

1. Ice Breaker / Acquaintance Activities

Objective: To provide opportunities for group members to get to know each other and to begin feeling comfortable with each other through activities, initiatives and games that are primarily fun, non-threatening and group-based (Schoel et al. 1988:280).

Active Names

The group stands in a circle and one person begins by coming into the centre and saying his/her name with each syllable accompanied by an action. For example, Natalie comes into the middle and says NAT-A-LIE, accompanied with a clap, jump, and click of the fingers. The group in unison repeats the name and action with Natalie a couple of times. She then returns to the circle and the next person continues with his/her name/action (Orlick 1978).

Circle the Circle

The group is divided into two teams and one team starts off by throwing a ball (or some other object such as a rubber chicken) anywhere in the gym. The same team then forms a circle and one person is picked to run as many laps as possible around the circle. At the same time the other team has to pick up the ball, line up as a train and then pass the ball over and under every second person. Once they have completed this it is their turn to throw the ball and try and get as many laps as possible. The winner is the team with the most amount of laps at the end of the game (Rohnke 1989).

Aerobic Tag

The group is split up into two teams and one team tries to pass a hoop around between them without dropping it or it being intercepted by the other team. The team gets one point if they can keep the ring going for more than 30 seconds or 10 continuous passes. In a variation of this, called anaerobic tag, the teams try and make 5 passes between them and then pass the hoop to someone who is standing inside one of two circles in the gymnasium to score points (Rohnke 1989).

Human Pinball

Played between two teams on a court where each team is trying to pass a ball around and hit one of three cones located behind the opposite team's side of the court. The defending team is allowed one person behind a line approximately 2 meters away from the cones whereas the attacking team is only allowed to throw the ball behind that same line. The team who can hit all three cones first wins (Foundation 1976).

Smaug's Jewels

One person is selected to be the 'smaug' and his/her task is to try and stop the others in the group from taking a number of beanbags surrounding him/her. If someone gets tagged by the smaug they become paralysed for the rest of the game (Foundation 1976).

Hospital Tag

This game is a variety of tag where if you get tagged you cover your 'wound' with one of your hands. If you get tagged a second time, you cover your wound with your other hand. The third time you get tagged, you are out (Wilderdom 2007).

Whaumpum

The group sits down in a circle. One person comes into the centre of the circle with a 'boffer' (foam sword). The game begins by someone seated in the circle saying someone else's name and the person who gets named then has to come up with another name of the people in the circle before the person with the boffer hits their feet. If someone gets hit they replace the person in the middle (Rohnke 1989).

Boffer Tag

The group is standing in a circle with each person on a spot marker. In the centre is one person also standing on a spot marker and at their feet is a boffer. Play begins with the centre person boffing someone on the legs and then replacing it on the centre spot and stealing the boffed person's spot before they can grab the boffer from the centre and boff the outgoing person. In which case it all switches over. When people get used to the game, introduce two boffers and/or allow people in the outer circle to steal spots that have been vacated by the boffed person so that they have look around for a safe spot to return to if they can (Wilderdom 2007).

2. De-Inhibitizer Activities

Objective: To provide a setting wherein group participants are able to take some risks as well as make improvement in commitment and a willingness to appear inept in front of others (Schoel et al. 1988:282).

Hog Call

The group is divided into pairs and is told to decide on a farmyard animal's sound. After practicing making the sound for a while they then go to separate sides of the gymnasium, close their eyes and start making the sound as loudly as possible, attempting to find each other without looking (Rohnke 1989).

Human Knot

In a circle, people put their arms in and hold someone else's hand, then try to unravel the knot without letting go of hands (Wilderdom 2007).

Speed Rabbit

The group stands in a circle and a person goes in to the middle and points to a person in the circle and says either elephant, frog or cow. The person pointed to must make the central move for that animal, and the persons on either side must make the appropriate appendages. If a person is too slow, or mucks the move up then they take a turn in the centre (Rohnke 1989).

Inchworm

The group is divided into teams of about 5-6 and form a line with legs wrapped around the person in front. The objective is to cover a certain distance moving as a team on bottoms only (Wilderdom 2007).

Bumpity Bump Bump Bump

The group forms a circle and the teacher/facilitator stands in the middle. S/he asks the group to make sure they know the name of the person on their right and left. S/he then points at someone and says, "Right!" That person must name the person on their own right. If s/he says "Left!" then they must name the person on their left. Once people understand the game, then add the phrase "bumpity bump bump bump" after saying "Right" or "Left." The person being pointed to must say the correct name before the person in the middle finishes the phrase. If they don't make it, they take the place of the person in the middle (YMCA 2005).

Impulse

The group stands in a circle and holds hands. The teacher/facilitator begins an impulse by squeezing the hand of the person next to him/her. That person then passes the squeeze to the next person, and so on, until it gets all the way around the circle. Try it in the other direction, then try it in both directions at once. For another twist, add a sound or a word along with the hand squeeze (YMCA 2005).

Ship Wreck

The group is running around in the gym and when the teacher calls “ship wreck” everyone has to get into one of the hoops that are lying across the gym floor. The last person to get into a hoop is out (Rohnke 1989).

3. Trust and Empathy Activities

Objective: To provide an opportunity for group members to trust their physical and emotional safety with others by attempting a graduated series of activities which involve taking some physical and/or emotional risks (Schoel et al. 1988:284).

Car Car

In pairs one person places their hands on partner's shoulders who now becomes the car. The car has their bumpers up, i.e., hands raised to chest height, fingers up palms facing out. The driver, then drives the car around the playing space without any crashes. Gradually increase speed and mobility at the call of the car. This game can be done with eyes closed but play would need to be initially reduced to straight line driving before allowing free driving (Rohnke 1989).

Walk/Run the Gauntlet

The group forms two lines facing each other with their arms extended finger tip to finger tip. One person after another then walk or run down the 'gauntlet' as the arms are dropped at the last minute to let them through (Rohnke 1989).

Mirror Image

In pairs people face each other with an imaginary mirror between them. One leads the other on a gentle aikido like movement sequence as the partner follows. At some stage the leadership changes so the first leader becomes the follower. Encourage slow motion movement for quality and control. Can be done in groups of three or four if necessary (Orlick 1978).

Trust Fall

The group is divided into groups of three where two people act as catchers (spotters) to the third person who is standing between them. The person in the middle then falls gently towards one of the catchers, who supports the faller and swings him/her towards the other catcher (Rohnke 1989).

Willow in the Wind

The group is divided into groups of 6-8 and each group forms a circle. One person come into the middle of the circle and closes his/her eyes. When the others are ready the person falls in any direction and is then "passed around" the group (Wilderdom 2006).

Mine Field

Objects are scattered in an indoor or outdoor place. In pairs, one person verbally guides his/her partner, a blindfolded person, through the minefield (Wilderdom 2006).

Running Free

In pairs, one person is blindfolded. Holding hands, the blindfolded person is lead gradually from a slow walk up to fast running. Swap (Wilderdom 2006).

Blindfold Line Up

All players have eyes closed or covered. They are required to line up according to, for example, their street numbers or birthdays. No speaking is allowed (Rohnke 1989).

4. Communication Activities

Objective: To provide an opportunity for group members to enhance their ability and skill to communicate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors more appropriately through activities which emphasise listening, verbal, and physical skills in the group decision-making process (Schoel et al. 1988:286).

Traffic Jam

Have each person of the group line up and stand on a poly spot, place the extra spot in the middle of the line. The goal of the game is to get side A to side B and Side B to side A, all facing forward. The rules are as follows: no moving backwards; a person can only move forward to an empty space; a person can not “jump over” their own team mate; only one person may move at a time, one spot per person, no sharing; if any of these rules are broken, the group must begin again (Rohnke 1989).

Rock-Paper-Scissors

The whole group is divided into two teams and each team has to decide what item to throw into a neutral zone between the two teams. The team that throws the winning symbol runs after the other team, trying to tag as many as possible before they reach their safe zone. The people who get tagged then join the other team (Foundation 1976).

Slip the Disc

The group is divided into teams where each member of the team has to be standing on their knees and hands next to each other. The team then attempts to move a disc (e.g., a Frisbee) from the first person to the last without using their hands (Orlick 1978).

Island

Place a few Frisbees or spot markers on the ground. Have the group start prancing, clapping, chanting or singing around them. When the teacher calls “Islands”, everyone runs to touch a Frisbee or spot marker. But in touching an ‘island’ they must not touch each other. As the game progresses reduce the number of islands so that the task is more difficult and discussion opens up on how to do the apparently impossible (Rohnke 1977).

Amoeba Races

The group is divided into teams consisting of 4-5 people. The objective is for each team to get across the gym as quickly as possible with a hoop around their waists (Rohnke 1989).

5. Decision-Making/Problem-Solving Activities

Objective: To provide opportunity for group members to effectively communicate, cooperate, and communicate with each other through trial-and-error participation in a graduated series of problem-solving activities which range from the more simply solved to the more complex (Schoel et al. 1988:288).

Crossing the Amazon

The group is divided into teams and each team has to get all their participants across the gym floor (the Amazon) by only using a limited number of 'magic lily pads' (hoops) (Rohnke 1989).

Braack-whfff

Everyone has one balloon. All balloons are blown up just short of popping, without being tied off. People are in teams of 4. One person from each team lets go of their balloon. Wherever it comes to rest another team member advances to that point and releases their balloon in an attempt to further their teams distance from the starting line. This pattern continues until all balloons have been released. See which team gets the furthest (Rohnke 1989).

Mummy Wrap

The group is divided into teams of 4. Each team has one toilet roll. The objective is to wrap one team member in a standing position as an Egyptian mummy. Mummies could then be judged for neatness, creativity etc (Wilderdom 2007).

Diminishing Load

The group is divided into teams. The object of the game is for each team to move all of their team members from one area to the other, under the following conditions: to get to the other area, players must be carried; the player who carried a person across, must be the next player carried; you may use more than 1 player to carry, but they would have to be next one carried; player (the last player) will get a free pass across the area, but only 1 player; if the team gets stuck or feels they have made a mistake in order, they may start over at any time; if a player touches the ground, in any way, while being carried he/she must go back (Rohnke 1989).

Electric Fence

Divide group into two teams. For each team, find two trees (or badminton posts in a gym) close together. Take a length of rope and create a sort of web by cutting the rope and tying sections together with duct tape. The teams must get their entire team through the holes of this fence without being "electrocuted" (touching the rope). First one to do so, wins (Company 2007).

6. Social Responsibility Activities

Objective: To provide a setting wherein group participants can build upon previous gains in areas of acquaintance, trust, communications, and decision-making, to develop skill in assessing and working effectively with the strengths and weaknesses of individuals in a group (Schoel et al. 1988:290).

Belaying

When doing rope work you can have a student being 'belayed', which means protected by a rope-friction arrangement. This usually consists of two or three particular knots (Rohnke 1977).

Spotting

Involves having one or more individuals in position to 'catch' another person in the event of a fall when, for instance, doing rope work. This can be practised by playing 'trust fall' or 'willow in the wind' (Rohnke 1977).

Fire Building

Is a time honoured and historic, if not, pre-historic skill. It is a skill which is fundamental to comfortable survival in the outdoors. In addition, fire making has an almost magical attractiveness to it. There is some real skill and knowledge (and a bit of luck) in getting a fire started. Success is immediately reinforced and is intrinsic. No one needs to tell a student whether he/she started a fire successfully or not (Rohnke 1977).

First Aid/Rescue Techniques

Rescue exercises and emergency first aid practice lend themselves to classroom use in bad weather. These skills can be used when doing rope work in a simulated rescue from a high element or any outdoor wooded area (Rohnke 1977).

Initiative Day

This day away from the school could serve as a culmination to an ABL programme. It gives students an opportunity to put to use both the outdoor and inter-personal skills they have developed in the programme. The students can be dropped off in groups at different points along a certain circuit and use maps and compasses. They are then expected to complete this circuit during the day. At each check-point, the students are met by a teacher and instructed to do a brief task, partly based on what they have learned and partly for fun. The day provides a sense of completion and wholeness to the ABL programme as well as a bit of dramatic enjoyment in an unfamiliar setting (Rohnke 1977).

7. Personal Responsibility Activities

Objective: To provide activities and initiatives of a somewhat more individualistic nature which challenge participants to develop persistence and resistance to frustration in attempting to reach a desired goal (Schoel et al. 1988:292).

Balance Beam

These balance walk devices can be quite varied in their shape and construction. The object is to provide balance problem by lashing variously sized logs or pipes between support posts. Vary the diameters, lengths, shapes, angles and tie-in points to provide a number of balance problems (Rohnke 1977).

Breathe Easy

Divide the group into pairs or have students act individually. Have each student hold his/her breath for as long as possible while their partner keeps track of time. Then tell the students to hold their breath again. When they are ten seconds short of their previous record, they are to open the paper which their partner gives them and do a short division problem out to one decimal place without taking a breath. They are to imagine that they are scuba diving and their lives depend on doing the task accurately (Rohnke 1977).

Pamper Pole

Climb a subtly swaying vertical 10-12 meter hardwood pole mantle on to a very small platform on top of the pole, stand erect on this platform without using the belay rope for support and jump for a trapeze that hangs at eye level from the bottom wire of an even higher two line bridge (Rohnke 1977).

Track Walk

A series of 2" x 6" lengths of boards can be place and bolted at varying heights and angles on a flat well-cleared area and will make up an excellent track walking challenge (Rohnke 1977).

Criss-Crotch

A low balance device that can be used by either one or two people. Two wires are connected close to the ground level so that the wires make up an "X". The object is to walk the wires from one end to the other without falling. Two people can use the wires as a balance event, trying to bounce, shake or shimmy the other person off his balanced position on the wires. Each person takes a stance comfortably near their respective starting points, with one foot on each wire. When a person falls off, the "champion" remains and meets the next challenger (Rohnke 1977).

References

- Company, Salt & Light (2007). *Outdoor Games*. 19/4 2007.
<http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/prs/chaplaincy/saltandlight/retreatbook/outdoormixers.htm>
- Foundation, New Games (1976). *New Games Book*. New York: Main Street Books.
- Orlick, T. (1978). *Cooperative Sports and Games Book*. New York: Pantheon.
- Rohnke, K. (1977). *Cowtails and Cobras - a guide to rope courses, initiative games, and other adventure activities*. Hamilton: Project Adventure.
- Rohnke, K. (1989). *Cowstails and cobras II*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Rohnke, K. (1989). *Silver Bullets: A Guide to Initiative Problems, Adventure Games and Trust Activities*. Dubuque, IA.: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Schoel, J, D Prouty and P. Radcliffe (1988). Activities selection chart including the trust fall/spotting exercise sequence. In (ed.). *Islands of healing : a guide to adventure based counseling*. Hamilton, MA.: Project Adventure.: 279-296.
- Wilderdom (2006). *Trust Building Activities*. 19/4 2007.
<<http://wilderdom.com/games/TrustActivities.html>>
- Wilderdom (2007). *Icebreakers, Warmups, Energizers, & Deinhbitizers*. 19/4 2007.
<<http://wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html>>
- YMCA, Camp Manito-wish (2005). *Leader Initiatives*. 19/4 2007.
<<http://www.manito-wish.org/programs/deinhibit.html>>