



ONE TEAM

CREATING A SAFE SCHOOL AND SPORT ENVIRONMENT

COOPERATIVE GAMES



INTRODUCTION

Cooperative Games that include a debriefing session, guided by the teacher or facilitator with a focus on diversity and inclusion, provide a natural medium that supports acceptance, tolerance and respect for one's socio-economic status, ability, language, race, culture, faith, age, actual or perceived sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. These cooperative initiatives involve students in the process of acting, reacting, feeling and experiencing (Orlick, 1982). Success of these games is experienced when students work together as a team and encourage each other to achieve the game's goals. Success in these games is not defined as scoring the winning goal or running faster to win the race. Teachers should create an environment where students can take risks and have the freedom to make decisions about the strategies or plans to achieve the stated goals. Even at times, when the goals may not be achieved, "failure" in itself can lead to many lessons, thus resulting in success through guided facilitation. It is not about "winning" but rather creating an environment whereby students' mental fitness needs are fostered.

Mental fitness has been defined as the state of psychological well-being derived from our thoughts and emotions, and is based on the need to be valued or appreciated for our strengths and positive qualities (competence), the need to be included or belong (relatedness) and the freedom to make healthy choices (autonomy) (Health and Education research Group (HERG), 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2007).

Give Your Everything: Be a Champion for Life

With a focus on mental fitness needs (Competence, Autonomy and Relatedness) and the Olympic values (Excellence, Friendship and Respect), the Canadian Olympic School Program's Be a Champion for Life resources allows students to explore their passions, interests and skills with an emphasis on inclusion and diversity. Students learn about mental fitness and its connection to Olympic values through class discussions, athlete stories, writing assignments and other fun activities.

<http://olympic.ca/resources/give-your-everything-be-a-champion-for-life/>

Once the conditions have been created to teach and nurture these positive living and learning skills, individuals feel engaged, empowered and supported in setting and achieving meaningful learning and performance goals (Allain, 2013).

COMPETENCE

Competence refers to helping participants recognize, use and expand their personal gifts and strengths in order to achieve their personal goals (HERG, 2007, Deci & Ryan, 2007). When we fulfill this need we feel a sense of joy, personal achievement and meaningful accomplishment.

When this need is fulfilled, I feel:

- I have many strengths and gifts that are often untapped and that are valued by others.
- A sense of worth and accomplishment when I use my strengths to pursue and reach my goals and work collaboratively with others.

RELATEDNESS

Relatedness refers to our need or desire for positive connection to and closeness with family, peers, and other significant individuals. We can fulfill this need through our positive interactions with others, our membership in supportive groups, friends, teammates, classmates and the support and encouragement we give to and receive from others (HERG, 2007, Deci & Ryan, 2007).

When this need is fulfilled, I feel:

- I belong and accepted, and am a valued part of a team, group or community.
- Included, encouraged and supported by others.

AUTONOMY

Autonomy refers to our need or desire for personal freedom to make choices or decisions that affect our lives (HERG, 2007, Deci & Ryan, 2007). When we fulfill this need we feel a sense of freedom and choice that leads to self-respect, joyfulness and respect for others.

When this need is fulfilled, I feel:

- I'm able to make good, positive decisions about things that are important to me.
- Hopeful because other people close to me support me in being an active participant in making good choices and positive decisions.

ACTIVITY CARD - HIGH FIVE

Description

Members of the group form a circle, outside the boundary (rope or existing painted circle). Inside the circle several different coloured foam / paper hands are placed within the circle. These hands have a number / letter written on them (depending on numeracy or literacy focus). Based on the number of hands, members will be asked to “high five” designated hands (numbers or alphabet) in order. Only one member can be in the circle at once. The objective is to have all members “high five” the hands in order under a set amount of time.

Success Criteria

All members assume a very important role in “high fiving” their designated hands, one at a time and in order. The group successfully completes the challenge when all hands have been touched in order (number or alphabet) under a set amount of time.

Equipment

- “Hands” (20-26 coloured hands can be purchased at the Dollar Store or made by students using Bristol board or cardboard)
- Rope or existing painted line that forms a circle

Setup

- Members are to stand in a circle, outside the boundaries (rope or painted line).
- Inside the circle, there are numbered hands, facing upward and randomly distributed.

Rules

1. The hands must be touched in sequence, with only one member being in the circle at once. Every member must touch at least one hand (no one is excluded).
2. All hands must be touched by the group, as fast as possible and in a sequence (numbers or alphabet).
3. All members must be involved; however, they do not all have to touch an equal number of hands (i.e. one member may touch two while another touches three). All members are encouraged to touch as many hands as possible (equal).
4. Each member has a maximum of 10 seconds in the circle at one time.
5. No communication is allowed to take place when the members are immediately around the circle.
6. All communication will take place at a separate place, called the time-out section. This is where all the brainstorming will take place. Once the members place themselves outside the circle, the clock will time that task. All strategies will be discussed here.
7. The object is that the team will realize this task in less than 1 minute (or 30 seconds).

8. A 5 second penalty will be added for any violation (two members in the circle at once, talking around the circle, for a hand missed or touched out of sequence).

Possible Solutions/tips

- It is encouraged that all members equally contribute to the tasks (but the number of disks may not equally divide in the group number).
- Allow the members to study the hands and place themselves around the circle near the predicted area where they will “high five” their hands, within their 10 seconds.
- The sequence/order must be followed, but they do not need to stay in the same place outside the circle. They can move around freely as they await their turn.
- Members are to communicate verbally during their time-out.
- Time-out may be located right beside the circle so the members can see the pieces of the hands.

Safety

- Ensure that the open space is clear of any obstacles or equipment (excluding the hands).
- The hands should have some “grip” to stick to the floor.
- Members will be entering and exiting the circle quickly, so other members must pay attention not to run into each other.

Adapted from Allain (1996). *The Effect of Adventure-Based Experiential Training on Team Cohesion*(Master’s Thesis, Kinesiology Program - Dalhousie University)



Anastasia Bucsis
Vancouver 2010

Variations

- Extra hands may be added to increase the level of difficulty.
- The set time may be decreased (less than 1 minute, less than 30 seconds, etc.).
- If using numbers, members may challenge the group to “high five” only multiples of 2’s, 3’s, etc. to reinforce numeracy.
- If using letters, members may be challenged to create a word or spell their name.

ACTIVITY CARD - RIVER CROSSING

Description

River Crossing requires that all members of a group “cross over” a river (designated space). The recommended designated space known as the “river” is half the area of the gymnasium or basketball court, located in the middle. Students must cross using two scooters, two rings and a long jump rope.

All group members are to leave the “shore” or “land” and cross over the river to the opposite “shore”. They are to use the available equipment (scooter, rings and rope) when crossing the river and cannot touch the river with any body parts. The floor space designated as the river stems from one shore (court line) to the other shore (opposite court line).

Success Criteria

When all group members, and all the equipment, have successfully crossed the river, without any body parts touching it, the assigned task will be successfully achieved.

Equipment

- 2 scooters
- 2 rings (deck tennis rings)
- 1 long jump rope (can be nylon rope)
- Designated lines (starting/finishing lines) - can be existing boundary lines, such as the basketball court or cones/markers

Setup

- It is recommended that existing boundaries or markers be clearly evident with the equipment (scooters, rope and rings) laying on the shore (starting line).
- One ring is set on each scooter and the rope is folded and is laying across both scooters
- The space (river) is to be free from any obstacles or safety hazards (bench, wall, stage, mounting equipment, etc.).
- Individual group members are to travel across the river on the scooter, without any body parts touching the river.
- The rope can be used to help pull someone on their scooter while the rings can be used to help propel the scooter or can be tied to the rope and used similar to a steering wheel or a pulling device.
- Often individual members will be pushed by other members as they coast over the river. This being the case, reinforce not to push too hard as their team member may fall in the “river” (off the scooter) or go in the wrong direction.

Rules

1. The designated lines or markers form the “river” (floor space)
2. If a group member’s body part(s) touches the river, that member will be sacrificed along with another member who has already successfully crossed the river and these two members must start over.
3. The first person who successfully crossed the river (pushed or used equipment to pull him/herself over the “river”) cannot be sacrificed and remains on that shore for the entire challenge. Even though this member cannot be sacrificed, they are not allowed to touch the “river”. If the river is touched, then another member must be sacrificed (start over). If this happens, a member who already successfully crossed the “river” or one who will cross it later must be sacrificed in place of the first person.
4. If a member touches the river as equipment or another member is “rescued”, a sacrifice is required (one member to go back to the starting line/shore).

Possible Solutions/Tips

- One member crosses over part way across the river on a scooter and uses the rings to push him/herself across the rest of the way.
- The first member, when they have successfully crossed the river, pushes the scooter back to other members, waiting on the starting line/shore.
- Members may keep the rope at the start line (pushed the first member- who used the rings) and throw it over to the first member who successfully crossed the “river” and use it as a “lifeline” to pull other members across.

Safety

- Other members must be aware that a rope or pieces of equipment are coming their way. Reinforce no need to throw the rope at a person or push the empty scooter with excessive force.
- The jump rope is not intended to be used as a tightrope, but rather a tool to help transfer others across the river. Reinforce that if members attempt to use the rope as a tightrope that they cannot help but “fall in” or touch the “river” with their feet.

Adapted from Glover, D and Midura, D (1992). *Team Building through Physical Challenges*. Human Kinetics Books Champaign, IL

Variations

- Use two ropes (one long and one short) - but ensure that the ropes are not much greater than the distance to be crossed as it will be quite easy to complete the task (make sure that the combined length of ropes is less than the distance).
- Add soft obstacles and if touched, the member is sacrificed (reinforce safety) and that a plan is required.
- Add an object such as a stuffed animal to be carried over the river.
- Have the group members return back to the starting line / shore (over and back).

ACTIVITY CARD - THE ROCK

Description

Initially this challenge may appear to be a simple task, but all members must balance on the “rock” for a designated amount of time. The item used as the rock may vary in size and shape, increasing the level of difficulty of the task.

All members of the group must balance on the “rock” (must be entirely off the floor) for at least 5 seconds. The members must find a way to support each other as they all need to find a way to be on “the rock” and off the floor entirely. Personal space may be sacrificed, putting some members outside of their comfort zone.

Success Criteria

When all group members are balancing on the “rock” (off the floor) for a period of time (recommended at least 5 seconds) the task is successfully completed.

Equipment

- An item that is considered the rock (suggested a 13 inch automobile tire, sturdy box or sticky mat). The size of the item will impact the level of difficulty and can be selected based on the size of the group.
- Tumbling mats are to be placed under the “rock”.

Setup

- The designated space is selected based on the size of the group (does not require a large space) and is away from obstacles or safety hazards (bench, wall, stage, mounting equipment, etc.).
- Tumbling mats are to be used in the event a member falls, decreasing the risk of injury.
- The “rock” is placed in the center of the tumbling mats.
- Despite how easy this challenge may appear, time is often required for members to master this task as they are to hold on to each other for a period of time, without falling off the rock.
- Reinforce that personal space will be challenged which may put some members out of their comfort zone.

Rules

1. All members of the group are to be off the floor while all or some members are to be balancing on the “rock” for a period of time (all members are to be off the floor, not all of them need to be touching the rock).
2. If any body part of any member is touching the mats (floor), then the entire group must start the assigned task over again.

Possible Solutions/Tips

- Often members are quick to jump on the “rock” and hold on to each other tightly, but do not remain “balanced” and off the floor for the set period of time.
- After a few failed attempts, members will quickly realize that they need a strategy or plan.
- Members may be encouraged to reach across and hold on to the member directly across from them and over the “rock”.
- Members may decide to put one foot on first and then their second foot.
- Some members may choose to stand on the inside of the rock, while being off the mats, facing other members and holding on to them.
- Members may wish to lie down on the “rock” and have others lie on top of them.

Safety

- Remind members that if a member expresses any pain or says “stop”, that they are to immediately clear the rock and re-evaluate their plan.
- Reinforce that this task requires physical contact/ touching with other members and that excessive force (pull or push) is not tolerated.
- If a student does not wish to participate in the activity, allow them alternatives such as helping with strategy without having to be in close contact with others.

Adapted from Glover, D and Midura, D (1992). *Team Building through Physical Challenges*. Human Kinetics Books Champaign, IL



Geoff Harris
London 2012

Variations

- To increase the level of difficulty, the set time to be off the floor may be extended or a smaller “rock” may be used.
- The hole in the tire (if used as the “rock”) may be considered the floor (members may place their feet inside the tire, on the rubber).
- If a group is experiencing difficulty, decrease the set time or allow members to stand in the “hole” of the tire (“rock”) or use a larger item.

ACTIVITY CARD - LEAN ON ME

Description

Sitting back to back with a partner, members have their knees bent and elbows linked (interlocked). While applying pressure on each other's back, they stand up together (back to back). When they successfully stand up, this group of 2 then joins another group of 2, until the whole group is standing back to back.

Success Criteria

The task is successfully mastered when the entire group is standing back to back, known as "mass stand up". The task begins with a group of two, then they join another group of 2, then another 2 joins the group, to where 6 members (3 pairs of 2) interlock their elbows and help each other by standing up, until all members are standing (2 separate lines).

Equipment

- Designated open space without any obstacles or equipment (can use a painted line to sit on each side of the line, back to back)
- Timer if trying to beat a set time

Setup

- Starting in groups of two, the pair will begin by sitting back to back, members have their knees bent and elbows linked.
- Once a pair has successfully stood up, they will then find another group of 2 to form a group of 4. Once the four are standing up, they then include another group of 2 until the entire group is involved (two lines sitting back to back) and they successfully stand up without using their hands nor "breaking the chain".

Rules

1. An individual member approaches another member who is about the same size (height and weight)
2. The pair will begin by sitting back to back, knees bent and elbows interlocked.
3. While applying pressure on each other's back, they stand up together, back to back
4. Once a pair has successfully stood up, they will then find another group of 2 to form a group of 4. Once the four members are standing up, they then include another group of 2, to form a group of 6 (two lines of 3 - with end members linking their elbows with one member behind them and the other elbow linked with the one beside them).
5. The group, forming two separate lines, sits back to back, knees up and elbows linked to have the entire group stand up.
6. No hands are allowed to be used to help members stand up.

Possible Solutions/Tips

- Groups may want to designate a "counter"/leader who counts "1-2-3 - up" as the timing is critical.

- The group can call a time out to re-assess where the "strength" is distributed or where there is a "break" in the chain.
- Members start by sitting close, without any space beside them or behind them.
- With some practice and cooperation, this task can be achieved.

Safety

- Reinforce that this challenge may put some members at risk if they have back issues (if so, they can be involved as a coach/referee - count 1,2,3 and up or with strategizing).



John Fennell
Sochi 2014

Variations

- To increase the level of difficulty, keep adding members to the group.
- Challenge the members to try standing with their eyes closed.
- Challenge the members to try standing without speaking.

ACTIVITY CARD - THE WHOLE WORLD IN THEIR HANDS

Description

This challenge can be mastered with ease or with difficulty. It will certainly depend upon the group's ability to work well together and communicate a plan. This task will require the members to transfer a large ball (suggested size 36 to 48 inches in diameter or larger, such as an Omnikin Ball) from one end of the gymnasium to the other (or smaller designated space).

The challenge begins with the large ball sitting on a hoop or tire. The goal is to move ball from one hoop/tire to another one, located at the other end of the gym. The group members are to move the ball without it touching the floor or using their hands. This task will require the members to be active as they move their individual body parts in many directions. A warm-up, including stretches is encouraged.

Success Criteria

The group is successful when the large ball has been transferred from the first tire/hoop to the other tire/hoop located at the other end of the gymnasium. The challenge ends when the ball successfully rests on the second tire, without ever touching the floor or being touched by the members' hands while being transferred from one tire/hoop to the other.

If the group members are encouraged to lift the ball over their heads, two members can be given the right to use their hands to hoist the ball over other members' heads.

Equipment

- 1 large ball (Omnikin) with the diameter of 36 to 48 inches and blown to the maximum size
- 2 tires/raised hoops
- Long open space (length of the gymnasium)

Setup

- Ensure that the open space is clear of any obstacles or equipment as some members of the team may decide to do the crab walk position to hoist the ball upwards.
- There should be sufficient distance from the walls as the walls cannot be used to help transfer the ball.
- All members of the group are to sit around the ball and decide their plan (crab-walk position, bridge, etc.)
- While they transfer the ball, the members can switch positions (crab walk, standing walk, crawling, bridge, etc.)

Rules

1. The ball cannot touch the floor.
2. Members' hands or arms cannot be used.
3. If the ball touches the floor or hands and arms are used, the ball must be returned to the first tire/hoop and the task re-starts.

Possible Solutions/Tips

There are various solutions for this challenge, so keep an open mind as the members formulate their plan. The following will provide a few suggestions to successfully complete the challenge:

- Members lift the ball off the tire with their feet while lying on their backs, then assume the crab walk position and walk sideways to the other tire/hoop while using their feet, legs and upper bodies to prevent the ball from rolling off a member and touching the floor.
- Group members may want to lie on their backs, head to feet forming two railroad lines while two members roll the ball, using their backs/buttocks by adding pressure on the ball and rolling it to the other tire/hoop.
- Similar to lying head to feet, members may want to lie side by side, but this time similar to railroad ties. Two standing members apply pressure on the ball (with their backs or buttocks) while rolling the ball to the other tire/hoop.
- Members stand back to back; two members use their legs to roll the ball up on at least one member, which goes over their shoulders. All members form a tight circle and the ball is carried on the members' shoulders as the members slowly walk down to the other side of the gym.

Safety

- Members are reminded that their personal space may be limited.
- If using the railroad style (members lying on the floor), the two members applying the pressure on the ball while rolling it across the gym must be aware of where they are walking, to avoid walking on other members.
- A warm-up focusing on various body stretches is encouraged as members will be using many body parts in various movements.

Adapted from Glover, D and Midura, D (1992). *Team Building through Physical Challenges*. Human Kinetics Books Champaign, IL

Variations

- Depending on the age group, hands or arms may be permitted to raise the ball off the first tire/hoop and lowered on the second one, located across the gymnasium.
- Members are encouraged to formulate a plan/strategy before they begin that requires all members to touch the ball at least once. It does not need to be equal time. If the intent is to increase the level of difficulty, then members may be asked to equally contribute (same number of touches).
- You may want to limit the movement patterns/techniques (crab-walk, crawling, walking, etc.).

ACTIVITY CARD - YOU'RE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PUZZLE

Description

Members of the group form a circle, outside the boundary (rope or existing painted circle). Members of the group are given a set amount of pieces of a puzzle. A puzzle is to be completed by the members placing all their pieces in the corresponding places to finish the puzzle.

Only one member can be in the circle at once. The objective is to have all pieces placed in the correct spot to complete the puzzle. Members leave their pieces of the puzzle in the circle allowing others to place them. Individual members are allowed to be in the circle for 10 seconds only.

Success Criteria

All members assume a very important role in “completing the puzzle”. The group successfully completes the challenge when all pieces are placed in the correct spots to complete the puzzle. The puzzle cannot be completed without every member’s contribution.

Equipment

- Jigsaw puzzle (can be an existing one such as “Oh the Places We’ll Go” by Dr. Zeus)
- Rope or designated lines to form a boundary

Setup

- Members are to stand in a circle, outside the boundaries (rope or painted line).
- Once inside the circle, only one member can go in to place the allocated pieces of the puzzle.
- A 10 second time limit is used for the member to be in the circle placing the pieces in the corresponding places.

Rules

1. All members are given a set amount of pieces of the puzzle.
2. Only one member is allowed in the circle at once. Once in the circle, members can place the pieces where they think they best fit the puzzle.
3. No communication is allowed to take place when the members are immediately around the circle boundary that is set.
4. All communication will take place at a separate place, called the time-out section. This is where all the brainstorming will take place. Once the members place themselves outside the circle, the clock will time that task. All strategies will be discussed here.

5. The object is to complete the puzzle as a team within the set amount of time.
6. A 30 second penalty will be added for any violation (two members in the circle at once, talking around the circle, etc.).

Possible Solutions/tips

- Allow the members to study the puzzle and place themselves around the circle, near the predicted area where they will place their pieces, within their 10 seconds.
- The sequence/order must be followed, but they do not need to stay in the same place outside the puzzle. They can move around freely as they await their turn.
- Members are to communicate verbally during their time out.
- Time-out may be located right beside the circle so the members can see the pieces of the puzzle.

Safety

- Ensure that the open space (circle) is clear of any obstacles or equipment (excluding the pieces of the puzzle).
- Members will be entering and exiting the circle quickly, so other members must pay attention not to run into each other.



Melissa Tancredi
London 2012

Variations

- Members of the group can study the puzzle so they can plan where to put their pieces once in the circle.
- A set time may be suggested (less than 1 minute, less than 30 seconds, etc.).
- Allow for non-verbal communication around the circle.
- Allow for verbal communication around the circle (but this may add pressure to the member who is currently in the circle). Emphasize no yelling!
- If the members are unsure where to place their piece of the puzzle, then they must take it with them until they have a chance to go back in (wait for their turn) and place the puzzle down.

ACTIVITY CARD - STEPPING STONE

Description

For this challenge, members stand on “stones”, or bases, in a specific order and in a straight line and reverse their order as they go from one end position to the starting position. Bases are placed in a straight line and are distributed (12 to 15 inches apart). Students begin on their designated base, then they move from base to base, until they are in the reverse order from where they originally started. One extra base is required (one more than the number of members), so members can use it to turn or shift their position. Members are required to help each other move and keep their balance.

This challenge allows for creativity as many solutions can be offered by various group members. Members will be required to support each other and at times, they may be taken out of their comfort zone as the challenge requires physical contact and close proximity. Effective member communication is required for the task to be successfully accomplished.

Success Criteria

Once all the members are standing in their reverse order from their starting position, the task is mastered.

Equipment

- Stones (carpet, markers, taped stones, etc.)- one more than the number of the members (if there are 11 members, then 12 stones are required)
- Stones maybe also be numbers so members can be assigned to the designated order

Setup

- Members begin by standing in an order on their respective base/stone
- One extra base/stone is used to help members shift or move direction
- A straight line of bases/stones is set up so members begin in one designated order and finish in a straight line, in the reverse order

For example:

START

John - Padma - Reagan - Lee - Brian - Miranda - Ashmit -
Kate - Dylan - Alyson - Chris

FINISH

Chris - Alyson - Dylan - Kate - Ashmit - Miranda - Brian - Lee -
Reagan - Padma - John

Rules

1. Only one member may touch a base/stone at one time (a group member may be lifted or help another off an occupied base/stone or step on another member's feet, who is currently standing on the base/stone) to move along.
2. When moving, a member can move from base/stone to base/stone in either direction to a neighbouring base/stone.

3. Members may touch a new base/stone only if it is non-occupied.
4. The bases/stones are not to be moved except if they are unintentionally moved and need to be returned to their original location.
5. When a rule is broken, the entire group must start the task again.

Possible Solutions/tips

- Often, the member at one end will work their way toward the other end by lumping or stepping over their neighbours, who are squatting or kneeling down.
- The member moving requires the empty base/stone upon which to step.
- The members need to keep a base/stone open between two members. For example, referring to the lineup in the set-up, an empty base/stone has to be between Padma and Reagan so John has a base/stone to step on. Padma gets as low as she can allowing John to step over her and Reagan reaches out to John to help him with his balance.
- Another attempt could include: Padma and John exchange positions. After John goes by, Padma moves to the end base/stone where John began. John moves over next to Padma and Reagan moves next to John, leaving an empty base/stone between Reagan and Lee. John tries to get past Padma to the next position and Lee prepares to assist John. The group continues this procedure until John makes it to the opposite end of the line. Then it becomes Padma's turn as she makes her way done the line, beside John. Then it is Reagan's turn, then Lee's...until the group has fully reversed its order. (John - Padma - Reagan - Lee - Brian - Miranda - Ashmit - Kate - Dylan - Alyson - Chris)
- Rather than jumping or stepping over the members of the group, members can simply step on each other's shoes/feet, without touching the base/stone.
- Group members could also lift each other over the bases/stones.
- There are many options to reverse the original line-up. Regardless of the option, members must help each other maintain their balance so that no member will touch the floor and no two members will be on the same base/stone.
- Members must be patient and supportive of each other as they attempt many options.

Safety

- Emphasis is placed on how each member will assist each other. For instance if they choose to jump over each other, it is imperative that the other members remain low.
- If members are being lifted, then mats should be used and/or a maximum lifting height is suggested.
- A warm-up with many stretches is suggested as body parts will be moving in many directions.

Adapted from Glover, D and Midura, D (1992). *Team Building through Physical Challenges*. Human Kinetics Books Champaign, IL

Variations

- Options suggested in the solutions/tips may be used as variations (try another way).
- You may want to set a time to increase pressure and level of difficulty.