TOOL KIT

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Disclaimer:

PURPOSE
GOAL ● ● ●

Team building activities consolidate the group, serve to manage group dynamics and to make young people act as a team.

DESCRIPTION
INSTRUCTION ● ● ●

Team building activities aid group dynamics by building trust, communication, and the ability to work together. These seem to be the most important reasons why youth workers, teachers, educators or trainers decide to build a team during their activities, class or course. A good collaborative group is a great space to generate creative ideas. After completing a team building activity, youngsters better understand their motivation to be part of a group and they better understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. Team building activities also help to develop problem-solving skills, team members can determine when they face a problem and what they can do about it working as a team.

INSTRUCTION ● ● ●

Team building activities improve group dynamics by increasing participants' enthusiasm and energy. Team building activities are often stimulating problem-solving tasks designed to help group members develop their capacity to work effectively together. Some team building activities are simply and fun games and others are complex tasks designed for specific reasons.

They are also known as group-dynamic activities, and they work on interpersonal relationships dynamics:

- Relationships between two people
- Relationships between a person and a group
- Relationships between groups

EXAMPLE

Human knot
Objectives:
The goal of this activity is to learn how to work together, improve group communication and raise team spirit. It can also focus on the group's understanding of communication, leadership, problem
solving, trust and persistence. Activity also helps to understand the roles people have in the group.
Time: 20 minutes
Group size: 7-30 people
Instructions:
The youngsters are asked to form a circle, shoulder to shoulder. The facilitator should ask them to stand closer, in order to prepare them for what is about to come. (If there are two or more groups they should have enough space, so that the groups do not feel distracted by the other groups, or a sense of competition).
Youngsters should close the eyes and each of them rise a hand in the middle of the circle, and then are asked to grab another hand from opposite direction (only 2 hands per one connection); same for the other hand. Now they can open their eyes.
Facilitator should explain the goal of the activity to the participants: they are asked to untangle themselves into a circle again, without letting go any hand.

The facilitator can now stand back and observe the group or individuals and the dynamics.
In the first minutes (up to 10) there might not be much progress, however as soon as the initial unfolding happens, the pace should become quicker. In case that no progress is made after the first 10 minutes, the facilitator could offer the group only one de- and then re-clap, in order to make it a little easier. The group then has to discuss and decide together which hands to de-clap and re-clap. In case the result are two or more interlocked circles, the facilitator should ask the group to unfold these too, in order to get the simplest structure.

Debriefing:
Adapt the question to the age of the group.
How was the activity for you?
How well did you think the group worked together?
What kind of roles where there in the group? Who took the role of the leader?
What could have been done differently?
What do you think you've learned from this activity which can be applied in future activities?

Important notes for facilitators:
Be aware that the activity involves close physical proximity and touch potentially in sensitive places! Group members potentially will have significant problems with such proximity, e.g., due to culture, or social or psychological barriers.
The result is not the most important thing, sometimes it can be solved; use it during the debriefing to introduce the fact that is ok to fail, the important is how much they worked on it.

Balloon Trolley

Youngsters are given a task to work as a team that will promote active participation, working together, problem solving, without leaving anyone behind. Though the end goal is a group success, individual actions and movements make a big impact. It may seem simple in the beginning, but this activity is a true challenge!

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Group Size: 5-25 people

Materials: One inflated balloon per person (minus one) and masking tape

Instructions: Before you begin, place two strips of masking tape on the ground to signify start and finish lines.

Ask youngsters to line up shoulder-to-shoulder behind the starting line. Hand each of them a balloon except for the last person in the line. Instruct them that, in a moment, each of them will put the balloon between their shoulders (i.e., two people standing next to each other will be holding the balloon on either side with their shoulders). They must hold the balloon there without touching it with their hands. They will need to walk to the finish line as a group. If any balloons touch the ground, the entire team has to start over again.

Helpful hint: If this activity is done outside, be aware that balloons dropped in grass are much more likely to pop than if they fall on other surfaces. Take some extra with you.

Debrief Questions:

Adapt the question to the age of the group.

What happened during this activity?

Did any one person emerge as a leader? If so, who was it and what did he/she do?

How did you work together to accomplish your goal?

How did individual actions impact the success of the team?

How does this activity relate to the teamwork that happens when you have to work on a project in a group setting?

PROS

Whenever you have a group of people who need to work together effectively, a team building activity provides the perfect tool. Some reasons for using a team building activity are:

- Team building activities help youngsters get to know each other better and understand the role and the importance of each participant.
- Team building activities warm youngsters up and rise energy and enthusiasm.
- Team building activities motivate your youngsters to work together effectively.
- Team building activities expertly run can unite people, enhance their strengths, and address their weaknesses.
- Team building activities create friendly environment, where youngsters are comfortable and happy to talk to and work with anyone.
- Team building activities actually work to improve communication.
- Team building activities stimulate problem-solving skills.

Team building activities can be used in a wide variety of age groups, situations and social settings.

CONS

- Team buildings activity risk to lead to competition mechanism; try to turn this competition in collaboration between participants.
- Learning to work well together can take some time: the best activities are easy to understand and has a clear task to be completed, but since they work on group dynamics they take time.
- Make team building activities inclusive: keep in mind that certain types of activities are hard to do for some people. For example, activities that require movement can be difficult or even impossible for some people with physical disabilities, or an activity could exclude someone, that is actually exactly the opposite result you want to achieve. Be sure that everyone is actively involved in the tasks, making them feeling essential part of the group

TIPS

When designing your team building activity remember not to complicate things. Less and clear rules work better and allow the group to have fun and be focused on the result.

Any team building exercise should encourage collaboration rather than competition.

Giving time limits it's important; it helps to motivate and activate all the members of the group, just pay attention not to lead them to discouragement.

Each team is different and every individual has something unique to contribute. Once you can identify and encourage everyone to reach their individual potential, your team will be able to reach its collective potential as well.

SOURCE
RESOURCE ● ● ●

- https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/toolbox_tool_download-file-1129/Outdoor%20education_activities%20handbook_2014.pdf

- http://www.nonformalacademy.eu/67-tool-cards/148-team-building

- https://icebreakerideas.com/what-is-icebreaker/#Team_Building_Icebreakers

- https://www.teambonding.com/6-reasons-for-team-building/

- https://guideinc.org/2017/08/09/team-building-activity-balloon-trolley/

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