Group Facilitation
for adventure-based learning

Facilitator’s Reference Manual

Training for staff delivering intentional group work

October 2018

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Introduction

Welcome!

Facilitating group work, such as fun games, nature-based experiences, adventurous activities and reflections on the outcomes - is a really fun and effective way to engage with young people. It provides a rich learning environment and developmental opportunities that can result in life changing personal growth and empowerment.

It’s pretty good for the young people too!

This training course is designed to:

- place you, as a learner at the centre of the experience
- expand and add value to your existing practice
- be consistent with the principles and diversity of ideas represented in this manual
- allow for the practice of group facilitation in a safe and supportive environment

This manual is designed to be written and drawn in during the training course, with questions to consider for your own learning, and the hope that it will remain as a useful resource to look back on as your facilitation develops. It has evolved from the intensive training delivered by The Outlook (under various Queensland Government Departments), and remains an inspiring and effective course that serves to connect facilitators with the praxis of group work.

Throughout this manual we have used the terminology of facilitator and learner to differentiate our roles in formalised group work, while acknowledging that we are all learners in the process. As facilitators, we must unlearn some key behaviours to be able to participate authentically in the life of the group, build an honest relationship with group members, and engage with the process of reflective practice so we can continue growing within ourselves. What a great place for us to begin!

There is a real power and magic in group work, so we warmly invite you to join us!

You may wish to list the names of the people in the group here today...
Hopes and Concerns

What do you hope to gain from this training course?

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<thead>
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<th>Expectations/Hopes</th>
<th>Concerns/Fears</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I want to happen!</td>
<td>What I don’t want to happen!</td>
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**Action:** How I will make this happen?  

**Action:** How I will stop this from happening?
Understanding your strengths and learning preferences:

How do you best learn something new?

What do you remember the most from your education, and why?

What are your key strengths in a team environment?

Please rate your level of knowledge (from 1-10) or comment about:

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Foundations

Window on the World

Imagine that this square represents your view on the world.

Place words or symbols inside the window to represent your core values and beliefs.

Are there any non-core values you hold as being important in your work?

How might your values and beliefs influence the way you see the world, and the people you associate with?
Reflective practice
As facilitators, we must embrace and participate deeply in the process of critical reflection for ourselves, to become more aware of our biases, judgments and pre-conceptions, and how these may influence the situation and our relationship with the learners.

An effective tool to help us explore this in more detail for ourselves, is the Johari Window. Spend time considering this to extend your window to the world on page 6. Perhaps you could invite a close colleague or supervisor to discuss this model with you, making notes on a page to replicate each of the relevant windows...

Being open to exploring new territory within ourselves - and using the techniques we will learn throughout this course - we can deepen our own personal skills and knowledge which will in turn, better serve the community of learners we work with.

Changing perspectives can have three dimensions:
- psychological (changes in understanding of ourselves),
- convictional (revision of values and belief systems),
- behavioral (changes in lifestyle and approaches).

What are the pivotal changes that you have experienced in your life?
Dadirri, mindfulness and nature connection

There is an Australian Aboriginal form of spirituality called Dadirri, which means inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. It is well worth researching more on this topic on the www.

Dadirri recognises the inner spirit that calls us to reflection and contemplation of the wonders around us - it is a 'tuning in' experience with the aim to understand more deeply the beauty and connectedness of nature.

Take time out to sit quietly in a natural place that is free of distractions. This is a powerful way to enhance connection with self and gain inspiration from nature.

Undertaking mindfulness exercises in nature is rewarding, but sometimes can be a challenge to begin with. If you find it difficult to relax, try focussing on all your senses and your breathing as a meditation, do a sound map, or make insect observations to help you enter the space completely. Monkey brain is totally normal – when persistent thoughts or feelings keep popping up, acknowledge them with gratitude for bringing up what may need more attention.

Some people will prefer to undertake intentional solo time, often fasting and spending time in the same place to gain connection, while others get more from movement or free play in natural areas. Take yourself somewhere really special...

You will most likely experience:

- Increased sensory awareness and insight, synthesis of ideas
- Improved confidence, ability to learn and discovery of new thoughts
- Increased attention span and ability to be fully present to a situation
- Reducing stress and anxiety levels and increased resilience to emotional triggers
Presencing and discovering your Dharma

Presencing is described as a process or journey (sensing + presence) leading us to a deeper source of knowing, similar to Dadirri. A U shaped diagram represents the process of letting go to ask deeper questions such as Who is our Self? What is our Work?

As we connect with all our senses and letting-go (of our old ego and self), we allow a deeper source of knowing to emerge. The letting-come (of our future possibility: our Self) allows a resonance that emerges with clarity and we begin to operate with high levels of energy - often becoming an intentional vehicle for the future. This “religious experience” is common to many traditions.

Ancient Buddhist traditions refer to this process as discovering your Dharma - an inner wisdom, or a cosmic guidance that governs not only the individual, but the universe itself. Dharma aligns you with the cycles of nature, the energy of the universe, and the center of your Self — your Being.

A path to discover your purpose can be found by consciously taking steps, and the path itself will help you in the right direction. Walking this path is not about success, but about harmony — with yourself, your thoughts, your words and in your actions.

1. The Path of Joy – learn to listen to your emotions, choosing actions for joy rather than fear
2. The Path of Synchronicity – watch for and follow guiding lights of coincidence to find your purpose
3. The Path of Letting Go – release everything that is non-essential to allow more to come in
4. The Path of Practice – make rituals of the healthy practices that serve you
5. The Path of Being – create space to connect with cycles of nature and your Self

What stories do you know about the personal experiences of the community leaders that have inspired you with their Dharma?
Locus of control and empowerment

How do you think the young people you work with experience their locus of control?

How can we better create opportunities for people to share power, and have some control over their education?

A fundamental principle of group work is that facilitators will find ways to share power with everyone in the group, not to hold power over them. While this can be very difficult to do initially – eg. due to previous experiences, expectations or abilities - we must do our best to ensure learners:

- feel a sense of belonging, and are well supported in their choices
- experience taking responsibility for their actions, for better and worse
- participate in group processes and consensual decision making
- have the opportunity to share control of an important group process eg working agreement

Creating circumstances that change or challenge the existing power base, and allow everyone the chance to experience autonomy, freedom and power of choice is at the heart of well-designed group work. This takes a real commitment to sharing power, not holding it. As facilitators we work with a tension between;

- intentional role modelling of values and
- respecting the right of individuals to choose their own values.
Ubuntu and finding Common Ground

A common philosophy of indigenous cultures around the world relates to the importance of interconnectedness and honouring each other “on common ground”. Southern African people refer to this as Ubuntu:

“It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, Yu, u nobuntu; hey, so-and-so has Ubuntu. Then you are generous, you are hospitable, and you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. We belong in a bundle of life. We say a person is a person through other persons. It is not I think therefore I am. It says rather: I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share. A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.” Desmond Tutu

If our selfhood is defined by others, and manifested through our actions among family and within a school community, this is a deeply personal philosophy that calls on everyone to mirror our humanity for each other. It can be seen and felt in the spirit of willing participation, unquestioning cooperation, warmth, openness, and personal dignity. Each person has vital role to play, which must be held in balance, no one dominating the other.

This world view, and way of being is described as finding “Common Ground” within the flexible learning environment, and is very different to mainstream schooling in subtle but very powerful ways. This can be most evident in classrooms, staff meetings or any circle work, by observing when and how the power is held and shared with each other.

Rather than being facilitator-centred, the group of learners on common ground are enabled as co-facilitators of their own culture of learning. This requires work, patience, unconditional positive regard and careful strategies which are the core reason behind this training course.

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<th>Facilitator - centred and directed</th>
<th>Group - centred and facilitated</th>
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<td>Can be safe, supportive, full of belonging, learning, loving, engaging, fun, interesting – depending on the skills of the facilitator</td>
<td>Can be safe, supportive, full of belonging, learning, loving, engaging, fun, interesting – depending on the skills of the facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible working agreement, dependent on the facilitator</td>
<td>Strong working agreement held by the group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible common ground space dependent on the facilitator</td>
<td>Co-created common ground space with movement towards independence and sustainability.</td>
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Which of these approaches do you think would be more sustainable? How have you experienced Common Ground in the past?
Relationship-based Learning

Consistent with common ground principles, Bishop (2017) maintains that in order to improve indigenous and marginalised learners’ educational outcomes we need to pay attention to:

Creating a family-like context for learning by
- Rejecting deficit explanations for learners’ learning
- Caring for and nurturing the learner, including their language and culture
- Voicing and demonstrating high expectations
- Ensuring that all learners can learn in a well-managed environment so as to promote learning
- Knowing what learners need to learn

Interacting within this family-like context in ways we know promotes learning by;
- Drawing on learners’ prior learning
- Using Formative assessment: Feedback
- Using Formative assessment: Feed-forward
- Using Co-construction processes
- Using Power-sharing strategies

Monitor learners’ progress and the impact of the processes of learning by assessing how well learners are able to:
- Goals: Set goals for their learning
- Pedagogy: Articulate how they prefer to learn
- Institutions: Explain how they prefer to organise/be organised in their learning/learning relationships and Interactions
- Leadership: participate in leadership roles and functions
- Spread: Include others in the learning context and interactions
- Evidence: provide evidence of how well they are progressing and what progress they are making
- Ownership: take ownership of their own learning.
Group Work

What groups are you currently a part of?

Think, draw and/or write about the purpose and operation of these groups in different situations:
Human needs

What are some examples of basic unmet needs that are likely to contribute to learner behaviour?

What cultural elements could affect participation in group activities?

How do you select individual learners to be involved in your intentional group work?

Our behaviour is a direct reflection of how well our needs are being met – in order to facilitate well, we must learn to recognise what are the deeper needs being felt or expressed by ourselves and others.

Having this framework of recognising needs, and conducting a needs analysis:

- Informs our intent and affects program design
- Deepens understanding of learner behaviour
- Informs our responses and creates effective options
- Assists in separating the individual from the behaviour
Six psychological needs

Consider how each of these needs are being met for yourself and for learners within your workplace.

Certainty:
- relates to the need for comfort and safety, in both our relationships and our physical environment
- our experiences of certainty and security can influence our risk taking behaviour and societal roles

Variety:
- relates to the need for change and diversity which challenges us and provides opportunities for emotional and physical growth
- our experiences of variety each person is different and can influence daily routines and the way we seek learning and development opportunities

Significance:
- relates to the need for our life to have meaning and significance, most often met through work or relationships
- Our desire and experience of significance and can influence our ethics, standards and relationships with others

Love and Connection:
- relates to the need to be cared for and cared about, as well as care for and about others.
- desire for love and connection can result in variety of ways we seek to experience meaningful connection with other human beings.

Growth:
- relates to our desire to develop emotionally and intellectually - as well as physically.
- desire for growth and learning is a powerful motivator

Contribution:
- Relates to a need to give back or make a difference to the world.
- Contributing to a cause greater than oneself can result in a range of beliefs and behaviour.
Experiential learning

Experiential learning (EL) can be defined as “learning by doing through reflection”

The experiential learning cycle identifies four phases:

**DO**

**REVIEW,**

**ANALYSE**

**PLAN**

Experience   Describe

**DO**

Action!

**REVIEW**

What?

Apply

**ANALYSE**

So What?

**PLAN**

Now what?

Success! Because each cycle is cumulative and has different results, it is sometimes thought of as a spiral... or a powerful spring!

Principles of EL

Experiential learning enables the construction of knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences; and to facilitate it well, we need to understand the following principles:

- EL places emphasis on the learner being an active agent in their own learning process.
- Authentic learning tasks are set that engage learners intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically, requiring them to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results.
- Relationships are developed and nurtured: learner to self, learner to others and learner to the world at large. Exploring our own values forms the basis for future experience and learning.
- Experiences are structured and supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis, while also focussing on spontaneous opportunities for learning.
- The facilitator and learner may experience success, failure, adventure, risk-taking and uncertainty, because the outcomes of experience cannot totally be predicted.
- The design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes and successes.
**Group facilitation**

What is facilitation?

What makes a good facilitator?

Does this differ from leadership?

Group work is often conducted under what is sometimes known as contractual facilitation – that is a person is nominated in the role of group leader. There may be other natural leaders in the group who may assist or support the process – they can also be acting as facilitators.

**Facilitation means “to make things easier”.** Some of the key micro-skills and elements of facilitation include

**Role clarity and group purpose** is important to be overt, so everyone in the group is clear about what each person is there to do and why. Facilitation of introductions and hopes and concerns is honouring and usually is the best way to start a group formation process.

**Commitment** is invited from all group members to guidelines or principles that are best developed co-operatively. Challenge by choice means that learners have the right to participate at different levels in activities or discussions, selecting their own ways of getting involved in the experiences. “Do your best”, “I respect your choice” and “I choose to be challenged!” affirms individual choices.

**Participation** by all group members helps to enable and deepen key learning in the group. Allow for a range of levels and styles of participation that respects any individual choices.

**Single speaking** is a sign of group respect. Having one person speak at a time ensures an opportunity to hear what is being said. Ask the group how they would like to ensure this can occur.

**Positioning and comfort** if group members are in a circle, it allows everyone to have eye contact, see facial expressions and body language. Co-facilitators can stand or sit opposite each other to pick up any non-verbal cues from each other and the learners, as well as alleviate a sense of ‘them and us’.

**Asking permission** of the group or an individual empowers and respects. The rule of thumb is if in doubt, ask permission.

**Make it fun and remain flexible** - fun is a great learning tool and has potential to engage and involve. Fun and enthusiasm can help maintain group energy and motivate a group to complete a task. If the program or activity you planned is not working, change it up and move on. Never stay locked into something that is not meeting the needs of the group.
Clear communication skills are essential to clearly and succinctly provide information, guide conversations and invite others to share ideas. Remember OARS as an acronym to help maximise your communication style:

- **Open Questions** – invite others to ‘tell their story’ in their own words and leave the door open for better answers. Begin with words such as "what" and "how" or phrases such as "What do you think about . . . " Open-ended questions should lead participants to think analytically and critically. Ultimately, a good open-ended question should stir discussion on the program.

- **Affirmations** – use of statements and gestures that recognise strengths & acknowledge behaviours that lead in the direction of positive change, large and small.

- **Reflective Listening** – listen with open ears and heart. Be interested in what a person has to say & be engaged. E.g. repeat or rephrase; paraphrase to help clarify meaning; reflect feeling.

- **Summaries** – part of reflective listening and useful at transition points. Helps with clear communication & can provide stepping stone toward change.

**Be comfortable with silence** - provide time for participants to think things through, or formulate a response. Some participants, often the quiet or introverted, need extra time to think. As a facilitator this can be quite challenging, but with practice you can learn to use it strategically.

**Deflect questions** from learners back to the group (unless it relates to instruction or safety). Answering questions for the group takes responsibility away from learners. If the group asks for feedback about how they went in an activity, deflect it back to them by asking them.

**Schedule time** to reflect on experiences. Debriefing styles can depend on the maturity, needs and abilities of the participants. Sequence debriefing and choose your moments so they can grow and engage learning.

**Trust your own personal facilitation style** – take every opportunity to learn from others and experiment, but stay true to your own ideas and approaches. Be open to feedback and evaluation.

**Monitor frustration levels** – challenges and conflict can precipitate a group to progress, but it can also be unnecessary and destructive. Call meetings or time out if necessary.

**Manage facilitator involvement** - refrain from being solely responsible for making things happen and avoid rescuing the group if they are struggling. There is often a fine line between helping a group develop and taking over. If in doubt watch and wait to see what happens next.

**Ethical issues** - prepare to deal with issues of confidentiality, discrimination, sexuality, power, values differences, environmental concerns and individual needs versus group needs. Facilitation requires protecting everyone in the group by relating discussion to the working agreement, trust the process!
Deepening group work facilitation

Intentional groups that continue through time, can reach new levels in autonomy, trust and communication, based on their shared experiences and growth. As a facilitator on common ground you may find opportunities to help others journey through the "U" (refer to page 9) using the personal experience that you have had. Guide them to:

**Holding the space:** listen deeply to what is being said, or what the situation calls for you to do (listen to oneself, to others and make sure that there is space where people can talk ...)

**Observing:** attend with your mind wide open (observe without your voice of judgment, acknowledge and let go of your history of thoughts and feelings)

**Sensing:** allow your heart to open in the process of finding interconnections and holistic meaning

**Presencing:** connect to the deepest source of your self and emergent will

**Crystallizing:** access the power of intention through your actions and a group of key people that also commit to the purpose and outcomes

**Prototyping:** integrate head, heart, and hand (allow for action without interference, over -reaction, too much analysis, etc.)

**Performing:** Co-ordinating the group (enable autonomy and natural leadership to grow and be shared)

Paying it forward is what this whole dance is about, after all...
Co facilitation

What is important to consider when working closely with someone?

Think of an experience of co-facilitation, what happened and why?

Following a similar process you would conduct for any group formation can really help to develop a strong co-facilitation team:

- make time to meet and connect with each other
- share your purpose and vision of what is being accomplished
- explore individual strengths, preferences, needs, hopes and concerns
- develop your own working agreement before the program
- focus on mutual support, honesty - build trust and experience working together
- expect that there may be conflict, so plan for that openly
- support each other to take time out for a short period each day if needed
- ongoing check ins such as a team meeting at beginning and end of each day
- let the group know when you are meeting and why
- have fun, congratulate each other and celebrate your successes!
- organise organisational support for debriefing and evaluation

The Belbins team roles questionnaire at the back of this manual (p111) is a useful tool to use since there is a variety of roles required of a facilitation team.

Often a lead worker is nominated, usually based on prior experience and willingness to take responsibility for decisions when needed. Effective teams are those which have knowledge of each other’s strengths and preferences, are aware of how to support each other, and actively use this knowledge within the team.

How does your co-facilitator like to be supported?

How do they have their cuppa?
Working Agreements

What sort of things do you think should be presented as non-negotiable?

What do you think is important for a group to negotiate about?

Facilitating the establishment of a working agreement is the next crucial step in the establishment of a group. The working agreement, also known as a group deal or guidelines, is a negotiated contract that arises from the process of discussing how the group want to work together.

Beginning by outlining any non-negotiables and any existing group objectives, the discussion can move on to negotiated principles that will presumably be relevant for the life of the group. Usually created as a visual document or symbolic item that the group carries with them; an important element of the working agreement is to discuss and agree on what will happen when the agreement is breached. Rather than being seen as a failure, these are learning opportunities that can serve to strengthen the agreement – it will be referred to and revisited regularly – even able to be amended through consensus decision making.

Common principles that can help to guide a healthy working agreement discussion include:

- Participation
- Respect
- Honesty
- Safety
- Legal

When everybody is satisfied with the agreement, it can be signed by everyone.

Thumb prints, hand prints, tags or signatures are effective ways to demonstrate commitment.
Ideas for creating a working agreement

What sort of working agreements have you seen in the past and how well have they operated?

Five-Finger working agreement

A quick and easy way to start developing a set of group values - everyone can immediately start using non verbal signals to remind each other...

_Thumbs up:_ What does this represent? Encouragement? Good job? Let’s celebrate the positive aspects of what we are doing together...

_Pointer Finger:_ Lets be honest and point out things that are not safe - whether it’s physical or emotional. We want to look out for each other and point out any ways things could be better.

_Middle Finger:_ So, what does this represent? Well it’s the opposite to that so this represents respect, let’s remind each other to be respectful, eg not "put down" each other, talk over someone or use inappropriate language. What will respect look like? What else would be disrespectful? What would be a respectful way to point out someone is not following our agreement?

_Ring Finger:_ this represents commitment. Are we willing to commit to this together? Like any marriage its never going to be perfect, but it can work if we talk for real about things that happen.

_Pinkie:_ this finger is vulnerable so it represents the need for us all to watch out for each other, “look after the little one”. It could be you – or me or anyone here at different times.

Creative working agreement eg. painting flags or chalk on the floor

Use of a range of artistic mediums that can create fun and bring life, colour and meaning to a working agreement that the group has pride in. You can allow the creative element or details to evolve over time – revisit regularly and work on it.

Symbolic object working agreements

Footballs, backpacks, picnic rugs, hats and canoe paddles have all been used (eg written on and carried around) to create interesting and effective working agreements that have symbolic meaning for the group.
Stages of Group Development

How have you seen groups change and evolve over time?

Group development is not a sequential or linear process. It can be helpful to recognise several distinct stages of group development so we can adapt our approaches and focus – five are generally recognised - however groups also can skip stages and/or be in more than one stage at any given time.

Each of the stages is important, and if supported well by good facilitation and situational leadership – it will lead to more effective development and stronger group performance.

“The better a group forms, the stronger it will storm. The stronger the storm, the better a group will norm. A group that has strong norms is ready to perform!”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TYPICAL GROUP BEHAVIOURS</th>
<th>USEFUL FACILITATOR RESPONSES</th>
<th>STRATEGIES TO MOVE ON TO NEXT STAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forming</strong></td>
<td>Polite, reserved, cautious, putting on a front, often take on particular (comfortable) roles</td>
<td>Prosocial modelling, ensure everyone is included, establish working agreement</td>
<td>Set increasing levels of activity challenge and complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storming</strong></td>
<td>Tensions, misunderstandings or crisis, can be overt or hidden</td>
<td>Pause activities, refer to working agreement, ask for clarification, encourage single person speaking and use of I statements, encourage recognition of other peoples feelings and ideas, look for common ground, assist with action plans</td>
<td>Group or individual debriefs, affirmations and check in on working agreement – amendments if required. Use common ground for action planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norming</strong></td>
<td>Listening to each other’s opinions and ideas, checking in and adapting, self-control</td>
<td>Focus the group on achievable tasks and relationship building activities, support for working agreement or other group development</td>
<td>Begin to withdraw support and allow the group to manage the situation even if conflict seems imminent (they may need to go back before they can go forward)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performing</strong></td>
<td>Asking each other’s opinions and ideas, co-operative teamwork, encouragement and support for trialling new ideas, self-efficacy</td>
<td>Delegate facilitation and leadership responsibilities within the capability of other group members, remove support and allow for increasing challenges and sequenced activities that will test their performance.</td>
<td>Acknowledge achievements and provide authentic activities that will promote feelings of accomplishment. and frontload the beginning of the end, involved in preparations for graduation ceremony etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mourning</strong></td>
<td>Emotional reactions (positive or negative) or withdrawal, seeking ways to stay in touch, reminiscing, celebrating etc.</td>
<td>Revert to more directive, planned activities that can help to guide the group through a process of reflection and sharing learnings etc. Celebrate and capture the moment – photos etc.</td>
<td>Final debrief with where to from here... acknowledge individual achievements, transfer of learning and encouragement for the next steps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Situational leadership

What personal qualities do you look for in a leader?

What are your personal strengths as a facilitator?

Leadership and facilitation are closely related, and can be better understood using the concept of situational leadership. Situational leadership is the process of balancing the relationship and task needs of a group, and is a good way to think about the dynamics of our changing role as a facilitator.

Different or changing situations such as environmental factors, stage of group development, individual or group needs, will require changing approaches in facilitation and leadership styles to assist the group to maximise their learning and growth.
Situational leadership and stages of group development

How do you think your role as a facilitator may change as the group develops?

When do you think you may need to take a different role to what you are comfortable with?

As facilitators, we need to be aware of our preferred or comfortable leadership styles, and also challenge ourselves to utilise other styles that may be appropriate to the group’s development.

This diagram highlights the changing focus of facilitator for each of the stages of group development.

**GRABBSS Model**

This is a holistic approach to assessing where the group is at during a program and can help identify what activities or processes need to be put in place to address the needs of the group.

- **Goals**: the purpose or intent of the program for both the group and the individuals
- **Readiness**: does the group have the skills and motivation for the activity?
- **Affect**: check in on the feelings in the group
- **Behaviour**: observe the actions of the group and all its members
- **Body**: the physical abilities and wellbeing of the participants
- **Setting**: the environment we are working in and the composition of learners
- **Stages of Development**: what stages are being experienced by the group now?
Embracing conflict

Think about some conflict in your life at the moment - what is the main reason or cause, from your perspective?

What might be the main reason or cause of the conflict in other people’s minds?

What could happen to resolve this situation?

Conflict is a normal part of all healthy human relationships. We all have different needs, interests and values and it is inevitable that group work will bring people into conflict with others. Although it can be nasty and difficult to deal with, it also has the potential to lead to a breakthrough in understanding and new levels of cooperation.

As a facilitator, you can help by

- Regularly checking in on feelings and acknowledge any expression without disapproval
- Recognise different levels and styles of conflict
- Adjust your facilitation style to suit the situation
- Supporting learners in using the working agreement to discuss any disrespect or anger
- Planning activities that will challenge and prompt learners in healthy ways
- Allow the energy to build and be expressed without interference or blocking
- Coach learners who are in the midst of conflict to name the core issues
- Facilitate two way conversations that enable learners to hear and acknowledge what each other has to say... an important step before being able to reach a resolution.
Adventure Based Learning

What do you think defines an adventure?

How does this relate to learning?

Adventure is a state of mind more than any particular type of activity. People find different things challenging, and for any given situation, people will be affected in different ways.

The Adventure Model

Risk is relative for different people too, since it is a function of the hazards and our competence. The adventure model identifies different states of “arousal” - or stress - for a given risk stimulus.

For example, driving a car is one of the riskiest activities we do. Someone with a lot of experience, however, may be so comfortable on their regular route each day that they are actually thinking about other things other than the act of driving (as well as multi-tasking!).

Everyone will have a different arousal profile due to their experiences and abilities – for example a learner driver or an international tourist may be in a different state of mind and stage of adventure.

Everything can change with a different risk stimulus (eg if started raining at night). As our perception of risk is raised, so will our state of arousal.

stage 1: play 😄 - in our comfort zone, not required to focus
stage 2: adventure! – raised awareness and engagement
stage 3: frontier adventure – engaged limbic system, full attention on the task required
stage 4: misadventure – always to be avoided, care for and focus on safety
Gaps model

Are there things other people are scared of, that you are comfortable with?

What are you often afraid to do?

The gaps model can be used as a language for communication and better understanding of each other’s comfort levels, and as a tool to determine the best approach to balance individual and group needs. It is not acceptable to plan for any group member to be in misadventure.

In practice this means that facilitators are sensitive to the gaps people are experiencing, and that people who are experiencing large gaps are assisted to reduce their gap. We may do this by:

- engaging and supporting people, i.e. supporting them to find ways to express themselves
- taking the time to build trusting relationships and sequencing exposure to risk
- by giving them information, language and opportunity to express what is going on
- giving them the freedom not to participate in those aspects of the activity that would be a misadventure for them
- allow for a range of roles such as observer, time keeper etc.
Some people in a group may be in the play zone... i.e. not experiencing enough novelty, stress or adventure - so it may be necessary to increase their gap, for example by:

- inviting them to take on different group roles e.g. support or leadership
- changing the activity to incorporate higher levels of complexity or challenge
- reducing one of their senses/abilities e.g. blind folded or invited to be silent
- asking them to help you set up and run or debrief the next activity
- highlighting the dangers involved and referring the group to the working agreement if safety factors are being threatened within the group

**Stress and Performance**

When are you the most productive?

How does this model (below) apply to the situation (above)?
Gaps and Adventure

This model is a synthesis of the gaps and adventure models, what can it tell you about group work?

Spiral of human potential

Another way of viewing the gaps model is through the spiral of human potential model which represents our self-concept within a snail shell of potential. Just as a snail grows as its shell expands, and so can we - if we are prepared to take risks and move beyond our comfort zones.

This model shows how we can use the gaps model to show our learners the opportunity that risk taking and skill building provides ie. that experiences of success lead to greater self-concept.
The Adventure Based Learning Process Model

This theoretical model of how ABL works (Luckner and Redlan 1997) describes the key elements that are understood to be important to the process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Individual...</th>
<th>(is unique and has their own expectations, readiness and motivations for learning, or possibly may not feel that need until after the experience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experiences a state of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disequilibrium...</td>
<td>(must be present for learning to occur, referring to an individual’s sense that there is a mismatch between old ways of thinking and new information, requiring integration of new skills or perceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by being placed in a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel Setting...</td>
<td>(in an unfamiliar environment which helps to raise the perception of risk (level of adventure) to increase receptivity to learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>(a safe and supportive social atmosphere that encourages cooperative rather than competitive learning and group cohesiveness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>while being presented with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Problem-Solving Situations...</td>
<td>(authentic, practical situations requiring individual or group members to draw on their mental, emotional, and physical resources to make decisions and act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that lead to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of</td>
<td>(success can lead to increased confidence, skills, and internal locus of control, and celebration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which are augmented by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing the</td>
<td>(facilitated discussions to explore the thoughts, feelings, behaviours and outcomes relevant to experiential learning about the experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and this promotes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalisation and Transfer</td>
<td>(allowing learners to make their own connections and ascribing relevance to what they are learning, in order to integrate the changes in other situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to future endeavours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Adventure Wave**

The adventure wave model follows the experiential learning cycle, and highlights that learning can be maximised through planned, facilitated reflections with opportunities to keep experimenting with new skills:

![Adventure Wave Diagram]

**Frontloading**

Sometimes before conducting an activity briefing, facilitators can ask learners or describe what the activity’s purpose, or process objective is. This differs from the activity objectives. The purpose of frontloading is to bring learners’ attention to their behaviours or interactions, so that they have more awareness and information to draw on through the session and subsequent debrief.

**Briefing**

A briefing will usually consist of the basic information needed for the activity – objectives, timelines, resources, guidelines, consequences, safety information etc. Always allow question time.

**Activity**

This is the sequenced learning experience where people are encouraged to use and develop their skills through activities. Monitoring individuals and managing safety for the group is the main focus of the facilitator.

**Debriefing**

This is the process of reflecting on what happened and transferring the learnings to future endeavours. Facilitation is needed for a group to be effective at debriefing, and a simple sequence of questioning themes (reflecting the experiential learning cycle) is easy to remember:

- **What?** Explaining questions
- **So What?** Exploring questions
- **Now What?** Planning questions
Debriefing and facilitating reflections

Debriefing generally refers to the information sharing and review of an organised operation which is typically focussed on logistical elements, however it is also often used to describe the facilitation of personal reflections on a learning activity.

This is the meaning we ascribe to debriefing as facilitators of reflective processes and it can take many forms. An effective approach for is to simply pay attention to and allow for the natural discussion to happen within a group, before prompting or focusing in on particular questions about people’s experience and opinions to guide the process.

A natural sequence of questioning known as the “What? So What? Now What?” model of debriefing follows the experiential learning cycle:

- **What Happened?** Descriptions, story telling, details of what and how it happened.
- **So What does that mean?** Next level - curiosity about why it happened and what that means to the learners
- **Now What could happen?** Transfer of learning – has it been useful and how will that change anything?

Important principles of debriefing:

- Help to establish the expectation (group norm) that debriefing can be fun and interesting and really useful.
- Youth groups will need to build their capacity for processing and listening to potential lengthy discussions so start small.
- Ensure these happen regularly and spontaneously, sometimes simply to celebrate wins!
- Devolve responsibility for the conduction of debriefs – allow and encourage others to facilitate discussion as the group matures in it’s stage of development.
- Always ensure everyone has the chance to have a say (use curiosity to invite quiet people to speak directly where appropriate).
- Speak directly or invite comment on any perceptions that the working agreement has been compromised – eg. power plays, put downs, disrespect etc
- Generally refer back to the working agreement as a check in/out each day – good things working, any improvements needed? Update the “document” based on discussion that clarifies group norms, renew group commitment.
Debriefing questions

It is important to be present to the discussion and responsive to any information emerging from a debrief (ie. not following a script). Sometimes you will need a prompt to get them going!

Here are some simple examples to get it started once the group is present in a circle:

- Share a Rose, (Highlight) Bud, (Potential) and Thorn (Challenge) for the day
- Caramello Koalas – pass them around and share with everyone two sides to your day – the happy face and the fine print details – before eating it
- Start by telling the story of what happened – everyone say a sentence and go around...
- Use a rope circle to pass the knot around and share an opinion about the topic at hand
- Offer some genuine positive feedback or name a personal strength for someone else in the group that you have witnessed today
- Name something you are grateful for and one thing you would like to see being done differently tomorrow

List some open ended debriefing questions you may ask of a group that:

- were playing some energetic, competitive games for fun and you noticed some put downs

  What? -
  -
  So what? -
  -
  Now what? -
  -

- are frustrated because they did not complete an activity because of safety concerns.

  What? -
  -
  So what? -
  -
  Now what? -
  -

- want to progress to the advanced skills session next week.

  What? -
  -
  So what? -
  -
  Now what? -
Add any of your ideas to the reflective techniques listed here:

**Continuums** - ask learners to stand on a line (rope) that represents a scale from agree to disagree for a statement (and then pause to discuss individual positions) eg.

- The tasks were too easy today
- I have tried my best today
- I feel the group is going really well
- Some people in the group need to listen more carefully

**Emotion identification**

- Choose a mood card or soft toy etc. to illustrate your feelings, and describe what and why
- Name a car / animal / weather / music etc. type to describe how you feel – what and why
- Rate your energy for learning from 1 – 10, try to describe the reasons

**Nature metaphor**

Look for something in nature that can be used to represent your experience/feelings etc

- small leaf that is growing and represents a new beginning
- a piece of bark that is scarred and protective
- stick, stone and leaf (What will stick with you? What was hard? What is growing?)

**Closure - weaving the web**

Ask everyone in the group to share... eg. three things:

- something they have learnt about themselves
- something they have learnt about someone else in the group
- a wish for the future

Pass the ball of string across the group to someone to speak first, and they will do the same once they have shared. This will slowly create a web that will connect everyone. Use this metaphor to describe our connection, and that although the group is coming to an end we will all take our learnings with us. Cut the web so everyone takes a piece with them.
Depth of debriefing facilitation

Priest and Gass (1997) suggested that there were several “generations” within Outward Bound where the depth facilitation was gradually deepened, however this is an oversimplification and generalisation, perhaps better to acknowledge there are a sequence of styles and methods for facilitating reflection on group activities depending on many factors (such as intent, learner needs, facilitator skills, nature of the experience, stage of the group etc):

1. Letting the experience speak for itself - no guided discussion is involved (“let the mountains speak for themselves”). This can be appropriate for mature learners who are able to reflect.

2. Speaking for the experience – very common, but the least preferred method, as the facilitator’s perspective is not that important in experiential learning frameworks!

3. Encouraging creative expression through art, music, dance or performance that can assist learners to reflect and synthesise learnings from the experience

4. Debriefing or funnelling the experience – facilitating reflective group or individual discussion, using the experiential learning cycle (what?, so what? and now what? questions).

5. Directly frontloading the experience - involves discussion before an experience to help orient and focus learners on issues that may come up during the activity.

6. Framing the experience - builds upon frontloading by introducing isomorphic framing, that is, a metaphorical structure for the activity which has a meaningful link to the learners experience. For example the game of minefield may be framed as the process to recovery from drug addiction, your guide is an inner voice and the obstacles are relapses.

7. Indirectly frontloading the experience - used where up front frontloading and isomorphic framing may not work, so paradoxical means, such as telling participants that an activity will probably be too hard for them, are used to fire their motivation. If you predict that learner behaviour may not be consistent with their goals you could start by saying "I suspect that when things get hard, you will just give up." Then you could also prescribe a symptom, such as if someone has a tendency to be negative, you request that the person be negative for a certain period of time. These approaches aim to create a therapeutic double bind, in that if the learner gives up, they have done what the practitioner predicted - and if they don’t, they have likely worked toward their goal.

8. Flagging the Experience - the facilitator uses elements of hypnotic language to help provide the unconscious mind with resources for the resolution of an issue or to address a goal. When learners are naturally absorbed in activities; such messages can access the unconscious mind, helped by the natural trance state that often develops eg. when dealing with heights or in frontier adventure.
Like a sunrise it was...

a bit confused, scared

but it happened anyway

encouraged

it felt good

then shit got real

failure.

but later

we laughed

lessons for all

new agreements

we tried again

it was awesome
Imagination, creativity and magic

How do you think we can best draw the full attention of our learners to a task?

What are some of the most memorable experiences you have created as an educator?

Engaging in fun, spontaneous and imaginative play, not only boosts cognitive development, it also improves social skills and creativity.

Framing an activity creatively is a great way to engage learners minds, emotions and spirit. Story telling and role play activities can provide the chance to play out new experiences or replay old ones by creating experimental situations to explore moral issues and problems in relative safety.

As a facilitator we can:

- Create a frame and linked sequence for activities that flow and relate or are engaging
- Be spontaneous, inclusive, energetic and imaginative in our delivery of the information
- Make up stories and follow on from/build on random ideas that may come from the group
- Use props and toys and a story line that will enhance the novel setting
- Encourage different roles and ways of interacting which can allow the expression of fears and needs without being judged
- Use good facilitation skills, observation and debriefing to identify and process any learnings from the activity

For example - you may set up a series of games and problem solvers as a “journey”. The group enters an imaginative space where people can take different roles and have to solve a series of “real world obstacles” together. “You can choose to be yourselves, could someone be the mountain guide? How about the friendly bear, a teacher and some children on this trip?”.

Experimenting with roles, connecting with what we have experienced, we fear, or might like to experience is great food for debriefing.

Be deliberate and careful to clearly mark the beginning and end of any role plays, by facilitating the end with a debriefing process to celebrate fun, acknowledge feelings, share insights and regain our groundedness!
Therapeutic approaches

Adventure Therapy

How would you imagine that diversional therapy is similar and different to adventure therapy?

Therapy can be loosely defined as “paying attention to” and often describes the treatment offered by or in the presence of mental health professionals.

Adventure therapy offers an effective prevention, early intervention, and treatment modality for people with behavioural, psychological, and psychosocial issues. It can appeal to youth-at-risk who are often less responsive to traditional psychotherapeutic interventions.

AT is often facilitated in a similar interpersonal group work context to ABL programs, with a focus on therapeutic goals (such as those including cognitive, behavioural, affective, physical and spiritual aspects) such as allowing the learner to progress through stages of change, externalising their internal experiences, taking responsibility in a social setting and discovering new personal possibilities along the way.

Adventure Therapy (AT) programs are diverse, and generally longer in duration than ABL experiences, as there needs to be more time to develop the necessary trust, process deep challenges and allow for the development of new skills.

- AT can utilise expedition and nature based adventurous activities which provides unique environments with adaptive dissonance for the learner. This process may, but does not always, include real or perceived, physical or psychological stress or discomfort.
- AT can also utilise games, trust activities and group challenges in an urban environment and often a strong focus on the role of nature.
- AT utilizes depth of facilitation practices (p38) as kinaesthetic experiential methodology to engage learners and establish an identical or parallel process which enhances the transfer of learning from the therapeutic context to their life.

In general, AT could be said to include the following therapeutic intentions:

- Opportunities for personal growth, change and/or healing
- Tailored experiences to meet the needs of individuals and a group
- Development of physical, psychological and social safety-nets

The Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy (www.aabat.org.au) is the peak body for practitioners and researchers with experience in adventure therapy, and has a wealth of information and links for further study in this area.
Trauma informed practice (TIP)

Brain development can be significantly hindered by many types of childhood trauma, and it can be difficult as facilitators to fully understand the context of our learners’ trauma history.

Trauma-informed practice relies on a strengths-based framework that is responsive to the effects of trauma.

The good news is that research into neuroplasticity has shown that our brains are capable of developing new connections well into adulthood. We can facilitate the remapping through positive learning experiences, and our practice can be enhanced by understanding the following principles:

Berry Street provides excellent resources and training on trauma-informed practice (www.childhoodinstitute.org.au/Resources)

1. Trauma significantly alters baseline physiological arousal levels in children.

Learners benefit from environments of care which pay attention to their mood, focus on adjusting their sensory stimulation to help them stay physically present, feel safe to connect with others, and engage predictable strategies from facilitators that reduce reactivity and minimise volatile responses.

2. Trauma reduces cortical capacity to regulate subcortical activation in children.

Traumatised learners are likely to find it difficult to utilise reasoning and logic to modify their behaviour or reactions – and are unlikely to learn from consequences, particularly when they are in heightened arousal states. Recovery from trauma will be enhanced through interactions with facilitators which promote physical activity that stimulates lower order parts of the brain responsible for movement, play and balance.

3. Trauma disrupts memory functioning in learners.

Strategies which support stressed memory systems, including the introduction of visual and mnemonic cues to prompt short term memory rehearsal and recall, repetition of episodic and narrative structures and the establishment of routines to structure behavioural rehearsal are beneficial. Their ability to generalise learning from one setting to another is also hampered by memory difficulties - implement co-ordinated plans of responses that support the translation of learning from one environment to the other.
4. Trauma disconnects learners from relational resources that can mitigate its effects.
Traumatised learners will require opportunities to experience attachment relationships which offer consistency, nurture and predictability. Facilitators can be resourced to understand the significance of daily exchanges, knowing that each exchange with their facilitator can help learners to develop ways of experiencing the world and relationships that counteract previous attachment patterns.

5. Trauma restricts the attentional capacity of learners.
Learners may benefit from care environments which enable them to engage in experiences which redirect their attention away from past trauma-oriented activation to the here and now. Facilitators can be supported to offer learners chances to act and react in playful ways which are likely to lead to intensely positive experiences. These opportunities relieve the burden on traumatised learners shifting their attention from the past. They also powerfully connect learners and facilitators in shared activities that promote trust and belonging.

6. Trauma based behaviour is functional at the time in which it develops as a response to threat.
Facilitators can be supported to understand the purpose and meaning of trauma based behaviour in learners, helping to shift their interpretations away from blame to greater acknowledgement of the ongoing impact of abuse experiences. This functional analysis approach enables facilitators to develop the confidence to plan to respond to learners. This analysis can also be translated into other settings such as school, where similar behaviours can intrude on their everyday experiences.

7. Trauma limits learners’ response flexibility and adaptability to change.
Traumatised learners may get ‘stuck’ due to constant trauma triggers, and so enact patterns of defensive behaviour that make sense in the light of their initial trauma(s) but may not seem obvious to those around them. It is important for facilitators to understand, that while in these triggered states, learners have little capacity to reshape their responses without the intentional resourcing of adults in their immediate care environment. Facilitators and other significant individuals will need to be resourced to focus on introducing change in small increments, preparing and supporting learners to become accustomed to one change before initiating another. In this context, facilitators and others can be supported to understand the benefits of predictability and routine for learners as well as the need for practicing flexible responses in acts of daily living.

8. Trauma undermines identity formation in learners.
Learners are likely to benefit from reinforcement by facilitators and others for examples of qualities that denote positive sense of self and resource personal agency. Facilitators will need to be resourced to understand the significance of their role in nurturing an emerging self identity specifically at various developmental transition points for learners.

9. Trauma diminishes social skills and isolates learners from peers.
Learners with trauma backgrounds need support to engage positively with peers in social situations. Facilitators and other individuals will need to appreciate the importance of their role in modelling social skills and respectful interactions. This will resource traumatised learners to build a network of relationships which promote connection and afford further opportunities to reconstruct their attachment styles.
Depth of intervention

All programs differ in the types of outcomes they strive to achieve. This is true of any experiential program that can have intentions that range from recreational through to therapeutic style of delivery. The depth of intervention has nothing to do with the intensity of the activity, but rather the focus that is given to processing the experience – that is the reflection, analysis and transfer.

Several factors influence the depth of intervention, such as:

- extent to which the learner is engaged in the process
- program intent and design
- staff competencies and connection
- level of preparation and follow up
- specific needs and issues of the learner

List some examples of the types of programs you have witnessed along the continuum:

**Recreation**: seek to provide a personally satisfying experience

- 
- 

**Education/Training**: personal development focusing on skills or personal growth

- 
- 

**Developmental**: seeking behavioural change.

- 
- 

**Therapeutic**: under supervision by psychotherapy or counselling program

- 
-
Stages of change

What significant changes have you initiated in your life, and how did that come about?

The stages of change model outlined below, is useful to understand how learners might respond to the need for change in their lives.

Our role as facilitators will vary according to the stage of change, so it is critical that we establish a strong relationship with a learner to be able to understand and help explore their thinking and motivations, and build the trust required for honest or difficult conversations about change.

ABL and AT can be facilitated as excellent strategies for assisting the therapist in the engagement process with learners, and as has been seen earlier – as a source of information for the learner.

Four dimensions of engagement are receptivity, expectancy, investment and working relationship.

- **Receptivity** - recognise a problem and a need for change, open to help
- **Expectancy** - perception of whether they will benefit from treatment
- **Investment** - active participation and responsibility for their treatment goals
- **Working relationship** is characterized by feelings of fair exchange and open communication

![Stages of Change Diagram]

**Pre-Contemplation**
No intention on changing behavior.

**Contemplation**
Aware problem exists but with no commitment to action.

**Preparation**
Intent on taking action to address the problem.

**Action**
Active modification of behavior.

**Maintenance**
Sustained change. New behavior replaces old.

**Relapse**
Fall back to old patterns of behavior.

**Upward Spiral**
Learn from each relapse.

Page 44
Motivational interviewing

What do you remember about the acronym OARS for communication skills?

How might your communication with learners change through their stages of change?

Clearly, learners who demonstrate a higher level of motivation also demonstrate a higher level of personal commitment to treatment, a higher readiness for treatment and positive treatment outcomes. There are many factors that can influence motivation to change, and one of them is collaborative conversations that assist a learner recognise and address their concerns.

Motivational interviewing (MI) utilises a guiding style of conversation that can sometimes be directing and often is a following style of communication. The aim is to bring about changes in behaviour by helping learners explore and resolve their ambivalence about making changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of change</th>
<th>Motivational interviewing conversations to help the learner move to the next stage</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-contemplation</td>
<td>Show you care and want the best for the learner, build a relationship from strengths perspective. Have a non-judgmental attitude and be clear that change will happen when they are ready.</td>
<td>Personal investment in the outcome, pushing for results, preaching, shaming, blaming, and threatening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplation</td>
<td>This can be a lengthy stage, be patient and anticipate they will have doubts. Point out dissonance and change talk, be a resource for information and help them think for themselves</td>
<td>Confusing this stage with decision making. Supporting denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Help define clear and concrete goals, witness commitments, emphasise and reframe change talk, help to vision and strategise.</td>
<td>Taking over, impatience with any lingering doubts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Celebrate successes. Be confident, hopeful and help to make backup plans.</td>
<td>Thinking it’s over and abandoning the learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>Encourage and support independence, normalize the need for backup plans. Celebrate success</td>
<td>Fostering dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relapse</td>
<td>Frame as normal, expected, help learner to re-enter the cycle (maintenance or earlier?)</td>
<td>Giving up, condoning self blame or guilt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program planning

Thinking of learners in your care, what would be some group work objectives you could target?

How could you evaluate the outcomes of a program aimed to attain those objectives?

Experiential group work is flexible and differentiated to account for a wide range of learning needs (adaptable for nearly all levels of ability and experience) and it can focus on many areas and developmental outcomes:

Group work can be used in many different ways:

- A counsellor could be working with learners who have difficulty expressing feelings or forgetting how it feels when they are not directly involved
- A therapist may be interested in build trust, focus on strengths and build connections in preparation for challenging conversations
- A youth worker could be working to engage with young people and learn more about their needs to help develop confidence and skills.
- A teacher could be focussed on mapping the development of their problem solving, planning and communication skills as applied to teamwork in a meaningful way
- An occupational therapist could focus on fine motor skills, visual perception etc as well as physical abilities of balance, co-ordination and endurance.
- Speech language pathologists could focus on social appropriateness, auditory comprehension and verbal expression
- Vocational therapists might be interested in teamwork and other work related behaviours

Rather than begin with a program plan and attempt to adapt it to your group, try starting with your group and develop objectives for them first. The program plan will follow

One of the keys to creating this is to consider:

- the selection process – compatibility, motivation, gender, fitness, cultural factors etc
- individual and group needs, therapeutic goals, program objectives
- information sharing, gaining consent and commitment to the process
- current issues, timing, availability of staff, other programs etc.
- group formation and appropriate sequence of activities, open or closed group
- 360° evaluation or similar process eg. a record of debriefs and feedback sessions etc.
- Finally then you can look at creating session outlines, back up plans, communication with all the stakeholders for feedback and co-facilitation planning etc
Developing objectives and evaluation

Beginning with your broader aims for a particular group of learners in mind, establish some SMART objectives – ie. specific, measurable, realistic and time limited.

Try some now

1

2

3

Evaluation

Your SMART goals form the basis of your evaluation, so consider how you will evaluate these

1

2

3

It could also include:

- Program evaluation – process and content
- Staff feedback to each other
- Staff self-evaluation
- Assessment of learner’s progress
- Learner self-evaluation
- Learner feedback
Learner selection and activity adaption

How does the relationship between individual and group needs affect your choices?

What activities do you think could meet the objectives you listed previously and how might they need to be adapted to meet your learner needs?

Modifying an activity is possible in a range of simple ways - that with a bit of careful thought - can transform the experience of learners.

It is often necessary because of specific learner needs, eg.:

Physical
- Balance, vestibular status, visual perception, auditory, fine motor control, gross motor control, ambulation, sensation, agility, endurance

Cognitive
- Stage of development, attention, memory, impulsivity, initiation, safety awareness, problem solving, divergent thinking, self-monitoring, planning, organisation

Psychological
- Social and emotional skills, status, roles, confidence, dealing with failure, adaptability, giving/receiving feedback

Communication
- Consider the range and level of expression, reception, reading, writing, pragmatic skills

Many of the activities listed in back of this manual have suggestions for variations – often to make them harder. By knowing your group of learners well, you will be able to plan the activity to be the right level of challenge for them, and assess how they are going to pre-empt any changes required.

One of the key responsibilities of a group activity facilitator is to balance individual and group needs. We know that every group is diverse, and that we must take care to meet individual needs in everything that we do. The power of conducting group activities (developed under a working agreement) is that some of this responsibility can be shared by the group. Perhaps it is OK – or a good learning outcome – that individual needs are challenged in a group setting, because it can allow others to step up and help to meet them.
Activity session planning

What process will you use to plan an activity session?

Most organisations will have a paper trail required for activity planning and approval. Our focus here is the practicalities of ensuring you have all the resources needed and time with your co-facilitator to talk through the session plan, being clear on roles and responsibilities, objectives and possible outcomes (including back up plans!).

![Pre-Session Diagram]

- **Introduction**
  - H - Hello
  - O - Objective
  - P - Process
  - E - Experience
  - Content: Introduction (you and the activity)
  - Tips: Be Clear
- **Demonstration Explanation**
  - Provide a demonstration (activity only)
  - Explanation including key safety points
- **Activity**
  - W - Watch
  - A - Assess
  - S - Set Goals
  - P - Practice
  - Content: Monitor safety (stop the activity when required)
  - Tips: Encourage participants
- **Summary**
  - Individual and group reflection
  - Active review/s
  - Group discussion
  - Final group debrief with transfer of learning
  - Tips: Identify key learning

**Pre-Session**
Prepare your resources (safety check equipment)
Check your venue and risk assess the area
Turn up on time and be prepared - FIRST IMPRESSIONS LAST
### Session plan template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators:</th>
<th>Date and venue:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group composition:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>Back up plan:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/time</th>
<th>Content (what?)</th>
<th>Process (why?)</th>
<th>Duration (mins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Session Review – overall feedback from the group:**

**Facilitators feedback for each other:**

**Specific reflections on objectives and outcomes:**
Risk Management

What is a risk?

What sort of risks do we take in our daily lives?

Why do we deliberately take risks? What are the benefits of taking risks?

Are there risks associated with taking no risks?

Risk can be defined as the **potential to lose or to gain** something of value, and that can be measured using likelihood and consequences.

- **Perceived risk** is the individual’s subjective assessment of the potential for loss. This perceived risk will vary between individuals undertaking the same activity, and may be much lower or higher than the real risk.

- **Absolute risk** is constant - the uppermost level of potential for loss which could be present, without considering safety measures or experience etc.

- **Real risk** considers a wide range of factors through a process of analysis and treatment (eg through safety controls and measures) to estimate the potential for loss.

- **Risk benefit** is the potential for gain as a result of taking the risk.

- **Risk management** describes the ongoing process of identifying, analysing, treating and monitoring of contextual risks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Risk Management Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Considerable management required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Risks may be worth accepting with monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Accept risks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your workplace has systems in place to manage risks – particularly because we often deliberately use risky activities (eg. social, physical, emotional) as an intentional tool for learning.

We need to follow the process for analysis and treatment of risks, in order to gain approval and trust that we are able to manage safety during the conduction of certain activities.

What risk assessments have you carried out in the past, and how did you find the process?
We know that risk is a double edged sword – it can cut and it can heal, so be sure to include the risk benefits in any analysis for justification of your requests for approval, decisions etc.

Risk responsivity is a principle which states that high risk situations may actually require high risk responses or interventions in order to be most effective at bringing about change.

How does this relate to your work?

Example of a risk analysis for conduction of water based problem solving activities at the pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Critical Impact</th>
<th>High Impact</th>
<th>Moderate Impact</th>
<th>Low Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazards</th>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>New level</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People factors</td>
<td>Lack of experience/skills, misuse of equipment, water, conflict, medical conditions, physical fitness, mental health</td>
<td>Drowning, injury, trauma, medical emergency, conflict, violence</td>
<td>H, M, H</td>
<td>Training, working agreement, sequenced exposure, supervision, challenge by choice, first aid, wearing PFD's</td>
<td>M, L, L, M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment factors</td>
<td>Ropes, planks, stools, toys</td>
<td>Misuse or accident, resulting in injury, self harm, fall from height, trauma</td>
<td>H, M, M</td>
<td>Working agreement, close supervision, information about safe lifting, check equipment, monitoring and control, secure storage</td>
<td>M, L, L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment factors</td>
<td>Hard surfaces, slippery surfaces, distraction, insects, heat</td>
<td>Injury, allergies, dehydration</td>
<td>H, M, L</td>
<td>Adjust height of stools, supervision and briefing, first aid</td>
<td>M, L, L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ideas for group formation games

Group juggle to speed ball

Objectives

• Progress from introductions to the early stage of getting to know each other
• Help to learn everyone's name.

Learners

• Any type of group
• Minimum of 5, maximum of 10 is best

Equipment

• Bag of soft toys or balls

Example set up and frame

• Place bag of toys behind you, with your favourite one in your hand
• Introduce this as a game or challenge to help get to know each other and have some fun
• Pass a soft object or ball to someone across the circle from you, calling their name before you throw the ball. If you don’t know their name, ask them, it’s OK!
• As you receive the ball, thank the thrower by their name, and call out the next name… etc
• Back to the start – let’s try again! This time once the object starts the rounds, introduce another one once it is in play (same order)
• Up the challenge by having one go in reverse order, or simply passed around the circle as well

Variations

• Can be played in a similar way or around the circle as an introduction - where you say your name and invent some action/alliteration/hope/concern/favourite food etc. The challenge is to see who is the first to “perform” or repeat everyone’s name and action/alliteration etc.
• Each say their name like you’re proud of it! (if anyone can’t hear it clearly, ask them to say it again). The challenge now is to make the circle alphabetical by first name - without talking! Or same challenge with animal noises and line up in size of animal

Speedball

• Finish with a final challenge to see if we can pass an object to everyone in that same order in less than 10 seconds. Ask if it is possible. Do they want to try? Let them go with ideas. Whether or not the achieve it, debrief the game and use that as an example of how the group can process learning and keep improving.
Calling a neighbor

Objectives

- Progress from introductions
- Learn something about everyone

Learners

- Any type of group that are still learning about each other
- Minimum of 6

Equipment

- Nil required

Example set up and frame

- This game can work with or without people standing in a circle to begin with. Introduce the game as a way to learn a bit more about other – it will be easy to start with and in the end we will all be joined together.

- When it is your turn to say something that is true for you... the aim is to find common ground or a connection with other people, and remind the group to keep it PG rated!

- Begin by saying “calling a neighbor who...” (eg. has more than two children, likes to read etc) and out of the people that indicate that is true for them, select the nearest/first to join arms with you... and take their turn

- The game continues until the last person joins the linked chain of people, and they need to find common ground with you to complete the circle. There may need to be several questions to find something – encourage people not to make it too easy/obvious.
Name the pulse

Objective

- Learn each other’s names
- Act quickly

Learners

- Minimum of six

Equipment

- No equipment required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite everyone to be standing or sitting in a circle
- Introduce the game as a speed challenge
- All you need to do is remember your own name
- Pass the pulse around the circle by saying your own name
- Practice to improve the speed
- Try the other way, team B
- Team A vs Team B
**Bumpity-Bump-Bump-Bump**

**Objective**
Learn each other’s names
Act quickly to avoid (or get out of) the centre of the circle

**Learners**
Minimum of six

**Equipment**
No equipment required

**Suggested set up and frame**
- Invite your group into a circle to play a fun game that will help to learn our names
- Choose a volunteer or place yourself in the middle of the circle
- The person in the middle points to someone and says “left” or “right”
- The person pointed to must name the person to their “left” or “right” respectively, before the person in the middle says ‘Bumpity-bump-bump-bump!’
- If the person pointed to is too slow then they take position in the middle of the circle
- After 3 or more unsuccessful attempts at beating someone to it - the person in the middle can call ‘ooga-booga!’ and everyone needs to find a new place to stand in the circle across from where you were
- The last person to join the circle is now in the middle, play on
Conveyor Belt

Objective

- Share something about yourself
- Learn more about each other by listening

Learners

- Any group
- Minimum of 6, maximum of 12 is best

Equipment

At least as many chairs as the number of learners

Example set up and frame

- Arrange the chairs so they face each other so the learners sit nearly knee-to-knee with one chair at the end as a spare. You need odd numbers, so use an assistant or yourself to add to the group if necessary to get the right numbers (this is a good way of building rapport but hard to be the timekeeper).
- Learners take a seat with a timekeeper separate.
- Each person has 1 minute to talk to the person opposite them - about themselves.
- When the timekeeper calls ‘switch’ the other person begins talking. When the timekeeper yells ‘change’ everyone in the group stands and takes a step to their left and sits in the next chair.
- The person in the spare chair can observe the process.
- Continue this until all participants have had an opportunity to talk to each other and observe.

Variations

- This technique can be used by a group to share ideas about a topic, say farewells etc.
- Timing and spaces between chairs can be different
- Can finish with a game of musical chairs!
Waumpum

Objective

- A quick and fun game to learn each other’s names

Learners

- Minimum of 8

Equipment

- Pool noodle (half)

Suggested set up and frame

- Introduce the activity as a fun name game that could get out of control if we are not careful. Working agreement reminder about caring for each other etc.
- Invite everyone to sit in a circle sitting on the ground with their feet facing inwards (toes to the sky).
- The idea is for the person in the middle, using the foam noodle, to waump the person’s feet whose name has been called out before they call someone else’s name.
- Should they waump the feet before the next name has been called, switch positions.
- It is ideal to have participants to call different names so they become more familiar with all group members. This can be fun but remember not to run this activity for too long.

Variations

- Can be played standing with “high ten” or another gesture rather than hitting with a waumpum
- Can up the challenge by asking each player to say their name and/or the next name twice
Blanket Game

Objectives

- Use consensus decision making to nominate one team member at a time
- Think quickly to name members of opposite team before they name you

Learners
All abilities and group sizes of at least 6, divided into 2 teams

Equipment
A tarp or large blanket (without holes!) approx. 2x3m

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the two equal sized teams to sit together facing each other and explain the process of the game. Question time.
- The facilitator and assistant hold the blanket up between the two groups so they are unable to see each other - all learners position themselves so they cannot be seen by the other team.
- Each group quietly discusses and selects one person to move forward and sit closest to the blanket, ready to be revealed.
- On the count of three, the blanket is lowered or lifted.
- The chosen learners are the only ones to say the name of the person opposite them
- The team whose player says the other person’s name first, gains that person on their team
- Play continues until all are on the same team! Declare everyone winners!

Variations

- The chosen learners sit back to back with the blanket between them, facing their team. When the blanket is dropped the group members need to describe the other person, never saying the person’s name.
Gotcha

Objective

- Engage left and right brain
- Social interaction and personal space
- Aim to try and catch your neighbour’s finger while avoiding yours being caught!

Learners

- Use of their arms and hands
- At least 4

Equipment

- None required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to form a circle, shoulder to shoulder and explain this is to get our brains engaged, and the aim is to avoid getting caught while simultaneously catching someone else!
- Ask everyone to extend their right hand, palm up in front of the person to the right of them.
- Now extend use the index finger of your left hand to touch the palm you will find in front of you.
- Set a signal eg “ready, set, GO” and everyone tries to catch a finger while escaping by the person on their left.

Variations

- Reverse the hands, i.e. the left palm is facing upwards and the right finger is extended.
- Ask another learner to count in the game
Poison Ball

Objectives

- Teamwork, communication and problem solving.
- Avoid being hit by the poison ball/assist your team get everyone in

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 8

Equipment

- Boundary markers or ropes for the field
- A soft ball used as the poison ball

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a boundary and invite the group to play a running throwing tag game
- The aim of the game is to avoid getting hit by the poison ball while staying in the boundaries
- The person who is “it” can pick up and throw the ball but cannot walk or run with it
- If you get hit by the ball you join the team who is “it”
- This is a game of team work and communication

Variations:

Spud is a variant that is best played in large, open areas.

- Players begin each round in a central location.
- "It" then throws a ball high into the air.
- The other players run but must stop as soon as "it" catches the ball and shouts "Spud!"
- It may then take three large steps toward the player of his choosing before throwing the ball at that player.
- If the ball hits the target, that player becomes it, and the game starts over.
Jump in, jump out!

Objective

- Engage left and right brain and body movement
- Quick thinking to avoid mistakes!

Learners

- Adaptable but best for a high functioning and physically able group
- At least 6

Equipment

- None required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to form a circle, holding hands. Change/note position of comfort.
- What I want you to do is say what I say and do what I say
- Jump left, jump in, jump out etc
- Now what I want you to do is say what I say but do the opposite of what I say
- Jump left, jump in, jump out etc
- Now say what I say but do the opposite of what I say
- Jump left, jump in, jump out etc
Number one fan

Objective

- Build team energy and encouragement
- Join as one team

Learners

- Adaptable for any abilities
- Minimum group size of 6 for effect

Equipment

- No equipment required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite everybody to play a fun game that is about encouragement, support and cheering (make some noise).
- Pair up with someone to play. Whoever loses is on the winners team and they need to find another winner to play with.
- The aim of the game is to be the number one fan of whoever beats you or your team at paper/scissors/rock. Be loud and totally supportive of your team (give examples).
- The scoring rule is:

  - Rock beats scissors
  - Scissors beats paper and
  - Paper beats rock
Clumps

Objectives

- Break the ice – group formation
- Create temporary groups matching the parameters being called

Learners
Minimum of 10 is good

Equipment

- Nil equipment required

Suggested set up and frame

- Introduce this as a very quick game; explain that you will call out a number, and everyone will form a group consisting of that number.
- Get people to mix and mingle between numbers being called
- Observe the interesting dynamics as groups are formed – often nobody wants to be left out but naturally sometimes there will be a remainder.
- Call another number

Debrief

- Likely to be necessary
- Reflect on what it felt like to be in a group and also being left out
- Were certain people being left out?
- What does that mean for us as a group? (revist working agreement)

Variations

- Elimination games
- Use categories such as coloured tops, denim shorts, black sneakers, gender, eye colour, etc.
- Once the group is formed, use their collective bodies to create a shape of a letter of the alphabet, or number or object e.g. house, car, chair, etc.
Simple tag games

Objectives

• Fun and energizing group formation games
• Avoid getting tagged

Learners

• Adaptable for all abilities
• Minimum of 8 is good

Equipment

• Boundary markers
• Half a pool noodle (optional)

Suggested set up and frame

• Set the boundaries and remind of working agreement - explain this sequence of games is a fun way to warm up etc. Beware of the tendency to over competitive behaviour.
• Safety information about where and how to tag someone, avoiding injuries.
• Play a sequence of games that start simple and end with more complex, as well as a symbolic levels that can be debriefed eg. level of teamwork, co-operation etc
• Choose from the following:
  • One or more people is nominated as “it”
  • Everybody is it! Sit down when you are tagged or if you both tag each other
  • Hospital tag where any part of your body that is tagged cannot be used
  • Minefield tag where once you are tagged you sit down - but can still tag people
  • Freeze tag where you must remain still after being tagged until being released by a team mate crawling between your legs (people are safe from being tagged while under legs)
  • Pairs tag, where a pair who are joined (always touching) form a chain with anyone tagged by them until the fourth person at which point there are two pairs that can separate.
  • Cat and mouse tag where teams of two or three are mouse holes, and there is a cat (it) and mouse (running). Any time the mouse runs into a hole another mouse runs away
  • Chain tag – where each person that is tagged joins the chain to help get the last people running
  • sequence

Debrief

• important to check in on working agreement and debrief elements of the game
Raising energy games

Impromptu Cricket

Objectives

- Team game – strategizing and group formation
- Fun and friendly competition

Learners

- Some co-ordination and running required
- Minimum of 10 is good

Equipment

- A soft ball, toy or something to make a ball out of eg scrunched up paper
- Something to use as a bat (optional – this is improvised cricket, you can use your hand!)

Suggested set up and frame

- Introduce this as a fun, running around game, and we need two evenly matched teams
- Build up a bit of team spirit – names etc. Describe the game and problem solve the resources to have to improvise eg bats can be our hands, a ball can be made from the lesson plan!
- Explain the rules carefully and limit question time because a practice round will help things become clear; it is a lot like cricket, there are batting and fielding teams and everyone will have a turn at batting and bowling after the teams switch over.
- When batting if you touch the ball (tipsy) you need to run around your whole team as many times as you can to score runs
- When bowling the aim is an underarm easy toss that may allow a catch
- When fielding the whole team must be touching the ball and call “stop!” to cause the batter to stop running
- If the ball is caught on the full there are no runs scored
- Each team to keep count of their own score

Debrief

- Often is necessary
- Reflect on the level of competition and pressure to perform
- What does that mean for us as a group? (revist working agreement)
Jump relay

Objectives

- Social interactions and team work
- To jump together and cross the line

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size of 6

Equipment

- Boundary rope or markers

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a boundary approx. 25 metres from the starting area
- Invite learners to play a game that will test their non-verbal communication skills
- Organise people into teams of three (preferred) or four
- Explain the aim of the activity is for each team to co-operate to be able to jump together any time a signal is given, to get themselves across the line
- Any time a team does not jump together or jumps on the wrong signal, they go back to the starting area
- Negotiate the signal for “Jump”
- The facilitator will vary timing of the calls and occasionally call a similar word to test the groups performance
Sharks and fishes

Objective

- The fishes to elude the shark

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum number approx. 9

Equipment

- No equipment required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite everyone into a circle and ask for two or more volunteers to be the shark and fishes.
- The rest of the group is in a circle with arms extended and clasping hands.
- Release hands and stand with their hands by their side.
- The fishes will start inside the circle and the shark outside.
- The shark is trying to tag the fish however the group is protecting the fish by clasping hands and opening them as needed.

Variations

- Each time the fish runs through a gap it gets closed up, see if the fish can seal all the gaps before being caught.
Pass the energy games - Yee Ha! / Zip zap boing! / Ah Kah So!!

Objective

- Social interaction and a fun warm up or energiser that can help to lift the energy of a group
- Aim to stay in the game as long as possible

Learners

- All abilities activity, needs at least 6 people

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite everyone into the circle standing beside each other. Frame that it is a fun game that requires quick thinking, action and (sometimes) loud voices! We will start slowly and get faster. Use some energy and exaggeration to help everyone understand the commitment required to make it fun and interesting, after a while we can play elimination:

Yee Ha’s is a farm game passing three actions between cowboys and cowgirls such as:

- A call of “Yee-Ha!” is accompanied by the arm and clenched fist across the body the direction of play moves it on to the next player.
- A call of “Hay Barn!” is made with both arms raised to resemble a roof above the head means the next player is missed and the play continues.
- A call of “Hoe Down!” is made with the opposite arm to the direction of play pulled down like a barrier which means the direction of play is reversed.

Zip Zap Boing involves an imaginary ball of energy that can burn if you hold it for too long... the three actions are:

- ‘Zip’ is actioned by swinging your arm across your body towards the person beside you. If you were using your right hand, you would be zipping to the person on your left and vice versa. They can continue in the same manner or...
- “Zap” is actioned by using both hands together and pointing to a person (be clear) across the group. If a person is ‘zapped’ they can continue with a ‘zip’, ‘zap’ or a ‘boing’. You cannot ‘zap’ the ‘zapper’.
- “Boing” is a rebound action that uses your whole body to reflect the energy back to the sender. You cannot “boing” a “boing”.

Ah, Kah, So is an extreme form of martial art and has three deadly and very loud actions:

- ‘Ah’ is a swift overhead movement with stiff hand pointed towards the person beside you. If you were using your right hand you will pass to the person on your left and it can be passed on in the same way in the same direction (not reversed by an “Ah”).
- ‘Kah’ is a strong pass across the circle by using a low brace position and one stiff hand pointing to a person across the group, who can pass it on with any of the three movements to someone else unless it is the sender in which case you must use...
- “So” is a block that is used to return to sender by using both hands up.

Variations

- Increase the pace of the game.
- Eliminated learners can walk around and distract the remaining players.
Angels and demons

Objective

• A short game to promote fun, movement and observation skills

Learners

• Adaptable for a range of abilities

Equipment

• Boundary ropes or markers

Suggested set up and frame

• Set up the boundaries and invite the group to play a fun game
• Explain the process for the first stage only
• Ask the group to mix and stand anywhere within the boundary (it might be a circle or rectangle, etc) and look around to choose someone in the group without saying anything.
• When everybody is ready, you can mention that this is your demon! The aim is to stay away from that person – at walking pace. Start the game and run it for a short time...
• Pause the game for stage 2 - look around and choose another person. This is your angel and they can protect you – so try to get them between you and the demon!
• Play the game for a bit longer but move on to another fairly quickly
Kangaroos, Koalas and Brolgas

Objectives

- Social behaviour and group performance
- Quick thinking to perform the appropriate actions

Learners

- All abilities
- Suggested minimum of 7, maximum 16

Equipment

- Nil required

Suggested set up and frame

- Ask the group to stand in a circle to play a quick, fun game together.
- Discuss the three animals, and agree on the actions/sounds of each animal - allocated to a middle person and also the two people either side to be involved.
- Practice each animal a few times to demonstrate technique and refine the actions:
  - **Brolga** – person in the middle stands on one leg and makes a long beak from one hand with the other behind their back, raising their head like a dancing brolga. Person on each side also stands on one leg and embraces the person in the middle with one arm while making a slowly flapping wing with the outside arm
  - **Koala** - crouches and yawns while the person on each side makes an ear shape with their arms
  - **Kangaroo** – person in the middle makes ears with their hands and shows their teeth while the people on either side embrace with one arm and they all jump several times in unison.
  - A volunteer or nominated person is brought into the middle of the circle, spins around to point at someone and calls an animal for them to perform with their partners.
  - As the game heats up any mistakes or delays in making the appropriate actions means that person is next in the middle
  - Continue the game until everyone has had a go

Variations

- Add in noises or more complex movements
- Encourage the group to come up with their own animals and actions
Marco Polo

Objective

- Social behaviour and interactions
- Find your partner while blindfolded

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- More the merrier

Equipment

- Boundary markers and a very safe area (supervision)
- Blindfolds – for everyone.

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up the boundary in a safe place and put safety spotters into position
- Invite your group to play a fun game that will require blindfolds (challenge by choice).
- Form two lines so that everybody is facing another person, to form a pair.
- Explain that you would like each pair to decide on words, such as marco polo, black beauty, sweet sour etc so that each person calls one of the words or sounds and they make a pair.
- When they are ready, ask each pair to announce their words, so everybody can enjoy the humour of the more inventive selections, and ensure that there are no duplications.
- Each pair then divides and moves to opposite ends of the area where assistants will help them be blindfolded and disoriented.
- The object is to find your partner by calling and listening for your pair. Safe movement while blindfolded means walking with hands up to protect yourself from other sightless people!
- When the pairs do find one another, they can open their eyes and enjoy watching the last pairs find each other.

Variations

- Use sounds instead of words.
- Assistants or learners that have finished can interrupt or distract learners
- Add a time frame or obstacles/bigger space
Elephant King

Objective

- quick-thinking memory game
- group performance fun
- social behaviours

Learners:

- adaptable for a range of abilities
- Minimum group size 6

Equipment:

- Enough chairs for everyone (the most comfortable chair should belong to the ‘Elephant King’)

Suggested set up and frame

- Ask the group members to find a seat anywhere in the circle.
- Ask them to choose an animal and an action for their animal and demonstrate it one-by-one.
- You can demo your animal first (elephant) which is your left arm straight and sitting across the bend of your right arm then your right arm will reach around your left to touch your nose.
- Now, inform the group that the intention is to not make a mistake with your action, be quick thinking and do the action of another animal.
- The person whose action has been done needs to do their own action and then someone else’s action. Should you mess up or take too long, you must move to the seat beside the Elephant King on his left. All participants now move one seat to their left.
- Each animal and action stays with that seat; this means that you now have a new animal and action to do. Memory is a good thing!
- You may challenge any person in the group. Keep going until there’s a mistake or decides to change it to someone else.
- The Elephant King is the king and has the last say - if someone is not quick enough or isn’t happy with the action, they can move that person to the left of them to begin the journey back around.

Variations

- Be aware of any cultural issues within your group. Ask for permission or choose another animal.
Giants, Wizards, Elves

Objectives

- Co-operation and decision making
- Quick thinking and running game
- Capture or avoid capture by the other team

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Need at least 8 people

Equipment

- 2 x 5m ropes
- Boundary markers

Suggested set up and frame

- Create the playing area by placing two ropes parallel to each other on the ground 2-3m apart. Place boundary markers/rope to create another parallel line about 15mts back from each rope.
- It may be useful to run the group through scissors – paper – rock games prior to this activity, as the idea can then be more easily understood.
- Invite the group to form two teams and introduce the game by explaining Giants chase Wizards; Wizards chase Elves; Elves chase Giants and clearly demonstrating these actions:
  - Giants: standing tall on toes and arms reaching above your head - roaring like a giant!
  - Wizards: bending knees and zapping with fingers as if to cast a spell with spooky noises.
  - Elves: crouch low and use hands to make pointed ears, making elf noises!
- When everyone has understood, they return to their “home” base line to huddle and discuss to decide what they will be (all the team must be the same character)
- When ready stand facing each other on either side of the centre rope.
- On the call, each team must imitate their character. The ‘winners’ try to tag the ‘losers’ before they reach home base, and those who were tagged now join the winning team
- Play the next round
More (advanced) tag games:

Kick the bucket

Objective

- Teamwork, communication and problem solving
- Score by kicking the bucket!

Learners:

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 5

Equipment:

- Boundary markers or ropes for the field
- Buckets or other items for the goals

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a field with centre line, and goals at each base line with a bucket full of water in the goal
- Invite the group to form two even teams for a running game, that also can be won with team strategy and stealth. Use bibs etc if they need help to tell each other apart.
- The aim of the game is to kick the bucket of the other team, however if you get tagged in their territory you must return to your baseline.
- You cannot go into your own teams goal area
Capture the Flag

Objective

- Teamwork, communication and problem solving.
- Capture the other teams flag and protect your own

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 8

Equipment

- Boundary markers or ropes for the field
- Two flags

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a boundary with two territories with flags and a “prison”
- Invite the group to play an active game, describe the rules:
  - Specifically state the boundaries of each team’s territory - once a player crosses that boundary line they are subject to being caught.
  - Let each team decide where they will place their flag and the prison. The flag must be visible and it cannot be moved by its team. A 5m circle around the flag is a safety zone that cannot be entered by its own team members.
  - The aim of the game is to grab the other team’s flag and carry it safely back to your team’s territory.
  - Some of the team can stay to guard their flag and others can head into enemy territory.
  - If a player sees an opposing team member enter their territory, they can catch them by tagging them. When a player is caught, they must go to prison.
  - If one of their teammates sneaks in and tags them while in prison, only one prisoner at a time can be freed and both players can walk back in safety.
  - If anyone grabs the flag, they must make it all the way back into home territory without being caught. If they do, the game is won!

Variations

Instead of having a jail the player that is tagged instead might need to return to their home base before re-entering the game.
Escape from the zoo

Objective
Teamwork, co-operation and fun group game.

Learners

- Adaptable for any abilities
- Minimum group size of 6

Equipment
1 x 10m rope for centre line
2 x sets of boundary markers
2 x Hula hoops
6 soft toys (wild animals)

Suggested set up and frame
- Create a half with 1 x 20m rope on a flat surface. Create two trophy boundaries, one on each side of the centre rope approximately 10m from the centre line using the other 2 x 20m ropes. Place the hula hoop in the centre of both trophy boundaries and place 3 x blue markers in one and 3 x red markers in the other. Split the group into two groups on either side of the centre rope.
- If you are on the blue team, you need to retrieve the blue markers (trophy’s) from the boundary and return them to your trophy cabinet.
- If a member of one team is tagged trying to collect or return a marker to their trophy cabinet, they must stand in the spot where they were tagged and release the marker (if they had one). They may only be freed by one of their own team members crawling between their legs (they are barred if they are half way through) although this is not a good option as they can be easy targets.
- When a team has all three trophy’s (markers) back in their trophy cabinet, they are the winners!

Key Safety Issues
- Make participants aware of possible head clashes when game intensity increases. (Maybe demonstrate a safe option)
- Keep tagging and ensure tagging is appropriate and with no intense force. (Boys can take tagging to a new level)
Camouflage (or Rob the Eagle’s nest)

Objectives

- Fun
- Exercise
- Teamwork and communication
- Avoid capture

Learners

- Adaptable for most abilities
- Minimum of 4 participants

Environment

- Area with some open space and also places to hide (bushland or campsite etc)

Suggested set up and frame

- Set boundaries for safety, careful with running and hiding
- Can share hiding spots but not compromise others in that spot
- Invite a group member to be the Eagle or spotter, standing in the middle of the open space
- Each player needs to tag the spotter (gently) or rob the Eagle of her eggs before running to hide
- The Eagle will count down from 20 with eyes closed while everyone hides
- Without moving (can pivot on one foot) the Eagle then searches for the culprits
- If they spot anything recognisable (eg. blue shirt behind the big tree) then that person sits aside from the game and observes
- After the search has finished the Eagle calls out and counts down from 15 seconds, repeating the process with less time each time
- Runners must leave their spots, tag the eagle and find another spot before the end of the countdown to avoid being spotted
- The last person left hiding is the new Eagle!
Fresh

Objectives

- Fun
- Exercise
- Teamwork and communication
- Avoid capture

Learners

- Adaptable for most abilities
- Minimum of 8 participants

Equipment

- Boundary markers or ropes

Suggested set up and frame

- Create a rectangular boundary using the markers or ropes on a flat surface.
- Be aware this is a high energy game as well as being strategic – successful teams have a combination of risk taking and good strategic awareness
- Invite the group to form 2 teams and have each team stand at their “home base” end of the rectangular boundary. Explain the rules carefully – then monitor safety.
- As soon as any player steps into the boundary, they are “fresh meat” and anyone from the opposite team that enters the field after them is able to tag them.
- If a player is tagged they are captured and must walk to the opposite corner (in the other teams home base) to wait for release.
- If a person from their team makes it across the line without being tagged, everyone who was captured, along with the rescuer can then walk back to their own home base to begin again.
- Once all members of one team are caught the game ends!
Ned Kelly

Objective

• Engage in fun, movement and interaction
• Become Ned Kelly by stealth

Learners

• Adaptable for a range of abilities

Equipment

• Boundary markers
• Hula hoop
• Foam noodle

Suggested set up and frame

• Create a boundary using a rope or markers on a flat surface. Place the hula hoop in the centre of the circle with all learners standing on the outer side of the boundary rope.
• Nominate or ask one person from the group to be a policeman with the foam noodle baton.
• The policeman walks around until they tap someone and runs to place the baton in the centre of the hoop, returning to the spot where he tagged the other learner.
• The chaser quickly goes to pick up the baton, and try to tag the policeman before they return to the seat. If successful the policeman is still it, if not they switch roles.

Variations

• After the game is running well, add the potential for anyone from outside the circle to run in, avoiding the baton and touch their head on the ground inside the hoop while yelling, “Ned Kelly!” First person to do these three times and escape each time, is the outlaw. If they get hit with the baton, they become the policeman.
Koosh ball invaders

Objectives

- Fun!
- Teamwork, communication and problem solving.

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 6

Equipment

- Boundary markers or ropes
- Koosh balls or soft toys (approx. one per player)

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a field with centre line and base lines, size is relative to group abilities/needs and type of toys. Place the koosh balls along the centre line for each side to access.
- Invite the group to form two teams along the base lines either side of the field
- Explain the rules and allow time for strategies to build before starting the game.
- When the game starts, everyone is on the field and cannot leave the field until they are out of the game.
- The main focus is throwing balls and toys, to hit a player on the other team.
- If you get touched by a thrown ball or toy you are out of the game - but still able to help your team recover balls and toys from outside the field.
- If a ball or toy is caught on the full, it is not a counted as a touch
Lowering energy group games

Human knot

Objectives

- Fun and engaging team challenge
- Aim to untangle the knot without letting go of each other – create a loop

Learners

- All abilities
- Between 6 – 10 is best

Equipment

- nil

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to play by circling up and reaching across the circle to grab someone else’s hand as if you were going to shake their hand.
- Now reach across with your other hand and grab someone else’s hand...
- Explain that the aim of this game is to not let go in order to become untangled!
- Allow time for the group to come up with strategies to move around and maintain their connections.
- Monitor frustration levels and communication – call time out if needed
- Rarely, a group will be really stuck and you may offer a single unclasp and reclasp to enable movement
  Often the group will end up in a large circle or figure of eight, celebrate this moment!
Couches

Objectives

- Fun and engaging team competition
- Try to get your team onto the couch
- Keep track of peoples names

Learners

- All abilities
- Minimum of 8 is needed

Equipment

- A comfortable couch to suit four people, or four separate chairs
- A chair or cushion for everyone else plus one more

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to play a team game (even numbers of boys vs girls, hats vs no hats etc. must be obvious who is on what team)
- Each person writes their first name on a piece of paper and folds it in half
- Sitting in the circle with two members of each team on the couch, explain the rules clearly
- The person to the right (anticlockwise) of the empty seat calls a name
- The person with that name in their hand will move to the empty seat and swap with the person that called them
- Repeat the process – call a name, they move and swap names...
- Remind them of the aim to call the other team off the couch and get their own team onto the couch – teamwork but NO CHEATING by offering names to call or showing papers etc
- Many people will be confused so offer to start a practice round to start learning...
- As the game progresses it becomes difficult to keep track of who has what name!
- As facilitator be clear on what needs to happen next and keep prompting until they are doing it for themselves
- Introduce a time frame to help move the game along and make people decisive – 5 seconds is heaps (ie. If they can’t remember they may as well guess a name!)
- First team to have four members on the couch wins!
Solo time

Objectives

- Connect with nature
- Reflect on activities
- Mindfulness

Learners

- All abilities

Equipment

- Can include pencil and paper
- Minimal food requirements

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to take some time for themselves
- Frame that some people may wish to exit solo and that is fine – show them where you will be waiting so they don’t need to disturb anyone else
- Discuss mindfulness and monkey brain, acknowledge thoughts that come in (refer to section on Dadirri)
- Can set tasks such as sound mapping, identifying all the insects, drawing, journaling, letter to future self etc
- Depending on the group it can be set up as a short time in proximity with each other through to an overnight or multi day experience out of sight of others
- Safety procedures and emergency communication set ups
- Opportunity to meet up and share something at the end so you may ask some questions or get them to bring something to the circle
Pictionary

Objectives

- Fun and engaging team competition
- Guess what is being drawn

Learners

- All abilities
- Minimum of 6 is good

Equipment

- Whiteboard and pens or similar resource

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to play a team game involving drawing on a whiteboard or similar area
- Divide into two evenly matched teams and choose the first nominated person (everyone will get a turn)
- The nominated person from each team leaves the room and consults with the person from the other team about what they will choose as a subject.
- The subject can be a pre-determined theme eg sea creatures, movies etc or can be totally up to them.
- The trick is to find something that is not too obvious (eg “cup”, but not too hard either eg “porcelain tea cup ”)
- The aim is to draw the object without saying anything, and the teams have to guess exactly the words that the drawers used to describe it to each other.
- Teams can look at the other teams drawing while playing, the game stops when someone calls out exactly the right description
- Swap drawers and play again

Variations

- Can use charade symbols (eg sounds like, two words etc) to allow for more complex examples.
- Can reverse the order of play – the team is describing to the drawer what to do without describing the object in mind
Have you ever?

Objectives

- Social interactions and getting to know each other
- To avoid being in the middle as much as possible

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Need for appropriate levels of disclosure

Equipment

- Nil required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite everyone into the circle to play a game that will help us get to know each other.
- Use chalk or post-it notes etc to mark positions on the ground (as a facilitator you don’t mark it to keep one less position in the circle).
- Set guidelines and parameters eg whatever you say has to be true for you, let’s start with some simple statements and always keep it PG rated to help maintain emotional and psychological safety
- A person nominated to start in the middle says “have you ever...” and states something they have done/seen/avoided etc
- If anyone else shares the experience then they must leave their spot and cross the circle to find a new position
- The person in the middle can take one of the spots so it is a race to avoid being in the middle
- Watch for some learners who like to be in the middle – gently remind them of the objective as this can affect other learner’s interaction etc.
Gangsta

Objectives

- Quick thinking, communication and agility
- Remember everyone’s name!

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 5

Equipment:

- Nil required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group into a circle to play a fast and furious name game.
- Explain the game - with one person in the middle (probably you for the first round), they will spin around and point at someone randomly
- The people on either side of them turn and say the person in the middle’s name as quickly as possible.
- The person in the middle swaps with the slowest person

Variations

- Elimination game
- If there are no triggers etc and working agreement is strong, it can be played as a fun game with imaginary guns with bullets held up and “bang” instead of names – the centre person ducks and the slowest person (whoever gets hit with the first bullet) swaps into the middle or is eliminated
Rock and water pairs

Objectives

- Social interactions and getting to know each other
- To avoid being caught off balance

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Any group size

Equipment

- Nil required

Suggested set up and frame

- Suggest that everyone pairs up with someone a similar size – perhaps someone you don’t know yet
- Introduce this will be a sequence of tests to see if you can keep your balance, think about being centred, grounded and reading the energy of the other person
- Balance beam, Sword fight, clasped hands, finger extended, touch your partner
- Unguarded knee tag, stationary, moving, other partners, hands up!
Challenging energy group games

Invisible Jump Rope

Objective

- Imagination, teamwork and encouragement.
- Avoid tripping over the invisible rope

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 5

Equipment:

- Nil required

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to come and play a fun skipping game, ask whether they would like to play invisible group skipping or invisible solo skipping first?
- Invisible solo skipping:
  - Adjust the length and set up your invisible rope by standing on it and bringing the ends up under your armpits to adjust. Holding the ends, flip the bight over your head.
  - Slowly begin jumping and turning the invisible rope in time with the jumps… easy!
  - Try a trick! Double jumps or cross overs!
- Invisible group skipping:
  - Choose a partner to help you swing the rope
  - Start by getting each person to run in and jump once before exit the other side
  - Try getting the whole group in at the same time!
  - Fancy footwork or tricks?

Variations

- Now try a real rope!
Voting Red and Green

Objective

- Strategise as a team to get the most points possible

Learners

- All abilities
- Two teams of at least a few people on each

Equipment

- Two red cards
- Two green cards
- Scoreboard

Suggested set up and frame

- Draw up a scoreboard for two teams and five rounds of the game to keep a running tally of the scores
- Invite the teams to sit apart from each other so they can both see the scoreboard but find it difficult to overhear each other’s strategies
- Explain the process and rules of the game – there will be five rounds where each team will decide to vote red or green and points allocated as follows:

If both teams vote Green:

- Earn 1 point each  
  +1  +1

If both teams vote Red:

- Each team loses a point  
  -1  -1

If one team votes Green and one team votes Red:

- Green team loses a point  
  -1  +3
- Red team earns 3 points!

- Emphasise the objective of this game is to get the most points possible!
- Direct the game to allow for slightly less planning time each round (or as appears appropriate)
Helium Stick

Objectives

- Teamwork, communication and problem solving
- Control the stick as directed

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 6

Equipment

- A long straight stick such as piece of light timber, bamboo or a broom stick.

Suggested set up and frame:

- Invite the group to make 2 lines either side of the stick facing each other.
- Each person can hold out their index finger.
- Place the stick on the fingers (straight fingers, no curling).
- All fingers must stay connected to the stick.
- The task is to, as a group, lower the stick to the ground.
- ENJOY 😊

Variations

- Invite the group to raise the stick from the ground
Stepping Stones

Objectives:

- Problem solving, teamwork and communication skills
- Get the whole group to safety without touching the ground!

Learners:

- Adaptable for a range of abilities
- Minimum group size of 5

Equipment:

- Carpet squares or similar panels eg closed cell foam
- Ropes or boundary markers

Suggested set up and frame

- Establish suitable boundaries for the group by laying two ropes or boundary markers on the ground, place resources nearby - there can be less stepping stones than group members
- Invite your group to try a team challenge (creative frame).
- For example the group is trapped by flood waters which are shallow but flowing really fast. If we don’t stand on a stepping stone we will be washed away and back to the start. If we don’t keep a hand or foot on the stepping stone, it will be washed away and lost!
- Allow play to start and monitor carefully – be consistent with consequences

Debrief

- Several experiences of failure are often required for a group to establish a workable plan and start supporting each other to achieve the task, so encourage planning time and debrief if needed after each attempt.
Blind shapes

Objective

• enhance communication and problem solving skills
• work as a team to create a solution

Learners

• Adaptable for all abilities and all group sizes

Equipment

• A length of rope suitable for your group size eg 6m+
• A blindfold per learner

Suggested set up and frame

• Invite the group to see if they wish to play a group challenge involving blindfolds (creative scenario) Present the problem clearly and allow some planning time.
• When ready, the group can put their blindfolds while you place the rope on the ground where they will need to search for it
• Once they find the rope, the task is to hold on and everybody to help form a square with the rope. Blindfolds must stay on until everyone is convinced that they have formed a square.
• When ready, place it on the ground and blindfolds can come off!

Debrief

• Important to share everyone’s observations
• Focus on feelings around involvement, communication and teamwork
• What could happen next time?

Variations

• Change the shape, eg. triangle, pentagon etc..
• Key people or everyone is not able to talk
• Set a time limit
Tarp Flip

Objective

- Teamwork, communication and problem solving.

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 5

Equipment:

- Tarp or rug approx. 2x3 metres depending on the size of your group

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite the group to standing holding the edges of a tarp with both hands.
- A ball or other object is placed in the middle of the tarp.
- The objective is to flip the tarp over so the opposite side of the tarp is facing up.
- Participants cannot let go of the tarp at any time and the object should remain on the tarp at all time.

Variations

- Set the tarp out and invite the group to a challenge – the first step is to stand on it.
- Make a creative scenario why there would be a need to stay on the tarp and flip it at the same time (or just set them the challenge) – eg. we have been out bushwalking and ventured too far off the track. It appears there is a species of worm living in the soil here that can eat through shoes etc to get to your brain, but thankfully this tarp is an effective barrier. This is an emergency and thankfully we have been able to call in a helicopter to the general vicinity. It is on the way but beware anyone that touches the ground will die! Stay on the tarp! The helicopter needs to find us and we told them the tarp is obvious, they are looking for a silver tarp. The only problem is we are standing on the wrong side! We have about 10 minutes to flip the tarp over so we can be saved.
- If anyone steps off the tarp they may lose their speech or vision due to worm activity (or everyone start again)
- Smaller tarps present much more of a challenging exercise!
- Add a time challenge
Collect the treasure!

Objectives

- Teamwork, communication and problem solving to retrieve an object.

Learners

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 5

Equipment

- Treasure box or similar container
- Treasure items
- approx. 1m of bungee cord or bicycle tyre tube that can stretch
- several ropes, some can be shorter than the diameter of the danger zone

Suggested set up and frame

- Boundary rope or defined area to create a “danger zone” – no go area
- Treasure chest, tin can or container suitable for the purpose placed in the middle of the danger zone
- Substance in the container suitable for the scenario (eg. chocolate, water, clues to the next activity)
- Resources must be stored outside the danger zone

Your creative scenario could include pirates, volcanoes, crocodile swamps, toxic waste, special operations etc. There is an imperative to lift and retrieve the object from the danger zone without dragging it (explain reasons). We need to solve the problem and work together to carry out the plan.

- If anyone falls into the danger zone the game ends – debrief and restart if suitable
- If the treasure/tin tips or falls the game is over – debrief and restart if suitable
- If a rope or other object touches the ground in the danger zone (for longer than 1 sec) it is lost

Question time and planning (eg set 5 minute limit)

Variations

- time restrictions relevant to the scenario
- Key participants gain extra challenges – become deaf, dumb or mute
- Non verbal limitations
- Provide shorter ropes or no bungee
- Shorter ropes
- Water in the bucket to increase the weight
Sheep and Shepherd

Group Objective

• Explore different ways of communicating and working together
• Put the sheep in the pen.

Learners:

• Adaptable for all abilities
• Minimum group size approx. 5

Equipment

• 1 x rope 6 – 8m in length
• hula hoop or square piece of carpet
• blindfolds for all the sheep
• whistle

Suggested set up and frame

• Set up the area with boundary markers for safety and a defined area as a pen
• Invite the group to play a fun game for communication, nominate a shepherd.
• The shepherd only can use the whistle (sheep can’t understand human language)
• The sheep have been blinded by the sun and it is important that they are put back in the pen or they might fall off the cliffs

• Question time

• Planning time

• When blindfolds are on, move the pen and disorient the sheep

• Non-verbal whistle signals challenge to communicate!
All tied up

Group Objective

- Problem solving, communication and co-operation
- Untie and tie a human knot

Learners:

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size approx. 6 – must have even numbers for the first activity

Equipment

- Short length of rope approx. 1.2m long for each person

Suggested set up and frame

- Invite learners to try a fun activity that will challenge personal space.
- Grab one rope each and pass the other end to someone else across the circle from you.
- You should now have a rope end in each hand.
- Attempt to untangle and straighten out the human knot into a circle.
- It is OK to turn around, step over or under - but not to let go of the rope.
- Occasionally you may need to allow a single unclasp and reclasp – let the learners plan who that will be.

Variations:

- Use a long rope or the same technique with an overhand or figure 8 knot in the rope before starting – then hold the rope and don’t let go until it is untied!

Debrief

- Important to share everyone’s observations
- Focus on feelings around involvement, communication and teamwork
- What could happen next time?
Ford Crossing

Objectives

- Use teamwork and communication skills to solve a problem
- Cross the area without touching the ground!

Learners

- Able to lift and walk on planks
- Recommended minimum of 5

Equipment

- 3 x planks approximately 2m in length
- 7 x stools
- Boundary ropes or markers

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up the boundaries and creative scenario, pile the resources nearby.
- Invite the learners to try and get across the danger zone safely without touching the ground.
- Monitor safety and frustration levels
- If anyone touches the ground, everyone starts again

Debrief

- Important to share everyone’s observations
- Focus on feelings around involvement, communication and teamwork
- What could happen next time?
Five Islands

Objectives

• Use teamwork and communication skills to solve a problem
• Cross to safety without touching the ground!

Learners

• Able to lift and walk on planks
• Recommended minimum of 5

Equipment

• 1 x plank approximately 2m in length
• 1 x plank approximately 1.3m in length
• 5 x islands (pallets or similar)
• Lashing ropes

Suggested set up and frame

• Set up the islands to be just far enough apart that the long plank will not span between any two islands.
• Invite the learners to come and stand on the islands in order to try something that requires communication and problem solving (creative scenario usually involving shark infested waters and a safe place to party!). By standing on one of the islands, you can create that as the safe destination.
• The challenge is to get everyone from where they are to the safe island without touching the ground (shark infested water). If anyone dies we all need to start again.
• Monitor safety and frustration levels

Debrief

• Important to share everyone’s observations
• Focus on feelings around involvement, leadership and teamwork
• What could happen next time?
Meuse

Objectives

- Use teamwork and communication skills to solve a problem
- Cross the area without touching the ground!

Learners

- Able to lift and walk on planks
- Recommended minimum of 5

Equipment

- 3 x planks approximately 2m in length
- 7 x milk crates
- Boundary ropes or markers

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up the crates in three staggered lines that are just far enough apart to require a plank between two crates on one line with another plank perpendicular to join the next line of stools. Essentially there is only one solution to this puzzle.
- Invite the learners to try something that requires problem solving (creative scenario usually involving a crocodile!)
- The challenge is to get everyone from the start line over to the finish line without touching the ground.

Debrief

- Important to share everyone’s observations
- Focus on feelings around involvement, leadership and teamwork
- What could happen next time?
Spiders Web

Objectives:

- Problem solving, teamwork and communication skills
- Get the whole group to safety through the web (or by disarming the web)

Learners:

- Adaptable for a range of abilities
- Minimum group size of 5

Equipment:

- Various ropes and bungee to make a web between two posts or trees

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a spider’s web between trees that will meet the groups needs.
- Frame the challenge is to weave the web with a length of rope through each hole without making contact with the web.
- If the web is touched then we need to start again

Variations

- Each team member must climb or be helped through the spider’s web without touching it! Once a person passes through a hole it then closes off and can no longer be used. Participants cannot go over or around the web. Safety is paramount and regardless of the frame, learners can move around the web to support others with this one.
- Turn the web onto its side horizontally and the challenge is to get through the web by stepping into it without touching it.
- Bells can be put onto the web so a sound is made when someone touches. This is great as it takes the authority role away from the facilitator.
Minefield

Objective:

- Teamwork, trust, communication and problem solving.
- Get through safely by not stepping on the dangerous mines!

Learners:

- Adaptable for all abilities
- Minimum group size 4

Equipment:

- blindfolds – one per pair
- 1 large rope, or boundary markers, to mark the boundary of the playing area
- Mines (soft or small objects of any size and shape to be distributed as obstacles)

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up the boundary rope and mines according to your objectives etc. The mines can be randomly distributed within the boundary.
- Invite the group to play a challenging team game, to get each other safely through the minefield!
- This game is ideal for all sorts of creative framing!
- Eg. learners pair up and take turns to lead their blindfolded partner through the maze from outside the boundary. If they touch a mine they have to spin around three times (or start again etc).

Variations

- Non verbal communication
- Challenging set ups including hanging objects etc
- A mission such as retrieve an object
- The opportunity to throw certain objects towards other players
Electric Fence

Objectives:

- Group focus on safety, co-operation and communication
- Get everyone over the fence in safety!

Learners:

- Adaptable for a range of abilities
- Minimum group size of 5

Equipment:

- A single rope to set up from a post or tree

Suggested set up and frame

- Set up a single rope by tying to a tree about waist height, depending on group strength and agility. The other end can be tied or a facilitator can hold onto it to allow for the activity to be a bit safer.
- Invite the group to try a challenging activity (creative frame)
- The aim is to get all team members across the electric fence without touching it
- If anyone touches they lose their eyesight and have to do it again
- How do you think we can do this safely?
- Monitor safety and frustration levels

Variations

- ask all team members to stay in contact throughout the activity.
- if anyone touches we all need to start again

Debrief

- Important to share everyone’s observations
- Focus on feelings around involvement, safety and teamwork
- What could happen next time?
Game master

Objective

- Invent a game

Learners

- Adaptable for a range of abilities

Equipment


Suggested set up and frame

- Create some structure if needed for learner experience/needs eg

- Can anyone think of a variation of that last game we played that would be fun to try?

- Allow for team facilitation and ideas sharing, perhaps you start by running their ideas then giving them ideas to run...

- The more regularly this occurs, the more able your group will be to support each other to run successful games
Add more games ideas here:
References


Collard, M (2016). Find the perfect group activity https://www.playmeo.com/


Department of Justice and Attorney General, Queensland (2016) Group Development and Facilitation Learner Guide.


Point Reyes Outdoors [http://pointreyesoutdoors.com/team-building-games](http://pointreyesoutdoors.com/team-building-games) 01.11.16


Venture Team Building [http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/teaching-team-building-session-structure/](http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/teaching-team-building-session-structure/)
Belbins team roles

Instructions

You may behave differently to some extent in different teams and groups. Your results may be more consistent if you have a particular team in mind when you consider the situations.

For each of the seven situations listed below:

- there are eight statements
- you have ten votes
- distribute the ten votes for each situation in any way you wish
- the number of votes for each statement indicates how true it is for you in that situation

You may give most of the votes to one answer, or give at least one vote to most answers.

The total votes for any situation, however, must add to 10.

There are no 'right' answers - the more truthfully you answer, the more useful the questionnaire will be for you.

Situations

1. I believe I can contribute to a work team or group because:

   ___ (a) I think I can quickly see and take advantage of new opportunities;
   ___ (b) I can work well with a very wide range of people;
   ___ (c) Producing ideas are one of my natural abilities;
   ___ (d) My ability rests in being able to draw people out whenever I detect they have something of value to contribute to the group;
   ___ (e) My capacity to follow through has much to do with my personal effectiveness;
   ___ (f) I am ready to face temporary unpopularity if it leads to worthwhile results in the end;
   ___ (g) I can usually sense what is realistic and likely to work;
   ___ (h) I can offer a reasoned case for alternative courses of action without introducing bias or prejudice.
2. If I have a possible shortcoming working in groups, it could be that:
   
   ___ a) I am not at ease unless meetings are well constructed and controlled;
   ___ b) I am inclined to be too generous towards others who have a valid viewpoint has not been given a proper airing;
   ___ c) I have an inclination to talk too much once the group gets on to new ideas;
   ___ d) My objective outlook makes it difficult for me to join in readily and enthusiastically with colleagues;
   ___ e) I am sometimes seen as forceful and autocratic if there is something which needs doing;
   ___ f) I find it hard to lead from the front, perhaps because I am over-responsive to group atmosphere;
   ___ g) I am apt to get too caught up in ideas that occur to me and so lose track of happening;
   ___ h) My colleagues tend to see me as worrying unnecessarily over detail and the possibility that things may go wrong.

3. When involved in a group project:
   
   ___ a) I have an aptitude for influencing people without pressuring them;
   ___ b) My general vigilance prevents careless mistakes and omissions being made;
   ___ c) I am ready to press for action to make sure we do not waste time or lose sight of the main objective;
   ___ d) I can be counted on to contribute something original;
   ___ e) I am always ready to back a good suggestion in the common interest;
   ___ f) I am keen to look for the latest in new ideas and developments;
   ___ g) I believe my capacity for judgement can help to bring about the right decisions;
   ___ h) I can be relied upon to see that all essential work is organised.
4. My characteristic approach to work in groups is that:
   a) I have a quiet interest in getting to know colleagues better;
   b) I am not reluctant to challenge the view of others or to hold a minority view myself;
   c) I can usually find a line of argument to refute unsound propositions;
   d) I think I have a talent for making things work once a plan has to be put into operation;
   e) I have a tendency to avoid the obvious to come out with the unexpected;
   f) I bring a touch of perfectionism to any job I undertake;
   g) I am ready to make use of contacts outside the group itself;
   h) While I am interested in all views I have no hesitation in making up my mind once a decision has to be made.

5. I gain satisfaction in a group task because:
   a) I enjoy analysing situations and weighing up all the possible choices;
   b) I am interested in finding practical solutions to problems;
   c) I like to feel I am fostering good working relationships;
   d) I can have a strong influence on decisions;
   e) I can meet people who may have something new to offer;
   f) I can get people to agree on a necessary course of action;
   g) I feel in my element where I can give a task my full attention;
   h) I like to find a field that stretches my imagination.
6. **If I were suddenly faced with a difficult task with limited time and unfamiliar people:**

   a) I would feel like retiring to a corner to devise a way out of the impasse before developing a strategy;
   b) I would be ready to work with the person who showed the most positive approach;
   c) I would find some way of reducing the size of the task by establishing what different individuals might best contribute;
   d) My natural sense of urgency would help to ensure that we did not fall behind schedule;
   e) I believe I would keep cool and maintain my capacity to think straight;
   f) I would retain steadiness of purpose in spite of the pressures;
   g) I would be prepared to take a positive lead if I felt the group was making no progress;
   h) I would open up discussions with a view to stimulating new thoughts and getting something moving.

7. **When working with groups I find:**

   a) I am apt to show my impatience with those who are obstructing progress;
   b) Others may criticise me for being too analytical and insufficiently intuitive;
   c) My desire to ensure that work is properly done can hold up proceedings;
   d) I tend to get bored rather easily and rely on one or two stimulating members to spark me off;
   e) I find it difficult to get started unless goals are clear;
   f) I am sometimes poor at explaining and clarifying the complex points that occur to me;
   g) I am conscious of demanding from others the things I cannot do myself;
   h) I hesitate to get my point across when I run up against real opposition.
**BELBIN’S TEAM ROLES QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES**

**RECORD FOR ANALYSIS**

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**Total**
Brief description of Belbin’s team roles

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**Implementer:** the backbone of the team in accomplishing detailed and practical outcomes. Best allowed a considerable amount of direct responsibility, and a principal action role in implementing group decision. Turns concepts and plans into practical working procedures. Carries out plans systematically and efficiently.

**Coordinator:** provides leadership (in the conventional sense of the term) by coordinating the efforts and contributions of team members. After encouraging contributions from others, the coordinator sums up the team verdict.

**Driver:** provides leadership (in the conventional sense of the term) by directing and controlling team members. Exerts a strong influence on the way in which the team operates and the objectives it pursues. Directs attention to matters such as setting goals and priorities, they can impose a predetermined shape on operations.

**Originator:** the ‘ideas person’ of the team, a prime source of ideas and innovation. Best given an innovative role where ideas can be generated and can play a strategic role such as forward planning. Advances new ideas and strategies, with special attention to major issues. Looks for ways around problems confronting the team.

**Resource Investigator:** acts as a source of information and ideas - explores and reports on ideas, developments and other resources from outside the group. Contacts, negotiates with and maintains external contacts which may be useful to the team.

**Monitor-Evaluator:** the ‘devil’s advocate’, critiquing the ideas and suggestions offered by team members. By analysing and evaluating plans they help ensure that the team is better placed to take balanced decisions.

**Supporter:** maintains group harmony, member satisfaction, and team spirit to maintain team effectiveness. Usefully fills support positions within a team. There are often several in a team. Supports members in their strengths for example by building on their suggestions. Underpins members in their shortcomings. Improves communication and fosters team spirit.

**Finisher:** provides attention to detail and follow-up, and instils a sense of urgency. Takes on the role of checking final completion of team tasks and protects the team from mistakes and omissions. Searches for aspects of the work which require particular attention and is often valuable in an emergency.
Flying the Blue Peter

The Blue Peter – also know as “Papa” – is a maritime signal flag representing the letter P. One of its secondary meanings, when flown by a ship in harbour, is to summon the crew:

“All hands report to the ship, she is preparing to sail!”

The flag was flown as a symbol for naval youth development programs throughout England during the 19th century in England, and widely used as a metaphor to summon young people to train for an important cause. Kurt Hahn - a German educator and moral leader during the Second World War, also adopted it for his adventure based learning programs that later evolved into Outward Bound and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme through his students.

He was concerned with the “modern decline” of our physical, cognitive, emotional, moral and spiritual capabilities that accompanied the transition from sail to steam during the industrial revolution, using sailing as a medium for growth.

“There is more to us than we know…”

Hahn experienced sunstroke while rowing as a teenager; he spent years in recovery and never regained the capacity to go out into direct sunlight. Despite this (or because of it) he found his Dharma as an advocate for adventure-based experiential learning. Read his timeless quotes here: http://www.wilderdom.com/Hahn.htm

“Your disability is your opportunity.”

Hahn’s progressive, learner-centred approaches rapidly spread around the world, while insisting that we must base our work on the wisdom of those who came before us, and sharing our work freely.

Think highly of yourself because the world takes you at your own estimate.

— Kurt Hahn —

Let us carry forward this great tradition and adapt it to our modern context, helping our young people and communities to prepare for their future challenges.