairs should respond and discuss.
- The sixth chair is open to anyone in the larger group who wants to contribute. In order to contribute the person must leave the outer circle and sit in the chair. If someone from the larger group wants to participate he or she must wait until a chair becomes available.
- A person can chose to leave the inner circle only after contributing something to the discussion. However, no one can say something and then leave the semi-circle without waiting for reactions from the other group members.

### **OPTIONS:**

- Have the group generate the discussion questions.
- Have one group (i.e. youth) generate questions for another group (i.e. adults) and vice versa. In this case all youth will be in the fish bowl and the adults would listen. Then two groups would reverse roles.

### **DISCUSSION:**

This exercise deals with many issues. By only allowing some people to actively participate, it forces the rest of the larger group to listen and reflect on statements instead of jumping in and making a point without fully considering the implications. Not allowing people to leave the semi-circle until the opportunity for feedback has occurred forces people to consider other opinions on the issue. It forces learning from each other.

**TITLE:** Fist to Palm

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Have participants pair up and face each other. Have one partner reach out with his/her palm open and up. Tell the other partner to place his/her fist in their partner's palm. Then say to the group, "Try to open your partner's fist." Process what happens. Now have them repeat the exercise, but this time say, "Open your partner's fist." Process what happens.
- The first time, most people react as though it's some kind of competition. You used the word "try". The second time, more participants will probably cooperate because you made an assumption and said "Open your partner's fist." Discuss what happens with the positive statements regarding cooperation and the assumptions we make in life.

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.150)



## ICEBREAKERS: GO BANANAS

**TITLE:** Go Bananas

**IMPACT:** energizes a group, gets participants warmed up physically, encourages laughter and vocal expression

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** any number

**TIME REQUIRED:** under 5 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:** “Go Bananas” is an energizing cheer/dance. The words and moves are as follows:

- *Bananas of the World Unite!:*
  - Clasp hands over head in a temple pose
- *Peel Bananas, Peel Peel Bananas:* (say twice)
  - Do the back stroke/dance.
- *Chop Bananas, Chop Chop Bananas:* (say twice)
  - Make chopping motions with your hands.
- *Shake Bananas, Shake Shake Bananas:* (say twice)
  - Do the twist/shake.
- *Eat Bananas, Eat Eat Bananas:* (say twice)
  - Pretend to eat bananas.
- *Go Bananas, Go Go Bananas:* (say twice)
  - Go crazy and dance

### **HINTS:**

- There are many variations to the banana dance. In one, instead of everyone repeating the words twice, there is a leader who sings/shouts each line first and then everyone else repeats.
- Encourage everyone to be loud and crazy and to dance a lot.

**SOURCE:** Amanda Blaine

**TITLE:** Gotcha

**IMPACT:** breaks the ice in a new group; can be used to re-focus a group

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 4 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to stand in a tight circle. Ask the participants to put their right hand, palm facing up, in front of the stomach of the person to their right.
- Next, ask them to take their left index finger and point it into the middle of the hand that is now in front of their own stomach.
- Explain that on the count of 3 they have to multi-task: to catch the finger in their right palm, and to have their own index finger escape from the palm it is pointing into.
- Count to three (skip two if you want to grab their attention). Then tell the group that if they caught someone, they turn to that person and say "Gotcha!"
- Repeat, this time counting random numbers and getting to 3 at the end.
- After a few rounds, switch hands (left hand out to the person on your left, right index finger down...).

**OPTIONS:**

To add a new element, ask participants to plant their right heel on the ground and raise their toes so that they are above the left foot of the person to their right. On 3, they try and tap the toe of that person, along with catching and escaping fingers.

**HINTS:**

Don't overdo this activity. Keep it short and sweet, and move on when laughter is at its height.

**SOURCE:** Project Adventure

## ICEBREAKERS: HEAD, HANDS & HEART

**TITLE:** Head, Hands & Heart

**IMPACT:** identity, ice breaker, sharing

**RISK:** low- medium

**GROUP SIZE:** any

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10-15 minutes to prepare chart, 3-5 min. per person to present

**MATERIALS:** large sheet of paper for each person, markers

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Give each participant a sheet of paper and a marker(s).
- Ask everyone to represent on their paper their Hands, Head and Heart in any way they want. (as a word, drawing etc.)
- Next to these words, participants should list or illustrate the following:  
Hands = things they are good at doing (building, gardening, skiing, cooking, cleaning the sink, learning new languages, being organized)  
Head = things they know a lot about (art history, hip hop, Thai food, yodeling, hamsters, growing vegetables)  
Heart = things they are passionate about (running, family, social justice, ending world hunger, Red Sox)
- Items may appear in multiple headings (I am very good at fishing, I know a lot about fish, and I am passionate about it too).

**OPTIONS:** To use this as a way to identify community resources and connections, include a fourth category called "Home" where participants should list important affiliations or connections within the community.

**DISCUSSION:** When everyone has finished, let each person have an opportunity to present his/her chart to the group. Allow each person enough time to highlight those things that s/he considers the most important and tell some stories. People can go deeper as time allows.

**HINTS:** If space allows, hang the charts up around the room for people to see as they get to know the members of the group.

**SOURCE:** ABCD

**TITLE:** Hit & Run

**IMPACT:** energizer, fun, gets people laughing at themselves, gets aggressions out, good to use after straight talk, requires good listening skills and strategizing

**RISK:** low – medium, participants are blindfolded, involves some body contact

**GROUP SIZE:** 6-12

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** a newspaper rolled diagonally into a cylinder and taped, blindfolds for everyone (optional), a chair for each participant, a large flat space free of obstacles (carpeted room in best)

**PREPARATION:** set up chairs in two equal lines facing each other on opposite sides of the playing area

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask all participants to find a seat, and hand each a blindfold if they are being used.
- The facilitator should define the playing area, show the rolled up newspaper to everyone, and explain the game.
- The object of the game is to be the first person to retrieve the rolled up newspaper and hit an opponent with it before the opponent can get across the room into the first player's chair. All this must be done blindfolded or with eyes closed.
- Once everyone understands the game, they should put on their blindfolds or close their eyes.
- Then the facilitator walks behind both lines of chairs and quietly taps one individual from each side on the shoulder, signaling them that they are the player for that round.
- Next the facilitator throws out the newspaper into the playing area. This can be done noisily at first and more surreptitiously as the game progresses. After a pause, the facilitator shouts, "Go".
- At this point the two designated players leap out of their chairs and attempt to get to the newspaper first. Everyone who is remaining in the chairs can open their eyes or remove their blindfolds and watch, but they cannot say anything.
- The first player to find the newspaper now becomes the predator whose only goal is to hit the other player with the rolled up newspaper.
- Meanwhile the player without the newspaper had just become prey. This player's only means of escape is to get into his opponent's seat before he is hit. This is surprisingly difficult to do.
- After each round, players usually switch sides so combinations of opponents can change as the game continues.

**OPTIONS:** You could probably keep score in this game, but that is not really the point.

## ICEBREAKERS: HIT & RUN

**DISCUSSION:** This game can be used simply to have fun, lighten a serious event, or change the pace. It can also be used as a way to talk about paying attention and staying focused (success requires good listening skills), and what it feels like to be vulnerable or a victim vs. the aggressor.

**HINTS:** Make certain that the playing space is safe and that the person with the newspaper does not swing too hard.

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

## ICEBREAKERS: I LOVE YOU BABY, BUT I JUST CAN'T SMILE

**TITLE:** I Love You Baby, But I Just Can't Smile

**IMPACT:** tests a player's willpower while keeping everyone else smiling, encouraging good humor, laughter, and silliness

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5-10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Members of the group stand in a circle with one person in the middle.
- The person in the middle says to one member of the circle, "If you love me, baby, smile."
- The person that is addressed must respond, "I love you, baby, but I just can't smile." The person tries to say this without even cracking a smile.
- Meanwhile the person in the middle is trying to do anything s/he can to make the person in the circle crack a smile. (No touching allowed.) If the person in the circle does smile, s/he becomes the person in the middle.
- If the person in the middle can't make the person on the outside smile, s/he moves on to another person in the circle and repeats, "If you love me, baby, smile", and the game continues with him/her in the middle until the person in the middle makes someone smile.

**SOURCE:** Cindy Piche and Karen Soens



## ICEBREAKERS: KILLER

**TITLE:** Killer

**IMPACT:** any

**RISK:** low to moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** any, but this activity is most effective with groups of 10 or more players

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15 minutes

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Tell the group that there 's a *killer* among them and if we don't find out who it is, we're all going to die!
- Explain to the group that you are going to select one of them as the "killer." (The easiest way to do this is to ask them all to close their eyes and then walk around them, touching one of them on top of the head to indicate their role.) To kill, the killer has to wink, not blink at someone. The person who receives this wink is dead and gets to act out their slow and agonizing death as loudly and elaborately as they want. Warn the victims that they **MUST NOT** die immediately after being killed. Tell them to give the killer 15 to 30 seconds to move away.
- As the group saunters around the playing area, eyeing each other carefully, and someone thinks they know who the killer is, they shout, "I accuse!" The accuser has to be seconded by another player within ten seconds or else they are eliminated.
- If there is a second, you say, "On the count of three, I want you both to point accusingly at the killer." If both point at the same person, and they are right, the game is over. If they're wrong or they point at different people, they are eliminated. The game continues until the killer is caught or until everyone has been killed – no mean accomplishment!

### **DISCUSSION:**

There's not a whole lot of subtlety to this game, but you might want to try asking what it felt like to be "the kiss of death" or how people figured out who the actual killer was. What gave them away in the end?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.307-308)

**TITLE:** King Frog

**IMPACT:** fun, creativity

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 8-12

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group to think of an animal that has always interested you and come up with a sign or noise that represents that animal for them.
- Have the group sit in a circle and ask everyone to introduce their sign. Include yourself in the introductions. You will be starting out as King Frog. Your challenge is to come up with as wacky a sign as possible to represent the King. We're still hoping that someone with a foot-long tongue will come along and start killing off flies, but until then a simple "ribbit" will do.
- Encourage everyone to come up with expressive signs. When everyone has introduced their sign, go around once more to practice them. Tell the group that they must remember and be able to repeat everyone's sign.
- When you feel that everyone is comfortable with the signs, announce that the group will begin to talk to each other using only the signs. Communication goes as follows: begin by making your King Frog sign, then the sign of someone else's in the group. That person responds by making their own sign, then the sign of someone else, and so on.
- After everyone is comfortable with this, announce that play will now begin. The object of the game is to climb the ladder to the King Frog seat. The lowest seat is to the Frog's left and so on around the circle. From now on, the signs the group created will remain with the seat where the activity begins. Make a mistake while communicating, and you must move to the lowest seat, with everyone else shifting one seat to the left and getting a new sign. Once play begins, there should be no talking.
- There are a few ways to make a mistake. Make the wrong sign, the wrong sequence, or a sign that doesn't exist, or don't respond when your sign is made, or don't respond quickly enough, and you must move to the bottom seat.
- This game will start off slowly, but as everyone catches on, it can move quite quickly. Play as long as you have time for, and end it by crowning the person in the lowest seat as the King Frog for the next time.

**OPTIONS:**

- If there is someone in your group that has trouble with dexterity or coordination or for some other reason has trouble keeping up with an increase of pace, the game can be modified by allowing the recipient of the sign to count to two before sending a new sign.

## ICEBREAKERS: KING FROG

- You can increase the challenge by allowing people to add the signs. For example, what was once only two thumps of the feet to represent a rabbit is not two thumps and a twitch of the nose. This can be added at times intervals or at natural intervals in the game.
- The signs can be purely visual, purely auditory, or a combination, depending on the needs of your group.

### **DISCUSSION:**

If you have used this activity specifically for disability issues, asking everyone to sign their animals without speaking, for example, have the group talk about how it felt to communicate with each other without words.

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.309-310)

## ICEBREAKERS: LINE-UPS & GROUP SORTING GAMES

**TITLE:** Line-ups & Group Sorting Games

**IMPACT:** get people to line up or sort a large group into small groups or pairs in a fun and energizing way

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** any size will work

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1-15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** animal sounds – name tags/cards with animal stickers; object sorting – appropriate objects (cards, seeds, shells etc.)

### **DIRECTIONS:**

#### **A. Lineups**

- In order to get people into a line try asking them to line up by: age, date of birth, the time you got up this morning, the distanced traveled to get here, the number of people in your family, alphabetically by first or last name, shoe size, height, or telephone number.
- Whisper to each member of the group the name of a particular animal. The group must line up from the largest animal to the smallest by making the animal's sound and/or acting like the animal. No talking. Then when they have lined up, have each person present their animal to the group; the group must guess the person's animal identity. See how close the group came in its size lineup. This can also be done blindfolded or with eyes closed by just using noises.

#### **B. Groups**

- Categories: To get people into small groups ask people to get together with others who have the same:
  - Favorite toothpaste
  - Favorite TV show
  - Favorite pizza topping
  - Favorite sport
  - Favorite ice cream
  - Favorite animal
  - Favorite color
  - Number of siblings
  - Hair color
  - Eye color
  - Shirt color
  - Age
  - Zodiac sign
  - Birthday month

## ICEBREAKERS: LINE-UPS & GROUP SORTING GAMES

### OPTIONS:

This can be made more challenging by asking participants to sort into groups non-verbally. They must use body/sign language to communicate.

- Animal Sounds: Before the day starts, divide the list of participants into groups, and assign an animal to each group. When making nametags for the participants, put either an animal sticker or a colored underline on each nametag.  
When it is time to break up into small groups, explain that people are going to gather in small groups based on their nametag. In order to find their group members, they will need to make the sound of their animal. (If the nametags have colors instead of animals on them, give participants a verbal or visual explanation of what animal corresponds to what color). Participants should find their group members by closing their eyes and making the sound of their animal.
- Object Sorting: Give each participant (or let them choose from a box of items) a small object, such as a playing card, seed, shell, button, or rock; and ask the group to divide into smaller groups or pairs by finding people with similar objects. These objects can have obvious differences (aces, diamonds, hearts, and spades look very different) or subtle differences where participants have to figure out what the commonalities are (rough, smooth, pointy, round). To challenge the group, limit the number of small groups that can be formed so that the large group will have to agree on a classification scheme that works for everyone's object. If the group has trouble with this, the facilitator can decide to accept a small group whose name is called "other" (i.e. no one could come up with a classification scheme that included these objects). This last variation where the number of small groups is limited may work best with less than 20 participants.
- Numbers: Have people hold up any number of fingers and then ask them to get into groups with other people holding up the same number.
- Questions: Another way to get people in pairs is to ask them to write down a question they have about a topic that is the basis for the upcoming activity. After writing it down, each person should find someone with the same question. That will be their partner. (Now collect those questions, and use them).

**HINTS:** If you're playing these games to create groups for a subsequent activity, don't tell the participants why you want them to get together in groups or pairs until after they have done so. That way they won't be tempted to cheat!

## ICEBREAKERS: LOADED QUESTIONS

**TITLE:** Loaded Questions

**IMPACT:** group bonding, tests how well a group knows each other, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 – 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** paper and pencils

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Give everyone a paper and pencil.
- Designate someone to be the first questioner.
- The questioner asks a “loaded question” of the other players. Loaded questions can be straight-forward or imaginative, but should inspire creativity. Examples include “describe a new room that you would like to have built in your home or apartment that can include anything imaginable”, “what is the first line of a song you would like to sing to your girl/boyfriend”, “what is your dream vacation”.
- Everyone, except the questioner, writes down a response to the question and passes their paper to the person sitting to the right of the questioner.
- The person to the right of the questioner mixes up the papers and then reads the answers out loud. It is often necessary to read them twice.
- Now the questioner must see how well s/he knows the group by guessing who said what.
- The game continues until everyone has had a chance to be the questioner.

**SOURCE:** Chloe Ciccarello and Tracy Mackenzie



## ICEBREAKERS: LOOK DOWN, LOOK UP

**TITLE:** Look Down, Look Up

**IMPACT:** creates a fun atmosphere; can lead to spontaneous and random bonding as individuals are paired in being “out”

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The group forms a circle.
- Each person stares at the shoes of someone else in the circle.
- When the facilitator says, “Look up,” everyone must look at the eyes of the person whose shoes they were staring at.
- If a person makes eye contact with another member of the group, both people yell and are out.
- Those participants who do not make eye contact with someone are still in.
- The facilitator then says, “Look down,” and participants must look at the shoes of a different person.
- The game continues until only a pair or one person remains.

**OPTIONS:** When two people make eye contact, they scream and run to trade places in the circle.

**TITLE:** Mafia

**IMPACT:** focus, calm down a rowdy group, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 6-12

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 30 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

**Roles:** The roles are as follows one detective, two mafia members, and citizens.

- The role of the detective is to figure out who are the mafia members and get the citizens to vote them out.
- The two mafia members try to figure out who is the detective and also try to act as regular citizens.
- The citizens are the ones who have the voting power and with a majority vote, they vote off who they think are the mafia members.

**The Game:**

- Ask everyone to sit in a circle. The facilitator informs everyone of the three different roles. After the roles have been explained everyone must close their eyes as the facilitator goes around the circle and identifies who will be the detective and the mafia members. It is important that everyone's eyes are closed during this part of the game. The facilitator will tap 3 people on the shoulder - once to identify that person as the detective and twice to identify those two people as the mafia.
- Once that is done, the facilitator should ask only the mafia members to open their eyes and acknowledge each other. At this point the mafia members as a team should decide whom they think the detective is and kill the detective off (point to the person). Once they decide, the facilitator should ask the mafia to close their eyes.
- Next the facilitator should ask the detective to open his/her eyes. The detective must then point out who s/he thinks is part of the mafia. After pointing out one person, the facilitator should nod yes or no if that person is part of the mafia. Then the facilitator should ask the detective to close his/her eyes.
- Next the facilitator should ask everyone to open their eyes. After everyone has opened their eyes, the facilitator informs the group whom was killed off by the mafia, and that person must exit the circle. Once people leave the circle they are no longer able to comment. The people left in the circle must decide together whom they think the mafia members are. The decision must be made by majority vote. Once a majority decision has been reached, the person voted must leave the circle.
- Then the facilitator must ask everyone to close their eyes again and go through the same process. The game goes on like this until both of the mafia members are voted off.
- If the detective is voted off, the facilitator should go through the step of asking the detective to open his/her eyes and pretend that that person is still part of the circle.

## ICEBREAKERS: MEET AND GREET

**TITLE:** Meet and Greet

**IMPACT:** creates a fun atmosphere in which people meet many others and can learn their names

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** less than 5 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:** The facilitator gives participants a series of directions, such as:

1. Walk forward without bumping into people.
2. Walk backwards without bumping into people.
3. High five as many people as you can.
4. Low five as many people as you can.
5. Walk in a circle milling around for 30 seconds making eye contact with as many people as you can.
6. Walk and shake hands with as many people as you can, saying your name to each.

Feel free to make up any new direction that gets people moving and interacting.

**TITLE:** Moose

**IMPACT:** icebreaker, quick energizer, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 7 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask everyone to stand in a circle facing in towards the center.
- The facilitator should start by placing her open hands with thumbs touching her temples, four fingers up and palms facing forward on either side of her head so that she looks vaguely like a moose with antlers.
- Immediately the two people on either side of her should raise the hand closest to the facilitator and make their own antler on half their head. Now the facilitator has a full set of antlers, and the people flanking her have one antler each.
- Now the facilitator has three choices. She can:
  - drop her right hand, passing the full moose pose to the person on her left. If this happens, the person to her right immediately drops his hand, the person to her left immediately raises his left hand to become the new, full antlered moose, and the person to the left of the new moose immediately raises her right hand.
  - drop her left hand, passing the full moose pose to the person on her right. If this happens, the person to her left immediately drops his right hand, the person to her right immediately raises his right hand to become the new, full antlered moose, and the person to the right of the new moose immediately raises her left hand.
  - pass the moose across the circle by dropping both her antlers and pointing them at another person in the circle. If this happens, the person whom she pointed to immediately raises both his hands into the antler position, the person to his right raises her left hand and the person to his left raises her right hand.
- These actions continue around the circle, getting progressively faster as people get the hang of it.

## ICEBREAKERS: **MOOSE**

**OPTIONS:** A variation of this game is called "Lumber Jack". It is played in a similar way with different movements. It also involves some noise.

- The facilitator starts by placing her hands together and raising them over her head as if she is raising an ax to split wood. As she does it she takes in a loud breath.
- Next the two people directly to her right and left put their hands together and swing imaginary axes into the facilitator's stomach. They do a loud "HA" as they do this.
- Finally the facilitator takes the down stroke with her imaginary ax and lets out an even louder "UGH" as she does so.
- As she brings her ax down, she turns to face someone else in the circle, and passes the turn to him.
- The person whom she has faced as she brought her ax down immediately raises his arms up, and the lumberjack actions continue on.
- The best part of this game is the noises so make sure everyone puts a lot of energy into them.

**SOURCE:** Monica Pless

## ICEBREAKERS: MOTION AND COMMOTION

**TITLE:** Motion and Commotion

**IMPACT:** energizes and breaks ice in a new group

**RISK:** low to moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** any number

**TIME REQUIRED:** around 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The group stands in a circle.
- One person begins by creating a motion and sound.
- The person to his/her right repeats this sound and motion, followed by the next person, until the motion and sound have traveled around the circle back to the original creator, who then does the motion and makes the sound for a second and final time.
- Then the person to the right of the first "creator," creates his/her own new sound and motion, and these then travel around the circle.
- This activity happens at a fast pace and high energy level. It continues until everyone has created an original sound and motion.

**OPTIONS:** Can also be done as a name game where the sound you create is your name.

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

## ICEBREAKERS: MURDERER

**TITLE:** Murderer

**IMPACT:** creates playful suspense, challenges people to watch closely, encourages dramatic play, and facilitates close interpersonal interactions through hand shaking

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** space where the group can move around freely

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Everyone should be directed to stand outside the designated playing area.
- The facilitator shakes the hand of each person in the group as each enters the room or playing area one by one.
- As the leader shakes hands, s/he squeezes one person's hand twice without the other players noticing. The person who received the squeezes is now "the murderer", and s/he must keep his/ her identity secret.
- Group members circulate in the room, intermingling and shaking the hand of each person they pass.
- As the murderer shakes peoples' hands, s/he squeezes their hands once. This squeeze lets people know that they have been "killed". Anyone who receives a squeeze from the murderer, must silently count to five and then fall to the floor in a dramatic death.
- The "live" people still standing can guess who the murderer is at any time, but anyone who guesses wrong is also considered dead and out of the game. A person who guesses the murderer correctly gets to choose the new murderer by shaking everyone's hand and squeezing someone's twice. That person can also choose to make himself/herself the murderer.

**SOURCE:** Sindy Piche and Karen Soens

**TITLE:** Nobody Knows

**IMPACT:** creates a quiet and reflective atmosphere and facilitates group members' thinking about their individual responsibility for the group and the wider world; introduces storytelling as a powerful medium for conveying important concepts

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** any number

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15 – 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** a copy of the story below

**DIRECTIONS:** The group leader reads the following story to the group.

Once upon a time in a faraway land, there was an old man. He lived in a small log cabin hidden deep in a dark forest. Nobody knew just where the cabin was, which was just the way the old man wanted it. Many others tried fruitlessly to find the place, but the old man told Nobody.

The old man had a special secret; he had a rainbow collection that was very dear to him, and he shared it with Nobody. It was a magnificent, magic collection of the most beautiful, real rainbows anyone could ever see. He had a whole bunch of little tiny ones--the kind you see on a sunny day when you throw water in the air. He had some tall, skinny ones that he found after light showers on spring afternoons. And he had a huge, wide one that rose straight up from the ground like a pillar and disappeared into the clouds.

Nobody knew the value of the old man's rainbows and the great influence the collection could have on the rest of the world.

Nobody loved the old man, and the old man loved Nobody, so when it came time for the old man to die, he passed his rainbow collection on to Nobody. Nobody shared the magic and wonder of the rainbows with all the hopeless people. Nobody taught others the value and art of collecting rainbows.

Is this a happy story or a sad story? Nobody knows.

**OPTIONS:**

Brian suggests rereading the story and substituting "someone's name" for "Nobody." He has the individuals in his group read the story aloud, one at a time, inserting their own names in the place of Nobody, going around the circle and having them read until each person puts his or her name in once. Brian has observed very powerful changes in group members as they read and become aware of being responsible to carry on something positive.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Do you think the story is happy or sad? Why?
- What or who does the old man symbolize?
- What do you think the rainbows symbolize? If you were the old man, what would your "rainbows" be?
- What is the moral of the story? Does the moral change with how you read the story?

**SOURCE:** Group Challenge Training - Thanks to Brian Brolin



## ICEBREAKERS: **RED HANDED**

**TITLE:** Red Handed

**IMPACT:** focus, calms down a rowdy group, restful, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10-20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** small object, such as a seed, stone or coin

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to sit in a circle facing in.
- Ask for a volunteer to be the first "IT". IT should sit in the center of the circle and close his eyes.
- The other players begin to pass a small object (e.g. a pebble) from person to person in the circle. Even those who are not passing the object should pretend to be. The sneakiest pass is to hold the pebble in one fist, palm down, and drop it into the palm-up hand of the next person in the circle.
- After the object has begun to make the rounds, IT opens his eyes, and searches for the object. If IT suspects someone, he taps that person on one of the person's hands. If the suspect is empty-handed, the game continues with IT searching. If the person has the object, that person becomes the new IT, and the old IT joins the circle.

**SOURCE:** Dylan Fitz

**TITLE:** River Bank

**IMPACT:** creates excitement and energy; develops listening skills and rewards following directions quickly and accurately; builds team unity when played as a team game.

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5-10minutes

**MATERIALS:** a piece of rope 60'-100' long. If rope is not available, then a hose or drawing a long line in the dirt will suffice. Tape can be used indoors.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Lay a long piece of rope in a straight line on flat ground. One side of this rope is designated the "river" and the other is designated the "bank".
- The goal of this activity is to be the last person left standing on the right side of the River Bank.
- Participants line up single file facing the same direction on the same side of the rope. Participants can be facing toward the rope or be turned sideways to it if there is not enough room
- The facilitator begins by telling everyone which side of the rope is the "river" and which side is the "bank".
- When the facilitator yells "River" or "Bank," people must jump to the designated side. Anyone who jumps to the wrong side, moves his/her feet but doesn't jump, hesitates too long before jumping, or touches the rope is out and sits down. The facilitator is the final judge of who is out.
- The facilitator can vary the sequence of commands, e. g. "river, bank, river, bank, bank, bank, bank, river," in an attempt to get people out. The pace can begin slowly and speed up with the facilitator mixing it up to make it fun and more difficult. Continue until one person (or only a few people) is left standing.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ask the group what it took to be successful at this game.
- What skills did they need? How could this translate into working on a farm? This game works well as a metaphor for how to work in the field: listen closely to what the leader says, follow directions, move quickly but accurately, and watch where you step.

**HINTS:**

- Make sure people jump, not step, over the rope.
- The facilitator is judge and deems whether a fidget or a flailing of the arms constitutes a person being out. The facilitator exercises all powers as judge in case the game needs to be sped along.

## ICEBREAKERS: RUSSIAN FINGER FENCING

**TITLE:** Russian Finger Fencing

**IMPACT:** energizes a group, breaks barriers between group members through physical touch and play, and encourages creative use of one's body

**RISK:** low to moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 2 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 Minutes

**MATERIALS:** a space large enough for people to move around

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Pair off in twos.
- Stand facing your partner and lock right thumbs. Point your right pointer finger at each other. Your pointer finger is your sword.
- The object of the game is to touch the other person with your pointer finger and not to get touched yourself. The person who touches his or her partner first wins.

**OPTIONS:**

**Variations include partners' locking left thumbs instead of right; partners' locking both right and left thumbs with arms crossed between them; and the group forming triads with each person locking one thumb with one partner and the other thumb with the other.**

**HINTS:**

**It might be a good idea to pair people up roughly based on height and size because it involves strength as well as good maneuvering.**

**SOURCE:** Greg Gale

## ICEBREAKERS: SCAVENGER HUNT

**TITLE:** Scavenger Hunt

**IMPACT:** icebreaker, gets everyone to talk with everyone else

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** copies of the scavenger hunt sheet and pencils for all players – chose one of those listed below or tailor it to fit the group and/or the goals of the event.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Give each player a pencil and a scavenger hunt sheet.
- Ask them to mingle and find one person who can answer yes to each of the questions. Write that person's name in the space on the appropriate box.
- Each box must have a different name in it.
- They have 10 minutes to fill in as many boxes as they can.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ask people to share something interesting that they learned about someone in the group.
- Ask people to share a similarity between themselves and someone else in the group.
- What was the most difficult square to fill? Did anyone find a person who could answer "yes" to that question?
- How does this activity relate to the group or the event that is about to take place?

## BLAST Scavenger Hunt



Find people who answer “yes” to the following questions. Write their name in the box. Each person can only sign in *one* box. Fill in as many as you can. Have fun.

Do you speak a Foreign language?  _____	Have you worked at a CSA?  _____	Will you tell me a good joke?  _____	Are you 15 or under?  _____	Were you born outside of the United States?  _____
Do you work with urban gardening?  _____	Have you worked with Heifer International?  _____	Are you an intern for your organization?  _____	Can you rub your stomach and pat your head? Prove it.  _____	Were you selected by your peers to attend?  _____
Do you work at the Congressional Hunger Center?  _____	Do you like tomatoes more than corn?  _____	Is this your first big conference?  _____	Do you have a good scar?  _____	Did you farm as a child?  _____
Can you impersonate a famous movie star? Do it.  _____	Are you a vegetarian?  _____	Does your neighborhood have high rates of diabetes?  _____	Do you garden at home?  _____	Did you study food or agriculture at all in school?  _____
Are you part of an after school program?  _____	Can you sing the chorus to your favorite song?  _____	Do you work in a rural area?  _____	Can you touch the ground with your hands while stretching?  _____	Have you worked to improve school or cafeteria meals?  _____



## Diversity Scavenger Hunt

Find people who answer “yes” to the following questions. Write their name in the box. Each person can only sign in *one* box. Fill in as many as you can. Have fun getting reacquainted.

Do you speak a Foreign language?  _____	Did you grow up with grandparents in your house?  _____	Do you attend religious services regularly?  _____	Have you been teased about something you couldn't change about yourself?  _____	Were you born in another country?  _____
Do you love rap?  _____	Have you ever traveled to another country?  _____	Do you write poetry on you own?  _____	Have you attended a private school?  _____	Do you identify with being middle class?  _____
Do you have a pet? What kind?  _____	Does your family have a car?  _____	Are you a Republican?  _____	Do you like your neighborhood?  _____	Did you farm as a child?  _____
Have you ever gotten straight A's?  _____	Are you a vegetarian?  _____	Are you an only child?  _____	Have you eaten an exotic animal (part of an animal)?  _____	Do you like school?  _____

## ICEBREAKERS: **SLAP HAPPY**

**TITLE:** Slap Happy

**IMPACT:** challenges group members to concentrate and pay attention to other group members while engaged in a seemingly simple task; energizes through the physical activity and rhythmic nature of tapping

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 - 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Group members kneel in a circle with hands flat on the floor in the circle. (This can also be played on a large table.) Each person places her right hand to the right of the left hand of the person to her right and left hand to the left of the right hand of the person to her left. In this way, each person's hand is flat on the floor between hands of the two people on either side of her.
- The game begins with one person tapping the ground once with one hand. One tap sends the tap in a clockwise direction. The person's hand immediately next to the first person's tapping hand taps next and so on around the circle.
- If someone taps twice, the tap is then sent counterclockwise or in the opposite direction to that which it has been traveling.
- Those who tap or even move their hands out of order or messes up in any other way are out. The circle then re-adjusts and tapping begins again.
- People on either side of a person who is out and leaves the circle do not have to move their hands over those of the people now next to them.
- The game continues until only two hands remain in the circle.

### **OPTIONS:**

- As a variation, the circle can become smaller each time a new person is out, with those remaining in the game having to replace their hands between those of the people next to them.
- People can tap more than once or twice. Essentially an even number of taps (2, 4...) changes the direction the tap was traveling and an odd number of taps continues the tap in the same direction.
- This can be played with feet instead of hands. Players sit or stand.

**DISCUSSION:** This can be all about focus.

**SOURCE:** Angela Studmeyer

**TITLE:** Steal the Bacon

**IMPACT:** energizes a group through physical activity; builds teamwork

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** something soft, non-breakable, and small enough to hold easily, such as a tennis ball or t-shirt tied in a knot, to use as the “bacon”; a space with no hazards that is large enough for the group to run and throw safely; two designated safety lines on either side of the playing area

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide the group into two even teams. Each team assigns members consecutive numbers from one to the number of people on the team. For instance, a team of ten will be numbered one through ten.
- The two teams line up on either side of the room (preferably a large space) facing each other. They must stand behind a designated “safety line”. Teams do not have to line up in consecutive order.
- The facilitator places the bacon in the middle of the space between the two teams and calls out a number. The person from each team assigned that number runs into the space and tries to get the bacon.
- Whoever grabs the bacon first tries to run back to his/her side of the room without being tagged by the opponent. The person without the bacon tries to tag the person with the bacon before s/he crosses the line to safety.
- Once the two people return to their respective lines, the facilitator replaces the bacon in the center and continues the game.
- Have fun and be safe.

**OPTIONS:**

- To keep score, a team can get a point in one of two ways: (1) those players without the bacon tags their opponents before they crosses their line; and (2) the person with the bacon gets safely back to her line without being tagged.
- The facilitator can call out more than one number at a time so that multiple pairs play at once.
- If multiple pairs play, team members can pass the bacon from one to another as they run.
- If the bacon is dropped, a member of the opposite team can pick it up and run.
- Passes can be intercepted.
- The team that does not have the bacon can tag only the person who is holding the bacon.
- The team without the bacon can tag anyone who has held the bacon during that round of play. Tagged players must sit down where they are tagged. A point is scored for each person tagged.
- Players can tag opponents by throwing the bacon at and hitting them, but use discretion.

**Source:** Ben Handzo



## ICEBREAKERS: **STRING THEORY**

**TITLE:** String Theory

**IMPACT:** to let everyone meet and find ways to network constructively

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 15 – 45 participants

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30-60 minutes, depending on number of participants

**MATERIALS:** skein of yarn or ball of string

### **PREPARATION:**

Make sure your ball of string is loose enough to untangle when you toss it. At a conference, have someone take notes of who's helping whom so people can contact each other afterwards.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Have participants stand in a big circle. Explain that each person will have a minute to say their name and organization and explain one of their skills, and then identify something they need help with (e.g. how to build raised beds, how to speak Spanish, how to make healthy food for lunch, tips on fundraising from institutions, etc).
- Someone who can help calls for the string (encourage new people each time to connect everyone). When you ask for help, hold onto the string and toss the ball to the person who can help.
- This person introduces themselves and their organization and explains how they can help or where they got that skill (e.g. I built raised beds last year, I grew up in Mexico, I know a great cookbook, I worked in fundraising), and then identifies something they need help with. As you go, this will create a web of string linking people together. At the end of the activity, people can look along the string to see who is holding it and go talk to the person they are helping and the person who can help them.

### **DISCUSSION:**

This game shows how much we can learn from each other. Each of us has knowledge and skills, questions and challenges. Many of these questions could be answered if we just talked to the right person! This is a chance to see what you can help others with and find out where to get support on some of the challenges you face.

### **HINTS:**

The first person doesn't have to explain a skill. The leader can ask for help with something they already know someone in the audience can help with to start smoothly. If someone asks for help and no one can help, ask them to think of a different challenge they would like help or advice on (this is more common in small groups).

## ICEBREAKERS: THE RULES OF THE GAME

**TITLE:** The Rules of the Game

**IMPACT:** social responsibility, all subjects

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** 15 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes or more

**MATERIALS:** a lot of tennis balls or similarly sized balls, a marking pen, and five hula hoops

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that access to information gives us power. Ask how do they handle it when you can't get information? Does it discourage them or make them determined?
- Mark each ball with a large capital letter. Use the Scrabble as a guide. This means you'll need more e's than c's, more a's than k's, only one z and x, and so on. Lay out five hula hoops on the ground in the same pattern as the number five on a die; in other words, one in the center and four opposite corner hoops. Put all the balls into the center loop. Place the corner loops about 10 yards from each other. (The further apart you place from each other, the more running will be involved.)
- Divide the group into four smaller groups and have each one stand by one of the four corner hoops. On GO, one person from each group runs to the center hoop, picks up one ball, and returns to their home hoop. The picked-up ball must be immediately placed in the home hoop and cannot be protected by from the opposing players. As soon as the ball is deposited in the home hoop, any other player on another team (but only one) can take off to grab another ball from the center hoop, OR from any of the other hoops.
- The point of all this scoping and scooping of balls is to get five balls that spell a word. A group can have more than five balls in the hoop, but five of them in combination must spell a word. The first team to do so wins. If you want to try it again, scoop up the balls and put them back in the center.

## ICEBREAKERS: THE RULES OF THE GAME

- After you have gone through this activity once, tell them you're going to do it again the same way. Then hand each of the groups separate written instructions as follows:

**Group 1:** "Your job is to pick up any five letters in alphabetical order: a, b, c, d, e, or any other combination."

**Group 2:** "Your job is to pick up five vowels."

**Group 3:** "Your job is to pick up five consonants."

**Group 4:** "You are the only group that is doing this activity the correct way. Follow my verbal instructions and make up words of five or more letters. When you see that the other groups are doing things differently, make fun of them, tease them, or ignore them altogether. Act superior, as if you know something they don't."

- Use a stop sign or time-out signal at different moments during this activity to ask different participants to tell the group what kinds of emotions are they experiencing and what kinds of behaviors or reactions they think they are displaying.

### DISCUSSION:

- How did it feel to be treated differently?
- What were some of your physical reactions? Emotional reactions?
- How did it feel to have different information than another group? Did it bother you at all?
- Where did you get the most support and validation?
- Do you ever feel you have a different set of instructions than others? Why do you think this is so?
- Do people from different classes have different "instructions" or goals? Why?
- How might these differing goals impact our ability to all get along?
- How does this game parallels what happens in your school or home life?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.355-356)

**TITLE:** Transformer Tag

**IMPACT:** warm up, listening, communicating, building allies, group identities, gender and sexual orientation

**RISK:** high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10-30 people

**TIME REQUIRED:** about ten minutes or enough time for everyone to end up out of breath

**MATERIALS:** a coin if you decide to do the option

**PREPARATION:** Perform this activity outdoors.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Tell the group that before we transform the word, we have to transform ourselves and so, we are going to practice it.
- Demonstrate to the participants two body positions that won't affect their running. Typical choices are one hand on top of the head and one hand attached to the gluteus (right or left behind). Each person gets to decide which accepted body position is "right" at the start of the activity.
- Give the group a minute or two to determine their game identity and indicate the start of the game by shouting "Declare" or any other suitable command. Players then immediately declare their identity by adopting one of the body positions.
- The action involves one team – the heads, for instance – trying to tag and transform the tails. If a head tags a tail, the tail becomes a head, and vice versa. Once transformed, the person tries to tag anyone of the opposing team. The game continues until one team successfully dominates the world! Then, rematch after rematch until the action loses its appeal.

**OPTIONS:**

- Heads/Tails Tag requires a coin, preferably a large one (quarters work nicely). Identify the two body positions outlined above for the Heads and Tails. Once the group knows the two positions, the action starts as soon as the coin had been flipped in the air.
- As the coin hovers above the group, everyone must declare as either a Head or Tail. When the coin lands on the ground, people need to know which side is up. If it's Heads, Heads are it and try to tag all the Tails. Any Tail that is tagged is frozen. The action stops once all the Tails are immobilized. If Tails shows on the coin, the action is reversed.
- This option tends to be shorter, but the fun is in how people learn what side of the coin comes up. This moment of uncertainty adds a bit of a thrill to the game, especially if the coin rolls along the ground.

**DISCUSSION:**

You probably won't need to spend a whole lot of time processing this activity, particularly if everyone needs time to catch their breath. So have some fun.

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.103-104)

## ICEBREAKERS: TRUE CONFESSIONS

**TITLE:** True Confessions

**IMPACT:** icebreaker

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 5 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 30 minutes, depending on size of group

**MATERIALS:** scraps of paper, pencils, a large bowl or bucket

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Give everyone some scrap paper and a pencil.
- Ask them to write down 3 questions, each on a separate scrap of paper, that they want to ask the group.
- Questions can range from “what are the names of your siblings”, to “would you rather have a mullet, rattail or bowlcut hairstyle” or “tell a story about your best birthday”. Yes or no questions should include a “why” with them to generate more interesting responses.
- Remind them that this should be PG-rated since they may have to answer their own questions. Funny is definitely good.
- Put all the questions in the bucket.
- Pass the bucket around the circle three times, and let each person choose and answer one question on each pass.

**SOURCE:** The Blast-astic BLAST interns

## ICEBREAKERS: WHAT'S IN A SHOE?

**TITLE:** What's In A Shoe?

**IMPACT:** icebreaker, name game, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 – 2 minutes per person

**MATERIALS:** everyone needs one shoe

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask everyone to remove their shoes, put one to the side of the room or playing area, and hold onto the other.
- Assemble the group in a circle, and ask them to toss their shoe into the center.
- Once the shoes are in the center, everyone should pick up a shoe that belongs to someone else.
- One by one each person should describe the owner of the shoe based on what the shoe looks like. They can include size, gender, hobbies, fashion sense, favorite sports etc.
- When they finish describing the person, the owner should step forward and introduce himself. (Or the describer can guess the owner).
- The real owner can verify or deny any of the things that were said about him or her.

**HINTS:** This is a good introductory activity for groups that do not know each other.

**SOURCE:** Greg Gale

## ICEBREAKERS: WHAT'S YOUR NUMBAH?

**TITLE:** What's Your Numbah?

**IMPACT:** icebreaker that involves everyone; medium energy, fun, name game

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes – more for larger groups

**MATERIALS:** a nametag, an info sheet, a pencil and something to write on for each participant. Add or subtract questions on the info sheet to better match the group size so everyone has a chance to meet everyone else.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Give everyone a nametag with a different number on it. Numbers should be sequential.
- Give everyone an info sheet and a pencil, and ask them to write their own name and number on the first two blank lines.
- Then they should write the numbers that follow their own in the successive blanks. For instance if Person A's number is "4", s/he should write "5" in the blank after "Introduce yourself to" and "6" in the blank after "Shake hands with" and so on down the list.
- Now everyone should mingle, following the instructions on the info sheet. People may want to check off numbers as they meet people.
- End the mingling when everyone has had a chance to interact.



## What's Your Numbah?

Place your name and number here \_\_\_\_\_

Introduce yourself to \_\_\_\_

Shake hands with \_\_\_\_

Give \_\_\_\_ a back rub.

Give a "high-five" to \_\_\_\_

Get \_\_\_\_ to laugh.

Compare arm spans with \_\_\_\_

Lie to \_\_\_\_

Describe the ways that \_\_\_\_ reminds you of Albert Einstein.

Introduce \_\_\_\_ to someone else in the room.

Tell \_\_\_\_ what animal you admire the most.

Do a quick magic trick for \_\_\_\_

Point your finger at \_\_\_\_

Maintain a straight face in front of \_\_\_\_ for 3 seconds.

Compliment \_\_\_\_ on her/his shoes.

Sing a song to \_\_\_\_

Wink at \_\_\_\_

Sneak up behind \_\_\_\_

Stick your tongue at \_\_\_\_



## ICEBREAKERS: YES CUBED

**TITLE:** YES cubed

**IMPACT:** energy builder, focus, connection. Learning the importance of saying “yes”, agreeing, and helping out peers

**RISK:** low - medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes, but could be shorter or longer

**DIRECTIONS:** There are three levels to YES cubed. They can be played individually or all together. In all three levels, everyone stands in a circle. If all three levels are played together, the facilitator can change between levels 1, 2 and 3 at any point; when the facilitator changes levels, the person who’s turn it is, starts the next level.

- **Level One:** One person begins by turning to the person to the right making eye contact, and saying, “YES”. The second person then says, “YES” to the person on his right. This passing of “yes,” continues around the circle at a fast, focused pace.
- **Level Two:** One person, (Person A), begins. Person A looks across the circle and makes eye contact with another person (Person B). Person B then says “Yes” or “No” in acknowledgement of Person A. Essentially Person A wishes to take Person B’s place in the circle, and so if Person B says “yes”, Person B is giving consent for A to take B’s place. At this point, A begins to walk to B’s spot. In the meantime, B must find another spot and so looks to person C, makes eye contact, receives the “Yes” or “No”, and then walks to C’s spot. This movement continues until the facilitator either switches to a new level, or concludes the game. (\*See Options for a variation of level 2).
- **Level Three:** The high energy level. In this level, one person (A) runs across the circle, leaps up, and slaps hands (high five) with another person (B) and shouts “YES”. Person A then takes Person B’s spot as B runs across to someone else to repeat the same action and so on.

### OPTIONS:

**Level Two**, if played separately from levels one and three, has a few variations. It can be done without speaking (without saying yes), and instead simply by nodding at the person wanting to take your place. It can also be done with nodding and shaking your head (yes and no), so a person can refuse to give up his place. In this case it is important for people to help out the person looking for a spot, as well as saying no, or else the activity won’t continue.

### DISCUSSION:

- What is the importance of this game?
- What is the difference between the various levels?
- Why is eye contact important?
- What is the importance of saying yes?
- (For Level 2 variation) What happened when people could shake their heads and say no? How did it feel when someone said no to you? How did you feel when you said no to someone else?

SOURCE: Tracy Mackenzie

## NAME GAMES: JACK-IN-THE-BOX

**TITLE:** Jack-In-The -Box

**IMPACT:** facilitates group members' learning each other's names through a funny and physical activity.

**RISK:** low (Do not use as a first name game.)

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to form a circle and sit down.
- One person starts by standing up and saying her name. Then she introduces the first four people to her left, starting with the farthest person. As each name is said, that person stands up and sits down quickly. There is a jack-in-the-box effect with people standing up and sitting down one after the other.
- Then the turn of introducer moves to the person to the right of the first introducer, and he now similarly introduces himself and four people to his left.
- By the time each participant has been an introducer, the names will be quite familiar.

## NAME GAMES: NAME RIPPLE

**TITLE:** Name Ripple

**IMPACT:** encourages laughter and physical creativity while helping participants learn each other's names

**RISK:** low to moderate (Do not play as a first name game.)

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 – 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The group stands in a circle. If the group is new, each person in the circle says his or her name to begin.
- Then the facilitator says the name of someone else in the circle and makes a corresponding motion, for instance "Ja-mil" with a squat low and a jump high.
- The person to the right of the facilitator then repeats the name and motion, followed by each successive person to the right repeating the name and motion one at a time like a wave.
- That name and motion stop when they reach the person whose name is being repeated, in this case Jamil.
- Jamil then calls the name of someone else in the circle, accompanying it with a motion that again travels around the circle until it reaches the person whose name has been called.
- The game continues until everyone in the circle has been named.

**OPTIONS:** Speed up the game. No pauses between people are allowed, including the person starting a new name/motion!

**HINTS:** You need to know at least a few people's names to play this game so it might be best to play it after another name game or on the second day of the program.

**SOURCE:** New Games for the Whole Family (p. 102)

## NAME GAMES: **BIPPITY BOP BOP BOP**

**TITLE:** Bippity Bop Bop Bop

**IMPACT:** energizes a group and enables participants to learn each other's names

**RISK:** low (Don't use as a first name game.)

**GROUP SIZE:** 5 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5-10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Stand in a circle with one person in the middle. This person is "it."
- To begin, the person in the middle spins around in a circle, stops suddenly, points to someone, and says or shouts "bippity bop bop bop." Before "it" finishes saying this phrase, the person to whom he or she is pointing tries to say or shout the name of someone else in the circle. If the person fails to say another name in time, says a made up name, or messes up in any way, then s/he is out and becomes "it" in the center of the circle. The game continues like this for a little while.
- Then "Bippity Bop Bop Bop" becomes more of a challenge. The person in the middle still spins around quickly and points to someone, but now says "**right** - bippity bop bop bop" or "**left** - bippity bop bop bop". Right and left refer to the people to the right and left of the person to whom "it" is pointing. The person that it is pointing at must then say the correct name of either the person to the right or left, following "it's" instructions, before "it" finishes saying "bippity bop bop bop." Again, if the person messes up, s/he becomes "it."
- A final variation is for "it" to add in the directions "**me** - bippity bop bop bop" or "**across** -bippity bop bop bop." Then the person to whom "it" is pointing tries to say "it's" name or the name of the person directly across the circle, respectively.

**HINTS:** The game should be fast paced and high energy. It is a great way to learn and practice names.

**SOURCE:** Mike Evans from Mellon

## NAME GAMES: I SIT IN THE GRASS WITH MY FRIEND

**TITLE:** I Sit in the Grass With My Friend

**IMPACT:** uses repetitive actions and phrases, movement, and low-level competition to help group members learn each other's names

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 – 30 people

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5-10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** chairs, paper plates, or anything on which to sit, one more than the number of players

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Arrange everyone in a circle, with all participants sitting on something that designates his or her place, such as a paper plate, blanket, or shoe. (Chairs can be used when inside.) Leave one of the sitting spaces (e.g., plate or chair) vacant.
- When the facilitator says, "go", the game begins with a race between the people on either side of the open space trying to move into that space.
- The winner who claims the spot then says loudly, "I sit,".
- The person who had been sitting next to the winner now moves into the space vacated by the winner so that s/he is sitting next to the winner again. As s/he sits, s/he says loudly, "in the grass".
- The new vacant space is in turn filled by the person who had been sitting next to the second person who moved. This third person says, "with my friend.....," and names someone else in the circle (for instance, Paul).
- Paul then gets up and moves to the open place, thereby leaving a new vacant place.
- This is the signal to start another short race between the two people sitting on either side of the open space. The winner starts again by saying, "I sit."

### **HINTS:**

- Have everyone in the circle say his or her name once before beginning.
- This game should move very quickly.
- Play until everyone's name has been called.

**SOURCE:** New Games for the Whole Family (p. 103)

## NAME GAMES: NAME AND ACTION GAME

**TITLE:** Name and Action Game

**IMPACT:** facilitates participants learning each other's names; requires concentration while encouraging laughter

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 – 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The group sits in a circle and claps on their laps to a certain rhythm.
- The group leader begins by saying his or her name and adding a simple action to the rhythm. The next person in the circle repeats the name(s) and action(s) already introduced and adds his or her own. The game continues around the circle until participants have learned all the names. If one person makes a mistake, begin again with one name and action.

**SOURCE:** Cindy Piche and Karen Soens

## COMMUNICATION: A WHAT?

**TITLE:** A What?

**IMPACT:** communication, icebreaker, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited - 12 - 15 is a good size

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** several small objects that can be easily passed around a circle

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- The objective of the activity is to pass a message forward and back in a circle.
- Ask the group to stand in a circle, facing the center.
- The facilitator begins the action by taking a ball (any object will do) and handing it to the person on his right, saying, "This is a banana."
- The person who now holds the ball is evidently already confused, because she inquires, "A what?!" The first player repeats, "A banana!"
- Person number two, her confusion temporarily cleared up, hands the ball to the person on her right and says, "This is a banana."
- Now person number three is confused. "A what???" he asks of number two.
- Number 2 then turns back to number one and asks again, "A what??" "A banana!" he says.
- Whereupon number two turns back to three and confirms it. "A banana!" she says.
- Now that number three is enlightened, he can hand the ball he's been holding to the person on his right, number four, and the whole process repeats itself.
- While number four starts the process all over again with number five, number one takes a different object, hands it to the person on his left, and says, "This is a pineapple." "A what?" And the pineapple takes off to the left.
- By the time the two objects collide somewhere in the circle, who'll be able to say for sure what's what?

**SOURCE:** More New Games (p.73)

## COMMUNICATION: ALPHABET GAME

**TITLE:** Alphabet Game

**IMPACT:** Listening, communication, focus and fun.

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** Should probably be kept to groups of about 10 members or people lose interest while they are waiting for a turn

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 15 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Gather group members in a circle and decide who the head of the circle will be.
- The head of the circle then says one word that begins with the letter "A."
- The person to the head's right then states the word previously given and adds word starting with the letter "B."
- This routine of repeating the previous words then adding a new word that begins with the following alphabetical letter should be continued around the circle. For example, if the first person says "apple," the next person should state "apple" then add a word that begins with "B," such as "boat." (Apple, boat...apple, boat, cat...apple, boat, cat, drum...etc.).
- Those who forget the words stated before them are disqualified from the group. (Alternatively, others in the group could help them out.)

**OPTIONS:**

- Try to get members to use words which revolve around The Food Project's work, i.e. vegetables, gardening, tools etc. Start by saying, "I'm going out to the field and in my gardenway cart I put ....."
- Choose a category, such as movies or cars.

**DISCUSSION:** How important is it to listen to those around you? How important is it to pay attention when someone else is speaking.

**SOURCE:** Ara Barsam



## COMMUNICATION: CAPTAIN VIDEO

**TITLE:** Captain Video

**IMPACT:** communication, team building, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 - 30 players - could divide into groups of 10

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 15 minutes

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- The objective is to pass a motion (sometimes with e-motion) around a circle from one person to the next with each person only being able to see the motion presented by the person preceding him.
- Ask players to gather in a circle. After demonstrating the game, have them face away from the center. Ask for a volunteer to be the first Captain Video.
- The Captain starts the game by tapping a Space Ranger (second player) on the shoulder, which is the signal for the Ranger to run around the outside of the circle.
- While the Space Ranger is running, Captain Video stands in the center of the circle and performs a simple movement, for instance, doing one deep knee bend while winking. The Space Ranger must pay close attention to detail because s/he must later duplicate this exact motion to the next Space Ranger.
- When the Space Ranger has completed the lap around the circle, the Space Ranger moves into the center and the Captain moves into the empty space in the circle, facing inward.
- The first Space Ranger enters the middle of the circle, and taps a new Space Ranger. While that Space Ranger runs around the circle, the first Space Ranger duplicates the motion of the Captain. Then the first Space Ranger takes the place of the second Space Ranger, and so on.
- Each succeeding Space Ranger repeats this process until it reaches the last Ranger. Then the last Ranger and Captain Video step into mid-circle facing each other and, at the count of three, do the motion at the same time. The two are not usually recognizable as the same thing--in fact, they are usually ridiculously different.

**DISCUSSION:** How does this model communication within a crew? Good? Bad? What techniques were used when the motion was passed correctly? (i.e. careful “listening” or watching).

**HINTS:** This activity could be used before a feedback session, especially for a crew that was having trouble communicating.

**SOURCE:** New Games for the Whole Family (p.42)

## COMMUNICATION: BALLOON TROLLEYS

**TITLE:** Balloon Trolleys

**IMPACT:** trust building, building allies, group identities, ability, and cooperation

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** the more the better

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15 to 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** balloons and everyday obstacles

**PREPARATION:** Make sure to perform this activity in a good-sized room with open space or an outdoor field.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Play a song that talks about the “ties that bind us.” Then, tell the group these balloons represent things that connect us and how fragile connections can be.
- Blow up enough balloons so that you have one to fit between every two people if they stand in a single-file line. For example, if X is a person and O is a balloon. The line would look like this:  
XOXOXOXOX.
- The challenge is to move the entire group across an area without allowing any if the balloons to hit the floor.
- This activity sounds simple enough, but it’s not all that easy to execute. Your group will find that they have to do a lot of work to keep the balloons off the ground. You can increase the difficulty by prohibiting people from hugging the players in front of them; in other words, they have to move simultaneously but without being linked together physically.

**OPTIONS:**

You can add challenges to the activity by having the group do the following whenever a balloon touches the ground:

- The entire group has to start again.
- The two people who dropped the balloon have to go to the front or end of the line and replace the balloon.
- The group has to figure out a way to pick up the balloon and reinsert it where it was without losing any other balloons.
- All of the above. Use whatever consequences that you think your group will enjoy and that will add challenge and fun to the activity.
- Putting some obstacles around the space for the group to navigate around will add some more enjoyment. Try having them: go over a wrestling mat rolled up on the floor, under a table or balance beam, step through a large hula hoop, step over a small barrier of milk crates, etc.

## COMMUNICATION: **BALLOON TROLLEYS**

### **DISCUSSION:**

This is a great activity for helping the group think about the different ways we communicate and work together, both verbally and physically.

- How did you communicate with each other in ways that didn't use words?
- How were other people helpful?
- How did other people make it difficult for you to keep the balloons off the ground?
- Did you find yourself making assumptions about someone who dropped a balloon? What were they?
- What did other members of the group say or do that encouraged you to trust and work as part of a team?
- Did anyone say or do anything that made you feel that you weren't part of the team?
- All of us, whether we want to be or not, are part of larger groups with invisible ties binding us together. How do you communicate and affirm your connection to other people?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.74-75)

**TITLE:** Blind Polygon

**IMPACT:** problem solving, listening, communicating, validating feelings, building allies, and individual activity

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 5 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** a rope that is long enough for each member of the group to hold onto with plenty of elbow room between participants

**PREPARATION:** This is a blindfolded activity, so be sure that all the members of your group feel comfortable with wearing one

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by saying to the group that there's an old saying that God gave us 'two eyes and a mouth for a reason'. Tell them to think about what it means not to have their eyes anymore and how it changes the way they perceive things.
- Blindfold all of the members of the group. If there are no blindfolds around or if people don't want to use a blindfold, ask them to close their eyes.
- Place the rope on the ground near the group member's feet and instruct them to find it.
- Explain to the group that the object of the activity will first to find the rope and then to form it into different shapes. All group members must be holding the rope and therefore are part of the solution. They can talk to each other.
- Tell the group that the first shape they have to make is a square.
- Ask the group to let you know when they feel that a square had been formed. If they go on for a while, ask them if they think they have a square yet. When greeted with a "no", let them continue, even if they are on a square! If the group thinks they have made a square, have them take off their blindfolds or open their eyes. After looking at their "square," give them time (one minute) to discuss a plan for how they will work out the next shape you give them. Other shapes you can use are a triangle, circle, or rectangle.
- If you can't find a rope lying around, you can also do this activity by asking the group to hold hands and form the shapes.
- One solution that some groups use is to move people around. This is perfectly acceptable but don't mention it to them. If they ask if it's legal you can tell them yes, but let them get creative rather than giving them helpful hints.

## COMMUNICATION: **BLIND POLYGON**

### **DISCUSSION:**

- A lot of communication issues usually come up with this activity. Depending on what happened in your particular group, a few typical questions might be:
- When was communication a problem? Why (were too many people speaking all at once)?
- Were any people or ideas not listened to? Why? How might that have hurt the group in trying to solve the problem?
- When did it get better? What changed to make it better?
- How important do you think eye contact is to the way we communicate with one another?
- Who were some of the leaders during the activity? What did they do that might be considered leadership?
- Did what happened during this activity look anything like what happened in other groups (class, student council, sports team, counseling group, etc.)

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.178-179)

**TITLE:** Bridge It

**IMPACT:** group initiative; provokes reflection about the dynamics of communicating across our differences; or when you want the group to think about how we all are constantly building bridges to narrow the gap between individuals

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 hour or more

**MATERIALS:**

one set of the following for each group:

- 4 Styrofoam cups
- 8-8" small-diameter sticks (ask the participants to gather them first)
- 1 roll of masking tape
- 1 small box of Legos or Tinker Toys
- 1 paper and pencil
- 1 set of terminology

and the following for each group:

- 2 tables
- 1 sheet or blanket
- 1 chair for each person

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that we all know that words have different meanings depending on what country or even what part of a country they come from. Two countries are separated by a body of water but want to establish trade and cultural relationship. The river is plagued by bad weather and almost constant fog. The two countries have a common language but the dialects differ considerably.
- A good way to start this activity is by dividing your group in half in an inventive way. Rip two full-page pictures out of a magazine and cut them into jigsaw-like pieces so that the total number of pieces equals the total number of people. Throw all the pieces at random into a container and ask each person in the group to pull out one piece. After everybody's taken a piece, ask them to pool their pieces and make the pictures. The group splits down the middle according to who belongs to the picture.
- Place the tables next to one another. Hang the sheet or blanket vertically next over the point where the two tables meet. (You can also prop up a piece of cardboard or poster board. Just as long as the participants can't see around what you use.) Put an equal number of chairs on each side of the divider. One group is side A, the other is side B.
- Place all the props for each group on the separate tables.

## COMMUNICATION: BRIDGE IT

- The terminology change papers should read something like this:
  - Side A** – the word top means bottom; side means under; and a laugh means high.
  - Side B** – the word tape means wide; sticking out your tongue means how many; and crisscross means parallel.
- Explain to both groups that the purpose of this exercise is for each separate group to build a bridge toward the other group, to meet at the divider, so the bridges connect and look as much alike as possible. Do not offer any guidelines except to say that the only props on the table can be used. In order to establish a necessary dialogue between two groups, three five-minute meetings have been arranged (be very strict on the timing) at a common site (use another room). As the members adjourn to the meeting room, remind them that they must not look on the other side of the sheet; offer blindfolds if necessary.
- Only one member from each group may talk at each meeting, and these two individuals sit facing one another, separate from the other people in the room. No comments from the group are allowed during this time.

The timing of the planning and building sessions should look like this:

- Each group is shown their building area and props and are given 7 minutes to talk over ideas for building their portion of the bridge (among themselves, not with the other group) and to begin construction if they choose to.
- First five-minute meeting of the chosen group representatives in a separate room. A new representative should be chosen each time.
- Seven-minute separate group discussion and building time back at the construction site
- Second five-minute representative meeting
- Five-minute discussion and building time
- Third five-minute representative meeting
- 10-minute race to get the work completed

Now comes the unveiling and a period of time set aside for debriefing the process, levels of accomplishment, and comparison of approaches.

**DISCUSSION:**

- What were some of the biggest misunderstandings between the two groups? How did they happen? Was it only because of the different dialects?
- Did you ever feel as though you understood each other? What did it feel like?
- What kinds of connections did you make with each other? Were they only verbal?
- How did your assumptions about the meanings of words influence your ability to communicate with the other group?
- What do you think could be done to improve communication between two groups who have different languages and values?
- Do you find yourself making assumptions like ones you made here about other groups in school? What are some of the assumptions? Why do you think you make them? How can we avoid making incorrect assumptions?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.175-177)



## COMMUNICATION: **CARD VOTE**

**TITLE:** Card Vote

**IMPACT:** for a quick evaluation, or to “take the temperature” of a group. It can also be used to start a longer conversation.

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** any size

**TIME REQUIRED:** 2 to 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 3-5 colors of note cards depending on how many response options you want to give people. Make sure there are enough for every participant to have one card of each color. Flipchart, tape, marker.

**DIRECTIONS:** This activity allows you to get a quick evaluation of an activity. It generally works best if you’ve set goals ahead of time and can structure your evaluation around those, but you could also set up evaluation questions independently.

- Start by distributing note cards to people, one for each response option (ex. Red, yellow, and green note cards for disagree, undecided, agree, or didn’t meet, somewhat met, and met).
- Set up a flipchart with your goals (or questions) written on it, and one note card of each color taped under each question.
- Explain that you’re going to ask people to evaluate how well you’ve done at meeting your goals, and you’re going to do it by having them hold up the note cards.
- Explain that everyone is going to hold up their note card at the same time. (Ask one person to help count each color of note card if the group is large.)
- Read through the goals, and after each ask people to hold up their note cards. Write down the totals below the cards you’ve taped to the flipchart.

**SOURCE:** Ben Handzo

**TITLE:** Conveyor Belt

**IMPACT:** icebreaker, get the room buzzing, gives everyone a chance to meet everyone else and find out a little information about each person

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 minute for everyone in the group plus 5-10 minutes for instructions and confusion

**PREPARATION:** Prepare a list of fun, get-to-know-you questions. Place a piece of tape down the center of the floor.

**MATERIALS:** the questions, a watch, a megaphone if the group is large and rowdy, and tape

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask everyone to stand in two lines, facing each other along the tape. Everyone should place his hands on the shoulders of the person across from him. The facilitator should NOT get in the line. This is a complicated activity to lead, and timing and talking is really challenging.
- If there is:
  - an odd number of people, ask the person without a partner to stand next to the facilitator.
  - an even number of people, ask one pair to step out of the line and stand next to the facilitator. More about these people later.
- Ask the partners to introduce themselves to one another.
- Now explain that you are going to read a series of questions. The person on the side of the line to the left of the facilitator will always answer the question first. When you yell "switch" the person to the right of the line will have a chance to answer.
- After 1 minute, you will yell "rotate". At that point everyone must be SILENT. Once everyone is silent, they should take one step to the right. Since everyone is stepping to the right, the participants will skip a person each time. They will worry about this, but assure them that eventually they will get a chance to talk to everyone.
- Once everyone has rotated, the facilitator should read another question. Partners should introduce themselves and answer the questions.

## COMMUNICATION: CONVEYOR BELT

- Don't forget about the person or people that are standing next to the facilitator since they are the key to making this all work right. If there is:
  - one person out, then that person will sit out the first question and then step into the first space on the right side of the line after the facilitator says rotate for the first time. At that time the person at the end of the left line will step out of the line, stand next to the facilitator, and sit out for one question before stepping back into the beginning of the right line.
  - two people out, ask one of these people to be out permanently. Their role will be to partner with the person who has stepped out of the rotation, but they will never enter the rotation. The other person will sit out the first question and then step into the beginning of the right side of the line as described above.

### HINTS: What to do if:

- someone wants to enter the conveyor belt after it begins.
  - Ask him to be the permanent partner at the end of the line who talks to the person who is waiting out a turn. OR..
  - Ask the two people who are already standing out at the end of the line to step into the line as partners, and ask the new person to wait out the first question and then step into the beginning of the right side of the line.
- someone needs to leave once the conveyor belt has started.
  - Tackle them and don't let them go.
  - Call Ben or Anim and ask them how to deal with it since it is way to complicated for me to figure out.

**SOURCE:** Anim Steel

**TITLE:** Equally Frantic

**IMPACT:** problem solving, listening, communicating, validating feelings, building allies, group identities or any other subject you choose

**RISK:** high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** about 15 to 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** at least one blown-up balloon for each participant, indelible markers, and a stopwatch

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by asking the group what are some of the things we need to keep in mind as we learn to treat individuals fairly and with respect?
- Give everyone in the group a blown-up balloon. Have each person label their balloon with something that to them represents fair and respectful treatment. As they proceed through the activity, remind them that this is what they want to be practicing.
- When you say GO! Everyone hits their balloon up into the air. The goal is for the group to keep all their balloons up in the air by hitting them with their hands or heads (no feet, someone might get kicked). Since it's a group activity, let them know that they don't have to hit their own balloon, but all the balloons have to be hit, not held.
- When you give the GO! signal, start your stopwatch. Now all the group has to do is keep the balloons in the air. There's a catch to this, however. Every 15 seconds or so, add another balloon to the game. The group must keep the new balloon from hitting the floor just like all the others.
- If the balloon does hit the floor it is called a "berserk", and you signal its presence to the group at the top of your lungs with a loud scream of "AAAAHHHHH!!!"
- If that same balloon stays on the floor for five seconds without being picked up, it becomes a "hectic", and you scream again. Every five seconds it stays on the floor, it becomes another hectic. This means you get to scream again.
- After six screams, whether they are for berserks or hectics, the group becomes frantic and the game ends. Stop the watch and let the group know what their current world record is.
- Give the group a minute or two to strategize for the next try and then get them started in an attempt to break their previous world record. This is where the problem-solving part comes in. The group may decide they need to arrange themselves in a certain way or give people certain jobs like receiving all incoming balloons. Lots of good ideas will emerge during this planning session. Some will help, some may not, so give the group a few chances to plan and try new ideas.

## COMMUNICATION: EQUALLY FRANTIC

### DISCUSSION:

- How did you label your balloon?-----Do a 'go-around.' Did you see any of these things happening during this activity? Be specific with your example.
- Did you do a good job of keeping things in balance? Keeping things fair?
- What could you have done better?
- What kinds of things make you "berserk" or "hectic"?
- What can we do to keep our own activities and lives from getting too frantic?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.205-206)

**TITLE: Getting It Right**

**IMPACT:** public speaking practice. In addition this exercise asks you to practice *really* listening and to discuss and disagree without getting to a personal or damaging level. Can be used when introducing the guide line “Intent and Impact”.

**RISK:** low - medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 3 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:**

Small groups: 10 minutes per question

Whole group: 10 minutes to discuss questions

**MATERIALS:** Develop a list of controversial topics for participants to discuss.

Examples are:

What do you think about mandatory community service for young people?

How do you feel about marriages between people under the age of 19?

How do you feel about capital punishment?

How do you feel about the equal rights movement?

How do you feel about the draft?

How do you feel about the age minimum for drinking and the age minimum for driving?

How should society deal with kids who deal drugs?

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide the large group into smaller groups of three.
- The facilitator should choose one of the topics on the list and present it to the groups.
- One person states his/her views on this subject for three minutes.
- The second person listens, then has two minutes to summarize what was said.
- The third person has one minute to evaluate the second person’s listening skills based on how close the summary came to what the third person heard.
- The first person should then comment on whether or not they were accurate.
- Switch off so everyone in the group has a chance to play each role.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Did conflicts come up between people’s public and private views? How could you tell?
- Did stories that people told from their own private experience give them more authority, or do you think they weakened people’s arguments for what they believed?
- Can someone who didn’t actually put the ideas together say what “actually” got said? Or are people’s individual interpretations the only possible thing that can come out of the summary? What does this say about the power of the media?

## COMMUNICATION: MISUNDERSTANDING

**TITLE:** Misunderstanding

**IMPACT:** illustrates the importance of good communication, and can be used as a starting place for a deeper discussion about intent and impact.

**RISK:** low - medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 2 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** a variety of objects that range from familiar to strange – one per pair - that are placed in brown paper bags; paper, pencils and a hard surface to draw on for each pair

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Have the group divide into pairs. Ask the pairs to sit back to back and designate themselves Person A and Person B.
- Give each Person A paper bag with an object in it, and give Person B the paper, pencil and hard surface to draw on.
- Person A must verbally describe the object to Person B who has to draw it. Person B has no idea what the object is and must rely solely on how Person A describes it. Person A must use words that are descriptive as to shape, size and texture but not specific enough to give away the object. For instance, the description of a pencil could say that it was narrow and straight, had 6 sides, was hard, had a point on one end and was rounded on the other – not that it had a lead tip and an eraser on the ends.
- After Person A is finished describing the object, have Person B show Person A his or her drawing based on Person A's description.
- Bring the group back together and let everyone share their images.
- If time permits, ask the pairs to switch roles and draw a different object.

**DISCUSSION:** Most likely the drawings look nothing like they should. This exercise focuses on communication and its importance. It is crucial to understand that what you think you are saying may not be what others perceive.

- Which drawings look most similar to the objects they portray? Why? What do these objects have in common? Are they more or less familiar to the describer/ the artist?
- What could the describer have done to make the description more easy for the artist to visualize? What words or types of descriptors would be most useful?
- How important was previous experience with the object in communicating the information between the partners?
- What does this activity demonstrate about the difference between intent and impact?

## COMMUNICATION: STEPPING STONES WITH A TWIST

**TITLE:** Stepping Stones with a Twist

**IMPACT:** group initiative, communication; cooperation; and compromise through trial-and-error participation in a problem-solving activity; helps people to see what each of them brings to the process and they validate each other

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** about an hour and a half

**MATERIALS:** 2 ropes for identifying the Take-Off (Point A) and Safe Zone (Point B), two-foot-square rug pads (one for each person), masking tape, one suitable safety or “rescue kit” to be carried along by group in the event of a catastrophe

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Tell the group that they are on Planet Diversity – a marvelous world of beauty, peace, and fecundity. The people there want to spread their chromosomal bounty throughout the universe, so they are embarking on a space voyage to another world. To leave the planet they will need special life-support vehicles to carry them safely through space and shield their genetic treasure. Their life support vehicles are the props. Any life support system can support as many people as can stand on it.
- The goal is to get from Point A to Point B without touching the ground in between. Give everyone a rug pad and have them write on a piece of masking tape what skill, resource, or experience they are bringing to help the group achieve its goals. Put the masking tape on the rug pad and ask everyone to share with the group what their rug represents. These rug pads will enable their group to cross to Point B. the group goal is to get everyone across. But before they begin, take away one rug pad – one of the skills will usually be repeated, so take away one of these doubles.
- Anyone touching the ground in space; i.e., between the boundaries, must return to home planet for decontamination and spiritual healing. Rescuing these travelers is recommended, since all people are expected to arrive safely at the new planet.
- For a life-support vehicle/system to function, someone must be touching it at all times when it is in space to maintain the 98.6 degree temperature necessary to maintain the DNA viability. If a life-support is untouched for even an instant, it ceases to function and is immediately removed from the activity. Example: A person tosses the support onto the ground, and then steps onto it. Because it left that person’s grasp when it was tossed, it is lost forever. A correct use would be to place it on the ground and step onto it while maintaining contact.



## COMMUNICATION: STEPPING STONES WITH A TWIST

- Generally, life-support vehicles can only move in a forward direction. If you make this rule, you may eliminate the possibility of a rescue should someone fall into space. Sometimes, only a few props are allowed to go into reverse, or props can only cross the universe at one time. This rule attempts to prohibit the solution of having “shuffle” across space using two props as skates and sending them back for another person to use. It’s a creative solution, but individualistic; it doesn’t require much teamwork or cooperation. It may, however, be a very effective technique for younger groups. Usually groups employ this method because they are stuck and can’t think of anything else that will work. It’s important for the group to pursue creative alternatives whenever possible, but on balance, it’s probably better to limit the number of times props can cross the gap or prohibit them from going in reverse.
- Be extremely watchful for untouched life-supports. People try to hide the fact that they make a mistake. Don’t let an untouched prop remain in use unless the group really needs to succeed in order to morale up. Remind the group of the Full Value Contract and owning up to mistake.
- Setting boundaries: Generally, it makes sense to set the boundaries far enough apart so that the group will need to recycle some of their props in order to cross the gap. Step out of the distance – one step for each person plus 5 more steps. This spacing requires the group to work together to use their props, using some of the materials twice to be successful.

### OPTIONS:

Divide the group in half. Each group starts on a different planet – half at Point A and half at Point B. They must exchange places. Each group gets one fewer prop than people. Do not state it explicitly, but the groups may share their resources (props) if they choose to. The focus of the problem suddenly becomes one of identifying whether two different goals can be pursued simultaneously for a common good, or will the two groups operate independently and/or competitively.

### DISCUSSION:

- What was the first thing the group did to try to solve the problem? Did you plan? What was the plan?
- What roles did people take in planning? In completing the plan?
- What role did you take? Why? Did anyone feel pushed into a role?
- How do we place people into roles?
- How do we feel when we make mistakes? What do we do?
- Our resources help us get through life,. A lot of times we limit ourselves by thinking that material resources are the only ones that count. We forget to look at our own inner resources or the resources that other people have to offer. How do you think you contributed to the challenge? Others?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.350-352)

## COMMUNICATION: THE ALMOST INFINITE CIRCLE

**TITLE:** The Almost Infinite Circle

**IMPACT:** group initiative, building allies, group identities, individual identity, cooperation, communication, problem solving, and fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** pairs

**TIME REQUIRED:** as much time as needed to find a solution

**MATERIALS:** one piece of 10-foot-long rope for each person in the group

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that life can be like a Rubik's Cube. We keep repeating the same patterns over and over again; we never seem to get anywhere. As they play the game they should think about how a little cooperation help us see the patterns and break out
- This activity seems to have no solution, but it will get your group actively working together in pairs trying to find one.
- Separate your group into pairs and give each person a length of rope. Have them tie the ends of the rope onto their wrists, crossing in the middle, so that the two people are intertwined.
- The goal is for the two intertwined people to separate from one another without untying the knots, cutting the rope or slipping the knotted portion over their hands.
- Answer any and all questions and keep emphasizing that there really is a solution to the problem even though it may look like a knife is the only answer.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- Were you able to solve this problem?
- What conversation was going on in our heads when you heard the instructions before this activity?
- What were your thoughts – positive and negative-regarding your partner's abilities?
- How high was your level of frustration, and how did you respond to it?
- How does this kind of problem-solving activity reflect what you do when you are stuck in a real-life situation?
- What can you carry forward from this activity to the next?

### **HINTS:**

Try this out with a friend:

- Form a loop in the center of your partner's rope.
- Pass the loop under either of your wrist loops so that the loop is pointed to your fingers.
- Pull the loop through your other hand, open it wide enough to pass your hand through. Pass the loop over your hand and pull it down and back through the wrist loop. You're free, or you should be!

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.77-79)

**IDENTITY: CIRCLE GAME**

**TITLE:** Circle Game

**IMPACT:** to build community within a group by discovering shared interests and characteristics.

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Generate a list of questions, words and phrases which highlight commonalities among the group. These can include physical characteristics (brown eyes, curly hair, 6 feet tall), people's backgrounds (born in Syracuse, have siblings), dislikes (broccoli, bicycling) and interests (singing, running).

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Have the group stand in a circle.
- Call out a description, and ask those who can respond affirmatively to move to the center. The responders then bow to each other in recognition and return to a different place in the circle.
- The facilitator then calls out another descriptor. This continues until the list is exhausted or you sense the group is ready for a change of pace.
- End with "all those who belong to the human race" to gather the entire group in the circle.

**OPTIONS:** This exercise can be used for participants to become aware of their shared characteristics as well as their uniqueness/ differences.

- Add categories particular to the group or goal of the session. Make the calls as positive as possible.
- Use this as a non-threatening, opening up exercise for issues of appreciating diversity.
- Ask participants to call out descriptions/ characteristics, and have the group respond to those suggestions.

**HINTS:** Circle Game can be started with a whip around the circle, each person sharing some food s/he likes. From this base the facilitator can point out that each of us is a unique person made up of many characteristics, some of which we share with others. More intimate and focused than "Wind Blows." Less intense than "Crossing the Line."

**SOURCE:** AFSC-HIPP

**TITLE:** Common Practice

**IMPACT:** to help group members get to know each other, learn what they share in common and build community

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 to 20 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask everyone to pair off and see what they share in common with their partner, such as favorite foods, social activities, sports, movies, books, cars and work experiences. Give the partners two minutes to draw up their list.
- Have each group of two merge with another group of two and find out what each of these four people has in common. Their original lists can be a starting point, but they are free to expand beyond this. Again give the groups two minutes to find common ground.
- Allow the small groups to keep merging with each other until you finally end up with the entire group discussing things they have in common. The larger the groups get, the more time you may want to allow for discussion. After the entire group has come together and found some common ground, make the point that although everyone in the group is a unique person, everyone shares some common bonds.

**OPTIONS:**

- Give the groups some guidelines, such as find some thing you had in common: when you were in second grade, that your family taught you, that you ate yesterday, about a way or a place that you've traveled.
- Ask each grouping to scatter after each commonality is found so that everyone meets the maximum number of people possible.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How can we strengthen our bonds as a group?
- How can we form new bonds?

**HINTS:** A good activity for recruitment interviews.

**SOURCE:** AFSC-HIPP

**IDENTITY: VEGGIE BASKET**

**TITLE:** Veggie Basket

**IMPACT:** ice breaker, to get people moving, have fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE;** 7 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:**

**MATERIALS:** chairs or things to sit on (one less than the number of people)

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Arrange seats in a circle, and have everyone sit down. The facilitator who has no chair stands in the middle.
- Ask group members to declare the type of vegetable they like best. It is fine for several people to like the same thing.
- Now the facilitator calls out one or more of the vegetables people have named as their favorites. When he has finished calling names, he says "Switch", and everyone who has chosen one of the named vegetables as their favorites must stand up, rush across the circle and sit in a new seat. No one is allowed to sit in the seat that was beside them. Since the leader is now rushing for a seat as well, one person will be left standing. This person comes to the middle and must now call out the names of another group of vegetables.
- At anytime the person in the center may call out "Veggie Basket", and all players must stand up and find a new seat.

**OPTIONS:**

- This game can be played with lots of other categories than vegetables.
- The facilitator can assign people to one of three or four categories, such as carrots, tomatoes and cucumbers.
- The person in the center can call out, "vegetables that go in a salad", or "vegetables that you put on a hamburger", or "vegetables that taste better cooked" just to mix things up and make people focus more.

**HINTS:** If you are playing this indoors, you may want to ask people to walk instead of run to a new seat - but they rarely ever listen.

**SOURCE:** New Games for the Whole Family (p. 78)

**TITLE:** Affirmation Cards

**IMPACT:** brings closure to an event, gives time for reflection and sharing amongst group members, focuses on the positives and what each person has accomplished

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** stiff paper to be taped on each person's back (including the facilitator's). Paper should be heavy enough to write on and not "bleed" through onto participants' shirts and large enough so everyone in the group can have space to write. Colored pencils or pens and tape.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Introduce this activity by asking the group what it means to be affirming.
- Then tape a card on each participant's back, and give everyone something with which to write.
- Instruct the participants to walk around the room and write affirmative statements on each person's card. The statements (1) can be signed or anonymous; (2) should only be positive; and (3) should be specific about the person.
- After everyone has had enough time to give an affirmation to every member of the group, bring everyone back together in a circle.
- Ask everyone to remove the cards and read the statements to themselves.
- Close by having each person share something on his/her card that is especially meaningful and describe why it is so. This could also be done as an appreciation for something someone wrote.

**DISCUSSION:** It may be enough to end with everyone sharing an affirmation s/he received. If there is time and the facilitator wishes to deepen the discussion, here are some possible questions:

- Is what is written on the back of your card consistent with whom you know yourself to be?
- If the statements are different, why do you think this is so?
- What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?

**IDENTITY:** COPY CAT, COPY CAT

**TITLE:** Copy Cat, Copy Cat

**IMPACT:** awareness of how people consciously follow or lead other people in their daily lives

**RISK:** low-key to moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** about 15 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that it's probably been a long time since any of them has played Follow the Leader. This time all of them get a chance to be leaders and followers.
- Ask the group to form a circle. Tell the participants they each have to pick someone in the circle to be their leader but not to tell anyone who their leader is. Explain that the object of the activity is for them to mirror the pose their leader is in. Whenever their leader moves, they have to do the same thing. Ask them to try to watch their leaders without staring directly at them. That way, the leaders won't know who's following them.
- Before you give your cue to start, make sure everyone has selected a leader and have them close their eyes and get into a comfortable position. When they open their eyes on your cue, the fun begins!
- Most of the time, after several patterns of movement for around the circle, everyone ends up in the same pose.

**DISCUSSION:**

Whether or not you want to process this activity is up to you, but here are some questions you might want to try out on your group:

- How easy was it for you to follow your leader without staring at them?
- Could you figure out who was following you?
- Did you ever feel left out or uncertain?
- What did it feel like to try to conform to someone else's movements?
- Do you ever feel the same way at school? Are there consequences if you don't conform?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.204-205)

**TITLE:** Map of my Allies

**IMPACT:** social responsibility, designed to help your group think more about who their allies are, what they want their allies to be like, and ways to become more effective allies

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 8-12

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15-20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** paper and pencils or markers

**PREPARATION:** Before doing this activity you should do other activities that had the main focus of ally-building skills.

**DIRECTIONS:**

Have each person in the group plot a diagram of their allies in relationship to themselves. It may be helpful to use a grid, timeline, or concentric circle format. Have them start by putting themselves on the page, then add their closest allies, continuing on to the people who aren't their allies yet, but who they would eventually like to have as a part of their network. Ask them to think about why they included their closest allies and strategies for bringing potential allies closer to them.

**DISCUSSION:**

- What was hard for you in this activity?
- What was easy for you in this activity?
- What have you learned?
- How can you apply this learning outside of this group?
- When you chose a partner did you pick someone who was safe or risky? Why?
- What was it like to have someone make suggestions to your approach?
- Were you able to hear what your partner suggested?
- Did someone suggest something that was useful?

Have each person share their thoughts if they wish, and talk about how best to support current allies and develop future ones.

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.148-149)



**IDENTITY: WALK IN MY SHOES**

**TITLE:** Walk in My Shoes

**IMPACT:** This activity can help decrease isolation and build a sense of commonality.

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 5 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 - 60 minutes

**MATERIALS:** an index or file card and pencil or pen for each participant

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide the group into small groups of no more than five people each. Provide each person with a file or index card and a pencil or pen
- Instruct the group that each person is to write on a card, "A challenge I'm working on is . . ." and finish the sentence. The cards are not to be signed. Once written, they are collected, shuffled, and redistributed at random within the small group. (If in the redistribution, a person receives back his/her own card, this is to be exchanged with someone else's so that each participant has to deal with someone else's challenge.)
- Everyone then reads their new card to the group as if they were presenting their own challenges. Others then give their own experience with solving similar problems, and offer suggestions.
- Repeat this process until every challenge raised in the small group has been dealt with by the group.

**HINTS:** Give plenty of time to this exercise.

**TITLE:** You Fill Me Up

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Give the group one full and one empty pitcher of water. As each pours water from the full pitcher to the empty one, ask them to state what they add to the group and what they want the other participants to take away with them.

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.119)

**TEAM BUILDING: CREW NAME**

**TITLE:** Crew Name

**IMPACT:** encourages creativity and humor as team members get to know each other; creates crew names and provides a fun vehicle for introducing workers to The Food Project

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** play in crews

**TIME REQUIRED:** can work on this while at lunch, working in the field or in shelters – give them several days

**MATERIALS:** poster board, markers (optional)

**DIRECTIONS:**

- On the first or second day of the program, tell them to come up with a name for their crew and be ready to announce it after community lunch on Friday. Their names should begin with the letter designated to their crew (A-F).
- (Optional) In addition to choosing a name, each crew spends time discovering similarities of the crew members (i.e. things they all have in common). They then portray these similarities in some way on poster board. When the crew presents its name to the group, they also present the poster of similarities.

**HINTS:** Make this fun - the more humorous the presentations are, the better.

## TEAM BUILDING: FOOD PROJECT OLYMPICS

**TITLE:** Food Project Olympics

**IMPACT:** provides crew competition and team building while participating in activities of sustainable agriculture, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited - divide into crews

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes – 1 hour

**MATERIALS:** farm tools, vegetables

**DIRECTIONS:**

Set up a variety of Olympic events in which crews can compete. Events involve areas of farming that they have learned over the summer. List the events earlier so that crews can choose which members will enter which events. Here are some suggestions for events:

- Water Carry - carry buckets of water from one end of the field to the other as a relay
- Wheelbarrow Race - crew move a garden way cart from one end of the field to the other with all crew members making contact with the cart at all times. At least two people should ride in the cart.
- The Vegetable Hunt - provide a list of vegetables. On "Go," crew members run into the fields, harvest the listed vegetables, and bring them back to the starting line. (This could also be done with weeds or insects.)
- Weed a Row - Crews weed a row and leave it weed free in as quick a time as possible with any tools they like
- Bunch of Carrots - The first person to harvest, wash, and bunch 10 carrots is the winner.
- Salad Bowl - crews harvest and prepare a salad. Winner to be determined by an impartial panel of judges!
- Make a Plant - crews harvest the edible portions of vegetables and put them together to make a complete plant, i.e. one root crop, one edible stem, edible leaves, and an edible flower

**OPTIONS:** This could be used on a recreation afternoon near the end of the summer or one event could take place each week with the score being kept all summer long. Any of the group events could be used when a team building activity is needed.

**HINTS:** All participants enter at least one event, and no one should enter many more than other members of the crew.

## TEAM BUILDING: FOX AND SQUIRREL

**TITLE:** Fox and Squirrel

**IMPACT:** energizes a group; requires attention and communication in a low-level physical activity

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** two large, soft balls and one small, soft ball for each group of 10 - 15

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide participants into groups of 10 – 15.
- Ask each group to form a circle and face the center.
- Start passing the two large balls (the foxes) around the circle. They may only be passed between players standing next to one another, never tossed across the circle.
- Once the group can pass the foxes fairly quickly, add in the smaller squirrel ball. The squirrel may be passed between any two players no matter where they are standing in the circle.
- Players must call out “fox” or “squirrel” as they pass the balls.
- The object is to tag the person holding the squirrel ball with one of the fox balls.

### **OPTIONS:**

- Players can count off by twos. All 1’s are foxes, and all 2’s are squirrels. Foxes can only pass to foxes; squirrels can only pass to squirrels.
- If foxes are having trouble catching squirrels, add in another fox ball or allow one of the fox balls to be tossed to any player.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- What partnerships formed among the players?
- Was it more important to tag someone else out or protect yourself?
- Did the group gang up on one player? If so, how did this feel?
- How important was communication between the foxes? Between the squirrels?

**HINTS:** Make sure the balls are not hard enough to hurt anyone.

**SOURCE:** The New Games Book (p. 59)

## TEAM BUILDING: SUSTAINABLE AG CHARADES

**TITLE:** Sustainable Ag Charades

**IMPACT:** introduces participants to concepts of sustainable agriculture in a creative and fun way; develops team spirit, communication, and problem solving skills

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** pieces of paper with sustainable agriculture and farming terms written on them

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide participants into teams of 8 or more. Then ask each team to divide into two groups.
- Give each group a note with a sustainable ag/ farming term written on it.
- The groups then have three minutes to come up with a way to act out the item on the note. They cannot speak when they are acting out the word or event.
- When each group presents its charade, the other half of the group's team tries to guess what they are doing.
- Here are some suggestions for messages:
  - the water cycle
  - decomposition or the compost pile
  - drip irrigation
  - the life of a carrot from seed to table
  - a tomato horn worm eating a tomato leaf
  - the life cycle of a Colorado potato beetle
  - a tractor plowing a field
  - weeds crowding out the strawberry plants
  - erosion
  - beavers damming a stream and flooding a field

**OPTIONS:** Put a time limit on the presentations.

**HINTS:** Make this activity fast and funny.

**DISCUSSION:** Ask presenters to explain their act after it has been recognized. Make sure everyone knows terms, such as the water cycle and decomposition.

**SOURCE:** MITS

## TEAM BUILDING: TENNIS BALL EFFICIENCY #2

**TITLE:** Tennis Ball Efficiency Game #2

**IMPACT:** teamwork, leadership, problem solving, and communication skills; encourages efficiency

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited, divide into teams of eight to ten

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** tennis balls (seven per team), one watch per team

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide players into teams, and give each team one tennis ball.
- Tell them that all players must touch the tennis ball with both hands in the shortest amount of time. Each team is responsible for recording its own time.
- Read the group the three rules of the game. Participants must listen carefully because the rules will only be read twice.
  1. A player may not pass the ball to any team member directly on either side of him/her.
  2. The ball may not touch the ground at any time, or the team must begin again.
  3. Teams must time themselves.
- Give the teams three minutes to work out their best solution. Have each team show how it solved the problem starting with the slowest team first.
- Next, challenge the group to solve the same problem using seven tennis balls. Give each team six more balls and have them repeat the process. The same three rules apply. The second time allow five minutes for solving the problem.

### **OPTIONS:**

- Play this game with peppers or tomatoes!

**HINTS:** Say the rules of the game exactly as they are written here. Do not write them down. There are many ways to interpret these rules. Keep the extra balls hidden until you are ready to play the second round of the game.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- How did the teams solve the problem?
- How many different techniques did the teams try?
- What made the second process more difficult or less difficult?
- Was the solution suggested by an individual or the whole team?
- Did one person assume leadership for the group?
- What did they learn by watching how other teams solved the first challenge?
- Were there different ways to interpret the directions? How does this apply to the way we communicate at TFP? Give examples of good or mis-communication.
- How does this apply to The Food Project fields?

**SOURCE:** Doug MacKenzie

## TEAM BUILDING: THREE-LEGGED SOCCER

**TITLE:** Three-Legged Soccer

**IMPACT:** allows people of all abilities to play a physical game; levels challenges for all players; builds teamwork, encourages communication, and can be great fun

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 - 28

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Something to tie partners' legs together (shoelaces, twine, strips of material, t-shirts) and a ball

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Have everyone find a partner of comparable size. One way to do this is to have people line up by height.
- Tie the left leg of one partner to the right leg of the other partner in each pair.
- Divide the pairs into two teams.
- Play soccer. (If you don't know how to play, ask someone who does.)

**OPTIONS:**

- If no ties are available, have partners link arms or put arms around shoulders.
- What if the partners were not allowed to talk?

**HINTS:** Play this on fairly level ground with no hidden holes

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did partners communicate?
- How did partners decide where to go and what to do?
- What accommodations did partners have to make for one another?
- Did this game require trust?
- Why was one team more or less successful than the other?

**SOURCE:** New Games for the Whole Family (p. 134)



## TEAM BUILDING: 1 2 3 = 1 2

**TITLE:** 123=12

**IMPACT:** builds teamwork as the group attempts to solve a riddle; challenges participants to pay close attention while engaging in a physical activity

**RISK:** medium (this can be frustrating)

**GROUP SIZE:** 8-20

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15-45minutes

**MATERIALS:** A rope 20' long or so to be used as a jump rope; space enough for the group to be able to move from one side of the room or area to the other; ceiling height to be able to have a jump rope turning

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Identify a person to join the facilitator in turning the rope.
- Ask the group to stand on one side of the jump rope. Tell them that their goal is to get the entire group to end up on the other side of the room, but to do so, they must solve the riddle of  $123=12$ . The only way they will be able to get information about whether they are on the right track is by noticing the rope. If it continues to turn, they are on the right track. If the rope stops turning, they are not solving the riddle. When the rope does stop, they must all go back to the beginning and start again.
- Give the group time to ask questions, but most of the answers will be clarifying that the rope will tell them if they are right or not. Eventually they will get the idea and begin trying some solutions.
- Remind them that they will receive feedback in the following manner: Whenever the rope stops turning, they will know that they are solving the riddle incorrectly, and the group should return to the starting place and begin again. If they pay close attention to the moment when the rope stops turning and what the group was doing just prior to the rope stopping, they will gather important information that will assist them in solving the riddle.
- When the rope stops, the group should stop working and analyze what happened. The group should focus on what they are doing to discover what actions are solving the riddle and what actions cause the rope to stop.

The **solution** to the riddle is: One person passes through the rope, then two people together, then three people together, then back to one, two then three (the pattern is repeated) until the rope has turned a total of 12 times.

**OPTIONS:**

- Count the number of turns to yourself to make it more difficult, or out loud to make it noticeable. This can help a group figure out the 12 part of the riddle.
- Another way to make it more difficult is to drop the rope if they skip a beat (meaning that the solution involves someone going through every time the rope turns). It is easier to let it skip beats.
- Allow people to go back to the other side of the room behind you or under the rope, instead of trying to jump through the 'back door' of the jump rope while turning.
- End with everyone on the same side of the room.
- Vary the end number if the group is larger than 12 people...it can be 123=20, 30, 17--you decide!

**DISCUSSION:** This can be a very frustrating activity. Process it accordingly.

- Review what happened during the activity. What role did people play? How many attempts did it take? How did people feel throughout?
- Did people want to give up at any point? How did they rally and persevere?
- How did the group arrive at the solution? How do they feel now that they have solved it?
- What can the group learn from this about working together? About sticking to a task that is challenging? About getting creative in their problem solving? About taking risks?

**SOURCE:** Project Adventure

## TEAM BUILDING: ALASKAN BASEBALL

**TITLE:** Alaskan Baseball

**IMPACT:** energizes a group with physical activity; challenges teams to work well together

**RISK:** low emotional, medium physical

**GROUP SIZE:** 12 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** rubber pig or rubber chicken; outdoor space, lots of area to run

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide the group into two teams. One team (team A) is the “infield.” The other team (team B) is the “outfield.”
- Team A starts by throwing the rubber chicken anywhere in the designated play area. The chicken must be allowed to land on the ground.
- Once the chicken has been thrown, team B runs toward it and forms a single file line behind it. The first person in line picks up the chicken and passes it over his or her head to the person directly behind, who passes it backwards through his or her legs. This over-under pattern continues until the chicken has reached the end of the line and the last person yells “STOP.”
- Meanwhile, team A is scoring runs. A run is scored each time a group member from team A runs around all of team A.
- As soon as team B yells “STOP,” team A stops counting runs. Only full revolutions count as runs.
- Now team B is the infield, and they begin by throwing the chicken anywhere in the area of play. Team A runs to it and gets in a single file line, passing it over and under, while Team B is scoring runs by one team member running around the entire group.
- Teams keep track of their own scores, which are cumulative from inning to inning. Play as many innings as seems to fit with the group!

**HINTS:** This game can be done with very large groups in a very large area of play.

**SOURCE:** Project Adventure

## TEAM BUILDING: ASSEMBLE THE SQUARE

**TITLE:** Assemble the Square

**IMPACT:** builds teamwork and communication; breaks the ice in a new group

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 20 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide participants into four teams.
- Each team lines up shoulder-to-shoulder on one of the sides of an imaginary square. Everyone faces the center.
- The facilitator goes into the center of the square as the spinner and stands, facing one of the teams.
- During this time, each team has to observe and remember several things: first, the order in which their team is lined up (i.e. which people are next to each other) and, second, where the team is lined up in relation to the spinner. A team can be facing the spinner; it can be to the spinner's left or right side; or it can be behind the spinner.
- Without warning the spinner spins around several times and stops (facing a different team) the spinner calls, "Assemble the Square!" The teams must quickly regroup around the spinner in their original positions: to the spinner's front, left, right, or back and in their original order within the team.
- As soon as a team is back in its original order and its original orientation to the spinner, all its members join raised hands and shout, "We're together!"

**DISCUSSION:**

- What techniques did a team use to help them be the fastest?
- Was communication between team members important? If so, how did members communicate?
- How did teams work with team members who struggled?

## TEAM BUILDING: **BEACH BALL AWAY**

**TITLE:** Beach Ball Away

**IMPACT:** builds teamwork and communication; energizes the group through movement

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** unlimited. Divide into groups of 10 or play in a large group with more balls going at once.

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** two or more well inflated beach balls, approximately one for every ten participants

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The goal of this activity is to keep the beach ball off the ground for as long as possible.
- Scatter the group and encourage them to hit the beach ball as many times as possible before it strikes the ground.
- They must follow these rules:
  1. A player cannot hit the ball twice in succession.
  2. Each hit counts for one point.
  3. The group must count aloud with each hit.

**HINTS:** Do not use a heavy ball, such as a volleyball or basketball. Play on level ground.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How many times were you able to hit the ball?
- Did your group improve as the game progressed? Why?
- What kind of communication did your group use?
- Was there a designated leader?
- Did counting out loud help the group to go higher? Why?

**TITLE:** Bodyguard

**IMPACT:** challenges group members to focus and to communicate with each other; energizes and builds teamwork

**RISK:** low - medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** soft, cloth ball, about the size of an actual softball

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to stand in a circle. Ask for two volunteers, and designate one of them the President and the other the Bodyguard. The President and Bodyguard then stand in the middle of the circle. The people on the outside of the circle are all Assassins.
- The Assassins' goal is to hit/kill the President using the ball. The Bodyguard's goal is to protect the President by blocking the ball from hitting the President.
- If the Bodyguard somehow gains control of the ball, the bodyguard can kill Assassins by hitting them with the ball. The Bodyguard can't be killed.
- The Assassins throw the ball to each other (fast and focused is most successful) and try to get the ball to an Assassin who can successfully hit and kill the President. Player cannot move their feet when they have the ball. The Assassins should try to remain in a circle formation during the game.
- Once the President is killed, the Bodyguard becomes President, and the successful Assassin becomes the Bodyguard.
- Be careful that no one gets hurt.

**DISCUSSION:**

- What techniques worked best for Assassins? Bodyguard and President? Was communication important? What role did teamwork play in success?
- What did it feel like to be in the center? What did it feel like for the President to be dependent on one person for protection?
- What happened when (if) Assassins or those in center lost focus?

**HINTS:** This could also be used in activism workshops to demonstrate the power of many people acting with a common goal (Assassins) or how one person can make a difference (Bodyguard).

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

## TEAM BUILDING: **BOOP**

**TITLE:** Boop

**IMPACT:** team building, trust, ice-breaker, listening, communicating, validating feelings, group identities, individual identity, or any time you want to use a simple activity to help build trust among your participants

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** any size

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 to 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** blown-up balloons

**PREPARATION:** This activity should be conducted in a large, open area cleared of chairs and other hazards (if you are outside, it helps if there is no wind)

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling your group that their balloon represents the spirit and feelings of another group member who is feeling down about him- or herself. Their tendency is to sink to the floor because they are so overwhelmed (demonstrating this is easy). Their task is to work together in different ways to lift the spirits of this person, and keep them up.
- Split the large group up into small groups of three. You might end up with a couple of groups of four, depending on the numbers.
- Ask the players in the small groups to join hands and give each group a balloon. Make sure that the groups are spread out enough to allow for some moving around.
- The goal is for each group to keep their balloon in the air – off the ground – during the activity. They must keep their hands joined during the entire game. Give the groups a minute or so to practice. During this time let them use any part of their bodies to keep the balloon up.
- After a short practice time, call out a body part. That's what each group must use to keep the balloon off the ground.
- You'll want to change about every 10 to 15 seconds during this activity. For example, you could start with hands only (one of the easier ones), move to heads only after 15 seconds or so, then maybe elbows only, knees only, noses only, etc.
- We like to move on to combinations after that, say head-hand-elbow. What this means is that a head shot must be followed by a hand shot, then an elbow shot and then back to a head shot, and so on. Have fun making up your own sequences, like nose-heel-shoulder.
- Remind the groups that their hands must be joined at all times and that the balloons should never stop moving, even as you call out new body parts.

**OPTIONS:**

- You can set a playing time before you start (like 3 minutes). If the group is in a competitive mood, you can have the group keep track of how many times their balloons touch the ground and compare at the end. If they're not competitive, just play without counting floor touches.
- A fun way to end the game is to tell the group to do the next command for as long as possible to see who the winners are and then yell, "No body parts at all." How in the world do you do that? Ah...as in all of these activities there is a way. Only problem is they've got to figure it out before their balloon hits the ground, (One way we've seen people do this is to blow them up in the air with their mouths.)

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did you discover a way to work together? Did you make a plan?
- What was it like to try to work together using different parts of your body? Could you sense what the next move should be?
- Did anyone have any physical problems that they had to consider while doing this activity?
- What role, if any, did someone's disability have in keeping the balloons off the floor?
- What issues did you have to consider in your plan; i.e., was everyone comfortable holding hands?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.311-312)



## TEAM BUILDING: **BRIDGE IT**

**TITLE:** Bridge It

**IMPACT:** challenges even very high functioning groups, demanding lots of communication and problem solving; develops leadership

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30-45 minutes

**MATERIALS:** canvas tarp, construction materials, such as pipes and connectors or newspapers, tape and straws, or lots of amusing recycled junk that doesn't necessarily have a name. Divide this equally so both groups will have identical supplies and put the supplies in paper bags.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide the participants into two groups of "construction workers."
- Give each group an identical bag of construction materials.
- Using these materials each group must build half a bridge that begins on their side of the space and meets in the middle of the space with the other half of the bridge built by the other. Each half of the bridge must mirror the other exactly.
- Place a tarp between the groups so they can't see each other's work. Groups must verbally communicate building techniques through the tarp so that they match and meet in the middle. They cannot touch the tarp.
- When groups think they have accomplished the task, remove the tarp and see how close they are.

### **OPTIONS:**

- With a very low functioning group, have them set up on opposite sides of a marked area in sight of each other.
- To further challenge them, make only one person on each side a "communicator" or limit communication to notes written on paper.
- If the facilitator can see that the groups are not going to be successful, the facilitator can allow one person from each team to have a 15 second look at what the other team is doing.
- To make this even more challenging provide some additional construction materials to only one of the teams.

**DISCUSSION:** This activity requires imagination, careful planning and good communication.

- What was the most challenging thing about this activity?
- How many people were responsible for communicating between the teams? Would it have worked better if only one or more than one had been doing the communication?
- How clear did the communicator have to be? Where did miscommunication happen? How could this have been avoided? What were creative ways that the groups used to communicate things to one another? (i.e. height/width of the bridge, where on the tarp it would meet etc.)
- How important was preplanning to the success of the activity? Did you need to experiment with bridge design before deciding on a technique?
- Did one person take a leadership role? What other roles were important?

**HINTS:** It may benefit the group to have a mandatory planning time.

**SOURCE:** Group Challenge Training

## TEAM BUILDING: **BUCKET AND ROPE**

**TITLE:** Bucket and Rope

**IMPACT:** team building, group cooperation, communication

**RISK:** medium – may be physically challenging for some people

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15-60 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Bucket filled half way with water; long rope that is strong enough to support 4000 pounds, two additional ropes 10-20 feet long depending on the size of the group

**PREPARATION:** Place the two smaller ropes parallel to each other on the ground about ten feet apart. These mark the start and finish lines. Tie the large rope to a tree branch in between the other two ropes so that a person can swing across from behind one rope line to beyond the second one without touching the ground.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Tell the group they are lost in the wilderness and must stick together if they want to survive. They have only one bucket of water for drinking and must not spill it. They have come to a river filled with crocodiles and must get the entire group and the bucket of water across safely.
- The group begins by standing together behind the starting line. Hand one person the bucket of water.
- Explain to them that first they need to get the hanging rope from between the two logs without anyone touching the area on the ground that is between the ropes on the ground (the start and finish line).
- After getting the hanging rope, each person in the group needs to swing from the start line to the finish line without falling or touching the ground and get the bucket across without the water spilling.
- If any one touches the area between the lines, everyone must go back to the starting line and begin again.
- If water spills from the bucket, the group must start over as well.
- Tell the group that you will give them five minutes to discuss strategies and from then on they must not talk to each other.

**OPTIONS:** For low functioning groups, it may be important to let them talk during the activity.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Have participants discuss the following:

How did participants solve the problem?

What roles did people play in this activity?

What did participants learn about teamwork?

How would you approach the activity differently if you were asked to solve it again?

## TEAM BUILDING: CHAOTIC GROUP JUGGLE

**TITLE:** Chaotic Group Juggle

**IMPACT:** challenges a group to focus, to remember, and to multi-task; provides an opportunity for a group to reflect on how it handles challenges

**RISK:** low - medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10-15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** soft, tossable objects of differing shapes and figures; space large enough for the group to form a circle and toss objects at each other

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Starting with one ball, have the group develop a throwing pattern using these guidelines:
  - People cannot throw to someone on their immediate left or right.
  - In developing the pattern, each person can only throw and catch one time.
  - Each person has to remember from whom she or he received the tossed object and to whom he or she threw so that the pattern can be recreated.
  - The group practices the pattern a number of times.
  
- Begin with one ball, using the pattern created. Add a second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, etc. as long as the group is able to keep the pattern going without too many drops. If there are lots of drops, take away a ball and get 'good' at the number the group has.
- Have the group identify a challenge that they are experiencing in the program. (Could be bad weather, not listening, lack of cooperation, etc.) Explain that this next object symbolizes this identified challenge, and is to be handed clockwise from person to person, while they are still continuing the pattern of juggling the other balls. This object should look different from the others. Keep this going for a while as they get used to this new twist.
- Ask the group to identify another challenge, or maybe a negative influence, that is happening. Pull out a final object that again looks different. This object gets passed in the opposite order as the original pattern. This happens at the same time as the original objects are being passed, and the challenge is going around clockwise.

**DISCUSSION:**

Use this activity to have a discussion about what the group's challenges are, and how they handle them.

- How do they handle challenges?
- Do they give special attention to the negative factors and not enough to the positive?
- Do they 'drop balls' when too much is going on?

**SOURCE:** Project Adventure

## TEAM BUILDING: **CIRCLE UP**

**TITLE:** Circle Up

**IMPACT:** teambuilding, problem solving, fun, energizing

**RISK:** low, involves some physical contact

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 6-10 lengths of rope of varying sizes

**PREPARATION:** tie the ropes into circles, and spread them out on the floor or playing area.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the participants to get inside a circle so that no one's feet are touching the ground outside of the circle.
- Once everyone has accomplished that task, the facilitator should applaud them and then remove 2-3 of the circles.
- Those participants who have lost their circle, now must join other circles. Again no feet can touch the ground outside of the circles.
- The facilitator continues to remove circles until only one is left. At this point everyone must try to fit their feet in the remaining circle. The more creative the solution, the better.

**DISCUSSION:**

- This activity can be used as a starter for a discussion on inclusion if a group is having difficulties working together.
- It can be used as a way to talk about diversity and the challenges and benefits of multicultural communities.

**HINTS:** Make sure this is done on a safe space where there are no obstacles to hit if people fall over.

**TITLE:** Cluck and Clap

**IMPACT:** provides refreshment and relief from intellectual work by people kinesthetically working together as a team

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 5 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5-10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** flipchart, markers

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Create a flipchart with lines of "Xs" and "Os." Mix the order of the X's and O's up in each line so that the pattern is varied. Make sure these symbols can be seen from the back of the room.
- Tell participants that "X" = "cluck" and "O" = "clap."
- Ask them to stand. Lead them through the pattern you have created on the flip chart by pointing at each "X" or "O." They cluck or clap each time its matching symbol is pointed to.
- When the group has gone through the pattern once, speed it up and go through it again.
- The third time, tell them they can now go through the pattern themselves. They must really 'tune in' to each other and work together. There will no longer be anyone pointing to each symbol. Then say, "GO!"
- Challenge them to do this again on their own, even faster this time.
- Encourage everyone to applaud themselves for a great effort.

**OPTIONS:**

- Divide the group in two, and ask one half to do all the clucks and the other half to do all the claps.
- Ask them to go through the pattern in reverse.
- Ask for a volunteer or two to demonstrate how fast it can be done.
- Add a third symbol (Z) that represents a snap or a whistle.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did they feel as a result of the exercise?
- Was it easier to be divided into groups or to do the activity as one group?

**SOURCE:** American Community Gardening Association - Growing Communities Curriculum

## TEAM BUILDING: DON'T TOUCH ME

**TITLE:** Don't Touch Me

**IMPACT:** group initiative, building allies, group identity, racial identity, gender, and sexual orientation

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 8-30 people

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** either a hula hoop or a 6-8 foot length of rope; a stopwatch

**PREPARATION:** Make sure to conduct this activity in a large playing area like a field or gym.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group what do the words 'Don't touch me' mean to them physically and emotionally?
- Place the hula hoop or rope (shaped into a circle) in the center playing field or gym.
- Divide the group into an even number of smaller teams. You decide how you'd like to do it. For example, if you have twenty people, you could have two groups of ten. Ten groups of two, or four groups of five. Take your pick; any all combinations work for this activity, as long as there is an even of teams. Try to make each team have the same number of players, but if you have an odd number of people in the group, just make the teams as even as possible.
- Have each team go to a spot about 20 feet from the circle. Try to spread the teams out evenly around the circle. Each team must be lined up directly across from another team.
- This activity is timed. On your command "Go", the members of each team try to get to the same place as the team directly across from them. They will do this by passing through the circle in the middle. Each member must put up least one foot into the hula hoop or rope circle as they pass through the middle on the way to the other side. The time for the entire group will be the time it takes for the last person to get to his or her new spot.

#### **Rules:**

- Not only must each player touch a foot inside the circle, but for an entire time while they are passing through the circle, none of the participants can touch. Each touch results in five-second time penalty. A ten-second time penalty will result if anyone kicks the circle (whether the hula hoop or rope), causing it to move or change shape.
- Give the group some planning time before their first attempt. As in many activities, you can have a set of planning time, like three minutes, or allow them to plan however fast or slow they'd like. Both bring up interesting discussions about how the planning time was used.

## TEAM BUILDING: DON'T TOUCH ME

- When planning is over, yell, "Go" to begin the activity. Players cannot move in front of their designated spot until you've said "Go". You don't need to say this (because you want them to come up with the idea), but if someone should ask, once you have said, "Go", any group member can move toward the center. Players do not have to wait behind their line until it is their turn to pass through the center.
- After the last player has gotten to his or her new spot, stop your watch. This is the group's base time. Now check for penalties – touches of people or the circle. Ask the group if there were any touches. Let them judge for themselves. Most groups will expect you to be the tough judge, but asking them to tell you will bring up issues of honesty and integrity – "Should I speak up when I know I touched Sue if I know this is going to add five seconds to our time? The group might get mad at me. Maybe no one else saw it. Sue won't bring it up, will she?" Add up the time penalties, add them to the time it took them to complete the problem and you have the group's total time (and the current World Record!).
- Give the group some more planning time before they have another go.
- Depending on the group's mood, two, three, or four attempts should leave them smiling and feeling a sense of accomplishment.

### DISCUSSION:

- What did the group do that made you feel safe or unsafe, excluded or included?
- Where else in your life have you had those experiences?
- How well did your group cooperate during their planning session?
- How well did your plan work? If it didn't work, why do you think it didn't?
- If you didn't share the fact that you were touched or you touched someone to avoid getting a penalty, why not?
- Did you make any touches or see someone touching? Did you speak up about it?
- How does integrity or lack of it (in this case truth telling) show up in this group and in your life?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.109-111)



## TEAM BUILDING: EVACUATION

**TITLE:** Evacuation

**IMPACT:** builds teamwork; requires problem solving with participation by all team members

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 – 20. The activity can be done with a larger group, but the team interactions needed to solve the problem will be challenging. It is better to divide large groups into smaller teams of 8-12.

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** 1 stretchy exercise band for each group

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Divide large groups into teams of 10 to 20 if necessary. Tell participants that their organization (company or The Food Project) is concerned with their safety and that the organization wants to make sure that everyone could get out of their building or vehicle quickly in the event of an emergency. Therefore they are going to practice an evacuation procedure.
- Present each group with a stretchy band, and explain that this is their exit out of the building/ vehicle. The object of the exercise is to get everyone out of this exit as quickly and as safely as possible. To do that they must follow a few rules:
  1. Participants may touch the band with their hands only – no other body parts may touch.
  2. **Once participants have touched the band with their hands and let go, they cannot touch it again.**
  3. Everyone in the group must get out of the exit in less than 20 seconds.
  4. The group times itself.
  5. The group(s) has three (or more) minutes to solve the problem.
- As groups struggle to solve the problem, try urging them on by reminding them that they have to evacuate quickly because their building/ vehicle is burning.

**OPTIONS:** A number of variations can be used to make the activity more or less competitive or team building.

- Make it a challenge between teams to see which one can do it the fastest.
- Once a group has demonstrated the evacuation procedure, challenge them to come up with a faster way. It is possible to do this in 10 seconds or less.
- Give some participants handicaps such as a being blindfolded, can't talk, can't use their hands, have to hop. This is good for players who have done this activity before.
- Give handicaps to participants who touch the band.

## TEAM BUILDING: EVACUATION

**DISCUSSION:** Have all groups demonstrate their solutions, starting with the slowest group.

- How did the group arrive at the solution?
- Did they try several methods before choosing one?
- Did someone act as leader for the group or were many involved in the process? Describe?
- What was the biggest challenge for the group?
- What problems, if any, did they have understanding the directions?
- How did the players who were handicapped feel? How did their teams support them to get out of the building?

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

## TEAM BUILDING: FLIP THE DUCK

**TITLE:** Flip the Duck

**IMPACT:** challenges all group members to use cooperation, strategy, and creativity, energizer

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 5-15

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10- 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** rubber duck (or any soft, unbreakable object that's not a ball) and a bed sheet, blanket, or tarp

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask all participants to get in a circle.
- Hand them the sheet, and ask everyone to hold onto the edge with two hands and stretch it out flat in the air, not on the ground.
- Place the duck in the center of the sheet.
- The mission is to get the duck to the other side of the sheet without letting it fall on the ground.

**OPTIONS:** Try this with a soft ball that rolls to make it more challenging.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How many different ideas did the group try before solving the challenge?
- Why were some less successful than others?
- Was everyone able to hold onto the sheet when the duck successfully switched to the other side? Did everyone participate on all the attempts?
- What type of solution worked the best – slow and careful or fast and risky? Use these to draw parallels to group dynamics, how to work on a farm, how to approach new situations, etc.

**SOURCE:** Raleigh Werner

**TITLE:** Key Punch

**IMPACT:** group initiative, cooperative problem-solving skills; helps your group develop cooperative problem-solving skills on just any topic

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 to 15 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 45 minutes to an hour

**MATERIALS:** thirty gym markers numbered from one to thirty with permanent marker; enough rope to make a 15'x30' rectangle on the gym floor or field; if you do not have or can't afford 30 gym spots, use circular flexible plastic container caps, like those covering a tennis ball can. (remember to number the caps)

**PREPARATION:** This activity should be conducted in a gym or playing field with at least 15' by 30' of open space.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that a militant group of nihilistic hackers have injected a very virulent virus into the government's Socially Serious Program. You represent the government's best chance to create a computer de-bugging program that will expel the virus and save billions of dollars.
- To achieve their goal, this highly trained group of viral professionals must physically touch all 30 gym spots in numbered sequence as quickly as possible.
- All limbered up? Let's banish that virus!
- Don't put off this description! *Key Punch* is easy to present and difficult to do than it seems.
- Make a 15' by 30' rectangle with the rope and place the numbered spot markers (starting with #1), orienting them as illustrated.
- The plan is to have all even numbers on one side of the rectangle and all odd numbers on the other side. Also zigzag the numbers up and down the rectangle. As you place the numbers, try to arrange them so that your odd/even and zigzag planning is not obvious. (Note that numbers 1 and 30 are located at the end of the rectangle farthest away from the starting line.)
- When placing the spots, put them more than one step inside the boundary, not just reach over the edge.
- Thirty feet from the end of the gym-spotted rectangle, put down a length of tape or rope to designate a starting line and to mark the planning area.

## TEAM BUILDING: KEY PUNCH

### *Rules and Considerations:*

- The entire group must begin and finish behind the start line. The stopwatch starts when the first person steps over the line and starts when the last person crosses back over the line.
- Only one person can be inside the boundary rope. If two people are inside the rope simultaneously, a glitch occurs and a penalty time is added to the score.
- If any number is touched out of sequence (for example, 3 then 5), this infraction causes the computer to crash and a penalty time is added to the score.
- Any part of the body may be used to touch each numbered gym spot in sequence.
- The team cannot walk back to the computer area between attempts in order to study the number setup. All planning must occur behind the line where the group starts each round. Any time the group or a player crosses this line, it is considered an attempt.
- Tell the group that they have 30 minutes or five attempts, whichever comes first. If they use five attempts in 18 minutes they're done; if they try only three times in 30 minutes, they're done.
- **Penalties:** Something suitably devastating is appropriate so that the group will want to avoid errors. Ten seconds per infraction seems to have a reasonable effect; besides, it's easy to add the penalty seconds and then adjust the time.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- How well did you work together as a group?
- What were some of your challenges?
- What issues emerged for the group?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.249-251)

**TITLE:** Lily Pads

**IMPACT:** requires decision making, planning, communication, and helping others as they share a physical activity

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30-60 minutes

**MATERIALS:** carpet squares or pieces of cardboard to be used as lily pads, lines to mark the banks of the river, blindfolds (optional), character cards (optional). Do not make the river so wide that the task becomes impossible given the number of players and lily pads. Players must be able to step from one pad to another, although they can pass them forward once everyone is in the river if there are extra lily pads

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The goal of the activity is for all team members to cross a marked area designated as the river using only the lily pads. Participants must stay in contact with the lily pads at all times, or the lily pads will be swept away down the river (i.e. the facilitator will remove them). If a participant steps off the lily pad into the river at anytime after leaving the river bank s/he will have to pay the consequences; and either the individual or the entire team will have to return to the river bank (the facilitator's choice). A successful team will get everyone across the river in as short a time as possible.
- Here are the rules:
  1. All participants must cross from one side of the river to the other.
  2. Once participants leave the riverbank, they are only allowed to step on the lily pads. Anyone who touches the river in any way will have to pay the consequences.
  3. Lily pads must remain in contact with a team member at all times, or they will be swept down the river and taken away.
  4. No running, jumping, or diving.
- The facilitator should time the group.

## TEAM BUILDING: LILY PADS

**OPTIONS:** This is a great activity to manipulate.

- Consequences for those who touch the river can vary from the entire team having to return to only those members who step off the lily pads having to return.
- Divide the group into two teams, and ask the two groups to stand on opposite sides of the river and switch places. This adds competition to the challenge.
- Prior to the activity have all members of the group identify a list of characteristics or qualities that are important for success (leadership, a team that is working well together, etc.). Write these words or phrases on pieces of tape and place a piece of tape on the bottom of each lily pad. Use these words, especially those that washed away, during the processing.
- Give handicaps to a few group members, such as a blindfold or tell them that they can't talk.
- Give each participant a card with a character trait on it such as bossy, shy, mistrustful, mute, encouraging etc. Ask them to keep the cards to themselves and to role play these traits as they do the activity.
- Tape a card to each participant's back, without showing them the card, that lets the other participants know how they should be treated. These can include "ignore what I say", "flirt with me", "follow all my suggestions", "ask me to help you", or "I need constant encouragement", "you can't understand my accent".
- Once you have tried the activity once and debriefed, challenge the group to take what they have learned and get across the river more quickly.

**DISCUSSION:** There are numerous ways to process this, depending on which option you choose and if and how the group succeeds.

- What components were necessary for success? Communication, careful planning, teamwork, one person acting as a coordinator, ideas from many people, practice before entering the river, thinking about those who needed more help to succeed. Explain. Give examples.
- Which of these was most difficult for the group? Why?
- Which of these contributed most to the success of the group? Why?
- How could the group have completed the task more efficiently?
- How is this activity similar to situations people have faced at TFP or elsewhere?
- What learning can you take away from this?
- For groups that used role plays: how did the personalities that players assumed affect the performance of the group? Which personalities worked well in the group? Which didn't? Which would work better in situations where a person had to solve a problem alone? How did it feel to be treated a certain way? Did people feel safe, misunderstood, frustrated? What does this say about problem solving in diverse communities?

**SOURCE:** Group Challenge Training

**TITLE:** Links In My Chain

**IMPACT:** requires focus, concentration, problem solving, teamwork and consensus building

**RISK:** low - medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 5 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** five lengths of string or rope, each 6 – 8 feet long

**PREPARATION:** Tie each length of rope in a circle. One of the five lengths should be tied so that it passes through all the other circles of rope, similar to the ring on a key chain. The other circles should all be independent of one another. Mix the ropes up in a pile on the floor.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to assemble around the pile of ropes.
- Tell them that their task is to determine which is the rope that is linked to all the others.
- They are not allowed to touch the ropes at any time.
- They must decide by reaching consensus – not a majority vote. (Make sure everyone knows what consensus means.)
- When a consensus is reached, one person can pick up the rope that they think is the link to see if they are correct.

**OPTIONS:**

- To make this easier, use different colored ropes.
- To make this more challenging, add more ropes.
- After completing it successfully one time. Mix the ropes up again and ask the group to repeat the activity without talking.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did the group solve this problem?
- Was their agreement right from the beginning, or were there several opinions?
- How was consensus reached? Was there one person or many who argued for a particular rope?
- How did it feel to be part of a community where everyone had to agree instead of letting the majority rule? What were the positives, and what were the challenges?
- Give examples of majority rule vs. consensus from other experiences.

**SOURCE:** Cammy Watts



## TEAM BUILDING: MASS PASS

**TITLE:** Mass Pass

**IMPACT:** challenges a group to function as a team, to set and execute a strategy, all in the context of a simple game of “pass”

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** a rope 40' or longer as the square boundary; 2 hula hoops; 20 soft tossable objects; a stop watch; a large open space

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Make a square out of the boundary rope. Set up a hula hoop at one corner with all of the objects inside of it. The hoop should be outside the boundary rope.
- Set the other hula hoop diagonally across from the first one. This hoop is also outside of the boundary, and it is empty.
- Ask the group to stand around the square. Tell them that their task is to accumulate points by passing as many objects as they can from the beginning hoop (hoop A) to the ending hoop (hoop B). Points will be counted in 90 second rounds.(60 seconds for a smaller group). They will have 3 rounds to complete the activity.
- Guidelines:
  - All objects must start inside hoop A at the beginning of each round. Objects must be passed individually.
  - All sides of the square must be occupied by at least one group member.
  - Once a person has chosen a position s/he may not switch that position in the middle of the round.
  - Every person in the group must touch each object after it leaves hoop A and before it ends up in hoop B.
  - Objects may not be passed to anyone to the immediate right or left of the passer.
  - Points are earned for each object that is placed successfully inside hoop B.
  - Whenever an object is being passed, it must always cross over the inside of the boundary area.
  - Whenever an object is dropped outside the boundary marker, it must be returned to hoop A to begin again.
  - If an object is dropped inside the boundary, it may not be retrieved, and it is lost for that round.
  - No member of the group may step inside the boundary during a round. If so, the round ends there and points are counted at that time.
  - Give different point values for different types of objects. Example, 10 points for every fleece ball, 20 points per animal.

## TEAM BUILDING: MASS PASS

- Repeat or clarify the rules again for the group. Allow some planning time before starting the first round. When ready, begin the first round.
- Count the score at the end of the round, replace the objects in hoop A, and give more planning time. Challenge the group to beat its first score.
- Begin round two and repeat above. Challenge them to get an even higher score.
- If round three is not a higher score, you can give them a fourth round. Ask them what is working, what's not working, and how they can improve their performance.

**DISCUSSION:** Look for themes that emerge from this activity, and highlight one or two of them in a discussion afterwards.

- How did they do as a group?
- How did they respond to the challenge?
- How did they respond to multiple rules?
- What are some things about how they worked on this task that are similar to how the group works together in the program?
- How were things different?
- Do they have anything they want to take away from this activity that can inform how they want to function as a team?

**HINTS:** Because there are so many rules in this activity, it may be helpful to have printed up guidelines, or have them written on a board for visual learners. It's a lot to take in audibly.

If a group gets through all objects and still has time left in the round, ask them how they might be able to score even more points. If they think of it, they can recycle objects already in hoop B back to hoop A for more points.

**SOURCE:** Project Adventure

## TEAM BUILDING: NITRO CROSSING

**TITLE:** Nitro Crossing

**IMPACT:** group initiative; good activity to explore the assumptions about people's physical abilities; encourages discussion on any topic, according to how the activity is processed

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 to 45 minutes

**MATERIALS:** tin can, water, swing rope, two "trip wires" – this is usually an element on a low ropes course

**PREPARATION:** This activity should be conducted in a space with a tree or sturdy pole that you can hang a swing rope from.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that this bucket is full of nitro and in danger of exploding immediately and killing all the bystanders. It's their job to find a way to transport the bucket safely – without letting on drop spill – and get all people over to the safety zone on the other side.
- The object of this activity is to transport a group and a container – try a tin can – 3/4 full of "nitro" (water) across an open area using a swing rope.

### **Rules:**

- Participants must swing over trip wires at the beginning and end of an open area without knocking either one off its support. If a trip wire is knocked off, the entire group must go back and start again. The trip wires are set up about 15-20 feet apart with the rope swing hanging down between them. The group's first challenge becomes retrieving the rope swing.
- Don't tie any knots in the swing rope except for a large knot near the bottom. This knot can be held tightly between the legs to help members of the group support their weight.
- The nitro must be transported in such a way that NO water is spilled. If any spillage takes place (one drop), the entire group must start over. The container must be topped off at the 3/4-full mark after each spill.
- The swing rope must be obtained initially without stepping in the open area between the two trip wires.
- The participants are allowed to use only themselves and their clothing to gain the swing rope.
- Participants are not allowed to touch the ground while swinging between trip wires and must attempt the crossing again if they do so.

## TEAM BUILDING: NITRO CROSSING

### OPTIONS:

- You can do the nitro problem indoors by using a gymnasium climbing rope as the swing rope. Setup the “trip wires” using empty tennis balls cans as supports and a section of bamboo as the top cross piece. Fill the #10 nitro can with finely cut confetti to avoid a wet gym floor.

### DISCUSSION:

- What kinds of stereotypes did you have about male and female abilities to complete this activity?
- Did any of these assumptions get shot down?
- Who did you look to, to be the leaders in this initiative and why do you think they were chosen?
- What encourages you to do things you didn't think you could do?
- What happens when you mess things up in your life? Who gives you support? How do you think others perceive you? What kind of feedback do you get from your family and friends?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.281-283)

## TEAM BUILDING: OBJECT RETRIEVAL

**TITLE:** Object Retrieval

**IMPACT:** group identity, racial identity, gender orientation, sexual orientation, or any time you want the group to challenge their cooperative skills

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 45 minutes to an hour

**MATERIALS:** a bicycle inner tube cut in half (slice off the valve area), four sections of rope that is 20 feet long, one section of 40-foot-long rope, #10 tin can or bucket

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Tell the group that inside the bucket is a special serum that, once injected into a few people, will bring world peace to all of us via its special ability to spread through your sneezing. The only problem is, there's just enough to create world peace, but the scientists don't have the formula to make another batch. It's their job to retrieve the serum without spilling a drop so that the world will know peace. There's another catch to this: the only tools they have to achieve your goals are the ones you are giving them now.
- Outline a 30-foot-diameter circular area with the long rope. Place the tin can, one third filled with water, in the middle of the circle.
- Give the group the rest of the materials and brief them on their mission along with the following stipulations:
  - Any and as many knots can be desired and tied in the ropes or rubber sections.
  - The inner tubes cannot be cut.
  - No one may enter or make contact within the area outlined by the circumference rope. If ground contact is made, they have to begin again from the start.
  - If any of the water is spilled, even a drop, they go back to the beginning again.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- How did the group pick a solution?
- Did anyone emerge as leader?
- Did you play the role of ally to anyone? How?
- What was your initial reaction to the problem?
- What did each of you do to attain peace? (*Go around*)
- What were things you could have done?
- What are the things in life that we can do to create peace?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.142-143)

**TITLE:** Pencil Drop

**IMPACT:** bonding, problem solving, physical challenge, fun

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 2 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 – 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** string, pencil, bottle

**PREPARATION:** tie two pieces of string around the eraser end of a pencil

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask everyone to find a partner.
- Choose one of the pairs, and ask the players to stand back to back.
- Tie the two pieces of string around their waists so that the pencil is hanging down between them.
- Place the bottle on the floor between them.
- Challenge them to lower the pencil into the bottle without using their hands.

**OPTIONS:**

- This can be a race against time or a race between several pairs.
- Blindfold the pair and have the rest of the group direct them.

**DISCUSSION:**

- What was the most challenging thing about this activity?
- What was the easiest thing?
- How did you and your partner work well/poorly together?
- What changes could you have made that would have enabled you to work together to accomplish the task more quickly?

**SOURCE:** Some book we lost

## TEAM BUILDING: PICK AND CHOOSE

**TITLE:** Pick and Choose

**IMPACT:** group initiative, problem solving, cooperation, listening, and creative problem solving

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** about 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** lots of used tennis balls (used balls of scrap paper)

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that there are a few areas in life where people can't find a way to contribute to a group goal or idea. Where do they fit in? How do they think they can make the biggest contribution?
- The object of this activity is for your group to try to throw as many tennis balls (or balls of scrap paper) as possible into the wastebaskets during a two-minute time period.
- Place the wastebaskets at varying distance from your pre-designated baseline. Each wastebasket has a different point value, with the closest scoring 1 point, the second 3 points, the third 5 points, and the furthest 9 points. The group competes against itself while trying to score the highest possible point total, wither by shuffling thrower and retrieving positions or making a decision about which wastebasket to target.
- Give some group time to decide who is going to throw and who is going to retrieve. The throwers must remain behind the baseline. The retrievers can stand anywhere they want to, but they are not allowed to physically assist into the wastebaskets. Their job is simply to retrieve the missed shots and get the balls back to the throwers as quickly as possible. Once the clock starts, throwers and retrievers cannot exchange positions.
- Play this game more than once so that you give the group a chance to change tactics and positions.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- How did you decide who would throw and who would receive?
- Did you consider abilities when you were searching for strategies? Were some people more comfortable in certain roles?
- How were different abilities assets to the group's goals?
- Was anyone anxious about your own or other people's safety?
- Was anyone embarrassed?
- What do you think you contributed to the group in this activity?
- Were you comfortable with the way the group assigned roles?
- Did the group make any assumptions when assigning roles? What were they were these assumptions harmful?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.316-317)

**TITLE:** Pipeline

**IMPACT:** teambuilding, problem solving, energizing, leadership, fun

**RISK:** low-medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 4 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 – 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** newspapers, a cup/bucket, a small ball such as a marble or golf ball, masking tape or string

**PREPARATION:** mark off two ends of a flat, obstacle-free playing area with the tape or string. Put the cup at one end and the newspapers at the other.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The object of this activity is to get the ball from one end of the playing area to the other and into the cup.
- The ball must move by its own momentum; it may not be carried by any of the participants.
- The participants cannot touch the ball once it has passed over the starting line.
- Everyone in the group must participate in the solution.
- If the ball stops moving or is touched by a person, the ball has to be returned to the starting line.

**OPTIONS:**

- If there are 12 or more people, this can be done as a race between two teams.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How many tries did it take to accomplish the goal? What did the group try and reject?
- What was the key to success? (probably synchronizing their actions, being efficient or planning ahead)
- How could this be applied to working in the fields, packing the CSA boxes, making salsa, or running an event?

**HINTS:** Calculate the distance of feet needed between the start and finish lines by multiplying the number of participants by 4 or 6 feet. The farther apart the distance, the more difficult the challenge.



## TEAM BUILDING: SECRET AGENT / GUARDIAN ANGEL

**TITLE:** Secret Agent/Guardian Angel

**IMPACT:** fun, energizes a group, can be used to discuss dynamics in a group that is not reaching goals or is stagnating

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** space large enough for people to move around

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to form a circle. Tell them that each person should look around the group and select one person to be his or her 'secret agent' without acknowledging who that person is. They are not to show or tell anyone, including the secret agent, who they picked.
- Secondly, ask each person to select a guardian angel, using the same guidelines as above.
- Tell the group that sadly, their secret agent has turned against them, and they will need help from their guardian angel. In order to do that they must always keep their guardian angel between them and their secret agent.
- Say "Go." Continue play for a while, and watch as the configuration moves and changes!

**DISCUSSION:** You may not need to process this game if you are only playing it as an energizer. However, it can be used as a metaphor for a group that is having trouble accomplishing its goals because it is too chaotic or unable to make a decision. Ask the group what it felt like to be in the game.

- Did it feel frustrating to be always circling with no forward movement? Why did that happen?
- What was the dynamic that developed in the game?
- How is this similar to the way the group is functioning?
- How can the group work to break the cycle and move forward?

**HINTS:** You may begin the game by having people select two people randomly, not naming them as secret agent and guardian angel, but instead as Person A and Person B. This may eliminate scapegoating if that is happening within the group.

**SOURCE:** Project Adventure

**TITLE:** Tire Pass

**IMPACT:** teambuilding, communication, problem solving, leadership

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 8 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30-60 minutes

**MATERIALS:** truck, tractor, or tire with a center hole big enough for the largest of the participants to pass through; 4 lengths of strong rope to tie up tire

**PREPARATION:** Tie the tire 5-6 feet above the ground. It should be tied off in 3-4 directions so that it does not move too much.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- The object of the game is for everyone to pass through the center hole of the tire as quickly as possible without touching the sides of the tire.
- The group must decide on two people who will be designated as the spotters; they are responsible for helping the first and last persons through the tire.
- Then the group should decide on a strategy that will get everyone through the tire quickly and safely.
- If anyone touches the side of the tire the group must start again. The facilitator should be the judge of this.

**DISCUSSION:**

- What was your approach and strategy? Was it the most effective?
- Who played what roles?
- What did you learn about teamwork?
- How would you organize yourselves differently if you did this activity a second time?

**HINTS:** Often the male participants will try to be the ones who are the spotters. If this happens, try to get the participants to come up with different strategies.

**SOURCE:** Unknown

## TEAM BUILDING: TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

**TITLE:** Turning Over a New Leaf

**IMPACT:** develops leadership and requires patience of a group trying to accomplish a challenging task

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** 6 – 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 – 10 minutes

**MATERIALS:** canvas sheet, beach towel, or blanket (choose one that is large enough for group to stand on with a little room to spare)

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask participants to stand on top of the sheet.
- Once all are on the sheet, tell them that they must turn it over without stepping off it.
- All participants must be standing on the sheet at all times. There can be no stacking or people on top of each other.

### **OPTIONS:**

- In a very high functioning group some participants can be given handicaps, such as a blindfold. We once tried this with a group of TFP staff who were not allowed to speak. They were not successful.
- Handicaps can be given to anyone who steps off the sheet.
- The facilitator can time the group, and challenge it to do it faster.
- This can be used as a competition between two or more groups.
- As a way of building on the theme of “turning over a new leaf,” participants might tape something on the side they are going to turn over, e.g., something they wish to leave behind or forgive themselves for or a goal they hope to achieve.
- This activity might work well prior to *All Aboard* with groups having space issues.

### **DISCUSSION:**

This activity can be a metaphor for “turning over a new leaf,” leaving the past behind and beginning something new. It can also be used for groups that are having trouble communicating, including everyone, or working toward a common goal.

**HINTS:** Safety can be an issue with this activity. The facilitator needs to be involved in spotting. It is important to mention that participants need to be careful of fingers and hands of persons moving cloth underfoot. Instruct participants that if they are falling to simply step off the tarp so they don't pull people with them.

**SOURCE:** Group Challenge Training

## TEAM BUILDING: WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO 'ROUND

**TITLE:** What Makes the World Go 'Round

**IMPACT:** trust building, problem solving, cooperation, and team skills

**RISK:** low to moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** any number over 4 or 5

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** a big puzzle made out cardboard, blindfolds

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that a lot of times we get so caught up in what we think we have or don't have that we don't realize that we are all in the same boat.
- If you have more than 10 people in your group, divide them into 2 groups with two puzzles. Have the group choose 2 people to be their "guides". The two people need to be perceived as "different" from each other. In a few minutes, the rest of the group will be blindfolded and their task will be to put the puzzle together in a safe manner without talking or touching their guides. It's OK if they touch other members in their group, but they cannot talk.
- The group which is to be blindfolded has 3 minutes to agree how they are going to communicate with each other nonverbally and how they are going to communicate with the guides without talking or touching them.
- Blindfold the group. Hand them the puzzle pieces. If you feel that your group may become quickly frustrated by this activity, you might want to impose a time limit before they begin, say three or five minutes.
- After five minutes, which will be long enough for most groups, you may want to stop and process how everyone was feeling and then have the group go ahead and put the puzzle together with their eyes open. This will leave them with a positive experience and may encourage discussion about the need for open communication – keeping both eyes and ears open – in order to accomplish the task of making change happen.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- How did it feel not to be able to see?
- How did it feel not to be able to talk?
- How did it feel not to be able to touch your guides?
- What was going on for the guides?
- How did you communicate with each other? What did you learn about communication?
- Did you notice any "status" difference between the guides and the puzzle makers? Was there collaboration between the guides and the puzzle makers?
- What causes distrust among groups like these? Do you ever notice this at school?
- Did you learn anything about trust, respect, and cooperation?
- Can you think of any ways to bring what you learned into your daily life?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.342-343)

## **TRUST: CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**

**TITLE:** Circle of Friends

**IMPACT:** trust building; when you want your group to develop a feeling of physical and emotional safety with one another; when group is working on questions of sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, or racial identity to help them used to get used to being close to people who look different

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 to 15 people

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes

**PREPARATION:** The space for this activity should be enough room to form a tight circle.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group to imagine themselves circled by warmth, love, safety, and concern. Tell them to all try to create that feeling.
- Ask the group to stand shoulder to shoulder in a tight circle with one person – the faller – in the center. The first time around, you might want to be the faller if no one else volunteers. The faller gets into position – arms crossed over chest, legs straight, knees locked – and begins to lean slowly in any direction to the point of losing his balance. Before the faller leans too far out of a plumb, the people in the circle redirect the faller toward another point in the circle.
- Have the catchers gently keep the faller moving around the circle in any direction, always maintaining physical contact with them. This fall-catch-redirect sequence continues in a gentle fashion until it becomes obvious that the faller is relaxing (but remaining rigid) and that the catchers have gained confidence in their ability to work together in handling the weight of the faller when he comes their way. Change people in the center until everyone who wants to has an opportunity to be the faller.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- What did it feel like to be the faller?
- What challenged the faller the most?
- What was it like for the catchers?
- How did you communicate with each other?
- What thoughts ran through your mind regarding your abilities and safety?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.207-208)

**TITLE:** Mine Field

**IMPACT:** group initiative, trust, communication; can fit in almost any stage of a group's development

**RISK:** moderate

**GROUP SIZE:** 10-16 in pairs

**TIME REQUIRED:** anywhere from 30 minutes to any hour, depending on what variation you use

**MATERIALS:** tennis balls, fleece balls, rubber chickens, beach balls, squeeze toys, and any other soft obstacles you can use for setting up your obstacle course, enough blindfolds for half the members of the group

**PREPARATION:** As with any blindfold activity, it's always a good idea to review the basic safety precautions: have participants keep their hands in the bumpers-up position and make sure the guides don't let their partners move too quickly. Ask if anyone needs or would feel more comfortable with extra support while they are blindfolded. Figure out what that support looks, feels, or sounds like. Let any students who feel uncomfortable with being blindfolded simply close their eyes – good place for a brief reminder of Challenge By Choice and your group's understanding of their Full Value Contract.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Start by telling the group that to say the wrong thing or not to listen to what someone is saying and the conversation can become similar to a mine field – you never know which next step might set off a mine. The objects in our physical *Mine Field* are obstacles that represent potentially sticky places in a conversation. Touching a *mine* means you've gone off track and can hurt someone's feelings. It's important to clearly communicate your needs and ask other people what they need. But since we are all human beings, stuff happens no matter what we do.
- Make up your own fantasy about a dangerous journey full of adventures and challenges to be faced. The end could be a world where everyone is valued and listened to or a world where all our dreams come true. Getting there is the hard part, but the journey's full of adventure, too."
- Ask the participants to help you spread out the tennis balls or whatever it is you decided to use in a random pattern inside the area you outlined on the ground. You can use more or fewer obstacles to increase or decrease the difficulty of getting from one end of the field to the other.
- Have your group split into pairs and tell them that one person will be blindfolded to start.

## TRUST: MINE FIELD

- The object is for the blindfolded participant to traverse the length of the obstacle enclosure. The sighted person will be the guide, but must stay outside of the enclosure and cannot touch their blindfolded partner. Only verbal cues are allowed. (Please see variations for nonverbal cues.) If the blindfold participant touches any obstacle, they must go back to the beginning and start again. Or you can have them count their touches and, when everyone has had a go, compare how they did. When all of the blindfolded players have had a chance, ask them to switch roles with their partners.

### OPTIONS:

- You can increase the challenge of a number of different ways, depending on how your group is functioning. Have two blindfolded players go through holding hands or have all the blindfolded players go through at once. Either way, they'll learn a lot about careful movement and how to make their voices heard above the crowd (politely, of course). You can also try timing them and give a time penalty for each object touched. Another variation is to put three blindfolded players on either side of the *Mine Field* and have their guides lead them through. Which team reaches the end first and how did they develop their strategy, together or separately?
- Before you start the activity, give each pair a pipe cleaner or some other object they can use to create a symbol. Use a variation of the opening, and describe the *Mine Field* as the area where all the problems exist that cause trouble at school, at camp, or where they live. Tell them that the pipe cleaner represents a support to help them through their problems. It might be a person, an object, a special skill, a place they go. Have them shape their pipe cleaner so that they will recognize it in the *Mine Field* area.
- Have each pair place their support symbol somewhere in the area. Their goal is to retrieve their support without touching any of the other objects. As in the standard version of this game, one of the players is blindfolded and led verbally by a sighted partner.
- Instead of verbal cues only, the pair establishes a set of tactile cues. In this scenario the guide can walk behind or beside the blindfolded person. The pair cannot hold hands or have any other continuous contact. Participants often devise signals like a quick tap on your right shoulder means shuffle to your right, etc. You can increase the challenge by penalizing guides who touch an object. Tactile cues can be used with the aforementioned variation/option.
- Continuing with the theme of trying not to hurt other people's feelings, have each pair blow up a balloon and write down one of their biggest fears or despairs on it. Ask everyone to put their balloon somewhere in the *Mine Field*. The object is for the guides to help their blindfolded partners reach their balloons, pick them up, and carry them out. Once all the balloons are out of the *Mine Field*, you can have the group create a ceremony to solemnly bust them all.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did you and your guide communicate? Did you feel as though your guide was taking care of you?
- What are some of the challenges to getting your point across in a conversation?
- What did you learn from this activity about getting support or asking for support?
- When you did the variation of the game, what were some of the problems you identified in the *Mine Field*?
- What did you identify as your support symbol? How does it help you in your daily lives?
- What did it feel like to depend on someone else to navigate your way through all the obstacles?
- Can you think of a time when you felt you were in emotional pit – not knowing what emotions you were going to stumble upon? What do you do when someone's emotions surprise you?
- How we feel about our gender and sexual orientation can be pretty confusing sometimes. The *Mine Field* might even be symbol of your own confusion, not someone else's. How did it feel to be walking through unknown territory?
- How did it feel to find your pipe cleaner or balloon?
- How did it feel to destroy your balloon?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.283-286)



## TRUST: TRUST WAVE

**TITLE:** Trust Wave

**IMPACT:** trust building; you can come back to this game when your group needs to work on their trust building skills

**RISK:** moderate to high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 minutes

**PREPARATION:** This activity seems incredibly simple, but the challenge level is deceptively high. It requires a high degree of alertness from all the participants. If you have doubts about your group's ability to perform their roles diligently, either don't try the activity or allow walking only for the first round or until everyone seems comfortable with the task. The space for this activity should be a large indoor space or outdoor field.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Tell the group that sometimes it looks like all the doors are closed to us and everything is going against us. But once you gather some momentum, you'd be surprised by what can happen and how those barriers just disappear.
- Divide your group equally in two and form two straight lines with each participant standing opposite someone from the other line. The lines should be just far enough apart so that when the participant's arms are fully extended, at shoulder height and in front of them, their hands reach to approximately the wrist of the person opposite. These two lines are the spotters.
- The goal is for one player, the runner, to start about ten yards from the group and walk, or slowly jog, between the two lines of people. The players in the lines have their arms raised at shoulder height straight out in front of them, effectively forming a barrier to the approaching runner. Just before the runner reaches them, the spotters raise their arms up over their heads to allow the runner to pass and lower them as soon as the runner has gone by.
- Ask the runners to attempt to maintain the same speed throughout their runs. Slowing down is not a problem, but speeding up obviously can be.
- Allow all participants an opportunity to be a runner, but remember Challenge by Choice. Some members in your group will be willing to go early on, while others will want to watch how the group is attending to the runner's safety.

***Safety Factors:***

## TRUST: TRUST WAVE

- Needless to say the spotting lines must be extremely careful or the runner will get hit in the face or the head. Spotters need to carefully watch the runners and judge their speed. Spotters should lift their arms with sufficient time to ensure that the runner is not hit. It is critical that you closely monitor the group and be sure they are fully attentive to each runner's safety. If they are not, or begin to goof around and lose focus, end the activity immediately.
- Allowing a ten-yard space before the runner enters the line helps people gauge the speed and judge when to lift their arms.
- Don't allow people to start only 2 or 3 feet away.
- It is appropriate to set a series of commands to indicate a runner is starting, much as with a *Trust Fall*. The runner should ask the spotting line, "Ready?" and wait for a reply before starting.
- If there are more than 10 people in the spotting lines, be sure that the spotters are all focused on the front of the line and the runner before starting. When the runners have been hit, it has often been because people in the middle or the end of the line did not see the runner coming or did not react quickly enough.

### DISCUSSION:

- What, if anything, held you back or push you forward?
- Were you confident that the group would make way for you?
- Did you feel comfortable running or was it threatening?
- Was it hard to pull up your arms in time for the runner to get through?
- How did it feel to make it whole way down the line?
- In this activity, you are taking a risk by entering another group of people. Have you ever done anything like this in school – that is, entered another group? How would you describe that experience?

**SOURCE:** Diversity in Action (p.173-174)

## **TRUST: TRUST BOX**

**TITLE:** Trust Box

**IMPACT:** To build trust and support others

**RISK:** medium - high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10 minutes, varies depending on group size

**PREPARATION:** Clearly mark off a small playing area. The size will depend on the number of people in the group. Everyone in the group should be able to easily touch someone else when standing in the area.

**MATERIALS:** Tape or rope to delineate the playing area

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the participants to begin walking around the space.
- When someone feels ready, s/he says loudly and clearly "I'm falling".
- Everyone else then rushes to catch the faller as s/he begins to lean back and fall.
- After one person goes, everyone should then resume moving through the space until the next person feels ready to fall.
- Be aware that two people might say, "I'm falling" at the same time. Depending on the size of the group, this is okay. Just make sure the group is aware and that they must catch both of the falling people.
- Find a conclusion after either everyone has gone, or gone multiple times. After finishing, process the activity.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- Did you feel supported? How could you have felt more supported?
- Why is this activity important?
- What risks were you taking, and why is it important to take these risks?
- What was the hardest part/easiest part of the activity?

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

**TITLE:** Trust Pinball

**IMPACT:** to build trust among a group of people. To have individuals take risks and be supported by their group.

**RISK:** medium-high

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10-15 minutes or enough time for everyone to have a turn.

**MATERIALS:** a large playing area with a flat surface and no obstacles.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask the group to stand in a circle. This activity should be done in silence, except for any directions the facilitator may need to give.
- To begin, the facilitator taps one person on the shoulder, who then closes his/her eyes tightly and walks blindly across the circle to the other side. The people on the other side of the circle stop the "blindfolded" person, turn the person around, and push the person lightly in another direction. (The people on the outside of the circle have their eyes open). This process is repeated with the same person a few times.
- When the facilitator feels the person has crossed the circle a sufficient amount, the facilitator asks the person to open his/her eyes and replace the closest person in the circle.
- The person who is replaced now shuts his/her eyes and walks across the circle.
- If the group seems ready, the facilitator can send a second person out across the circle while the first one is still walking. It then becomes important that the people on the outside of the circle make sure that the people walking do not collide. To do this they must notice when and where all walkers are sent. Depending on the group, three or four people can be blindly crossing the circle at once.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to go and end it by having everyone return to the edge of the circle.

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did it feel to walk across the circle? Did you feel supported, scared, vulnerable?
- Did you trust the other people in the circle to stop you and protect you? Did you feel differently after your turn?
- What changed when more than one person crossed the circle at once? How was it different?
- What did you get out of this activity?

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

**CLOSING: 4-3-2-1 GOODBYE**

**TITLE:** 4-3-2-1 Goodbye

**IMPACT:** closes an experience and brings the group together

**RISK:** low

**GROUP SIZE:** any size

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

Teach the group the following beat/pattern:

Clap 4 times, pause, clap 3 times, pause, clap twice, pause, and finally clap once.

1-2-3-4

1-2-3

1-2

1

**Then stand in a circle; and all at once, perfectly together and in rhythm, clap together. It is a loud and powerful beat when done correctly.**

**DISCUSSION:**

- How did teamwork play a role in this activity?
- If people are not focused/committed, what happens?
- Don't process; let the activity speak for itself.

**HINTS:**

This is a good way to close a workshop or day. It visually and audibly demonstrates the power and cohesiveness of the group, punctuates the end, and flows nicely into applause for a great job done.

**SOURCE:** Greg Gale

**TITLE:** I Feel...

**IMPACT:** facilitates sharing, connecting, and self-expression between group members; provides closure for emotional activities or experiences

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** any size

**TIME REQUIRED:** 5 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Pair the group off in twos, and have them stand facing each other, making eye contact and staying connected. Pairs should not stand too close to one another.
- One member of the pair (Person A) begins by saying very simply "I feel \_\_\_\_." Person A should say honestly how s/he feels ("I feel confused," "I feel powerful," "I feel better than I did before") to the other person.
- Then Person B responds by saying one way s/he feels.
- The two continue back and forth until both have fully and honestly expressed how they feel.

**DISCUSSION:**

The activity is, in a sense, processing. But it can still be processed in a large group. Ask how their feelings changed as they shared.

- Did the sharing help?
- Was it difficult?
- What was it like to communicate honestly with another person?
- What were the barriers, if any, to communicating?
- Is there anyone who would feel comfortable sharing with the entire group?

It's a good, personal way to debrief after workshops, emotional activities, and challenging days. It is a way for people to safely express how they feel following an activity that sparked high emotions, or perhaps even following mediation.

**SOURCE:** Tracy Mackenzie

**CLOSING: I TAKE . . .**

**TITLE:** I Take . . .

**IMPACT:** encourages participants to acknowledge the impact other group members have had on them; offers bonding and closure as the group reflects on its shared experience

**RISK:** medium

**GROUP SIZE:** any size

**TIME REQUIRED:** 15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** none

**DIRECTIONS:**

Here at The Food Project we all learn from each other, and we have all grown together. As a program ends it is important not only to reflect upon what we have learned, but also to acknowledge those who have so greatly affected us. In "I Take . . ." each group member has the opportunity to go around the circle and tell each individual what s/he will take from that person and bring with him or her into the future. It can be things as simple as "I will take your laugh," or comments such as "I will take your honest and open feedback about how I don't work hard enough."