

Teambuilding for Everyone

* * * * *

IIRP World Conference 2017

Bethlehem, PA

Pam Thompson, M.R.P.Y.C. and Samantha H. White, M.R.P.E.

Group process is very powerful; it provides the key to creating a supportive and caring environment that challenges people so that they can grow and change. People build more intimate and positive relationships within a healthy group.

Group development is defined by five stages:

Forming: How people behave when they first come together in a group

Storming: How new groups struggle to get comfortable as individuals compete with each other for leadership and get used to each other

Norming: The stage when people are more comfortable with each other and normalize their relationships

Performing: When a group is functioning reliably in a good way

Mourning: The final stage when a group ends

It is imperative that facilitators use activities relevant to the current stage of the group in order to help the group develop and move toward “performing.” All groups go through these stages to be healthy and to provide the benefits of a healthy system for their members. However, if a group fails to develop, negative alliances form, individuals do not grow, and the group may actually be detrimental to its members.

Groups sometimes regress, especially when new members come in. The existing group must be strong enough to integrate the newcomers and get them to buy into the positive norms of the group, allowing the community to return to the performing stage.

In the **forming stage**, the role of the facilitator is more directive, and helps to reduce uncertainty and provide a safe atmosphere. The facilitator needs to allow time engage with activities that allow group members to get to know each other, ensuring the quiet ones are drawn out and not left out. Rituals may be used to introduce people and get them engaged. The facilitator needs to explain the purpose/goals of the groups and to model expected behaviors.

In the **storming stage**, the role of facilitator is to help members deal with conflict. The facilitator needs to acknowledge conflict as an opportunity for growth and improvement. It is vital that the facilitator make certain group rules are followed, assuring that there is adherence to core values, such as truth, trust, and respect. This allows group members to learn about tolerance and patience. In order for the group to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a "testing and proving" mentality to a cooperative, problem-solving mentality.

In the **norming stage**, the role of facilitator is to model listening skills and foster an atmosphere of trust. The facilitator helps group members use problem-solving skills to mediate differing positions, clarify any role ambiguity and, when appropriate, re-focus the purpose or rules for group functioning.

In the **performing stage** (which is not reached by all groups), the role of facilitator is to be a collaborator and keep the group moving. The facilitator needs to stay out of the way of the group’s progress. The group is highly productive and there is unity among its members. Group identity is complete, morale is high and group loyalty is intense.

Sample Processing questions:

- *How did your group work together?*
- *Who was most involved or who was least involved in the task?*
- *Was your group successful?*
- *How could you have worked more effectively as a team?*
- *Did the individuals in the group work independently or as a team?*
- *Comment on your own role in the group.*
- *Who showed leadership?*
- *What leadership style was displayed?*
- *Were varied ideas encouraged?*
- *Was communication clear and effective?*
- *Were ideas shared openly?*
- *Was appropriate or non-appropriate risk-taking displayed?*
- *Was peer pressure displayed?*
- *Was competition involved? Was this good or bad?*
- *Were gender issues displayed?*
- *How did you feel? Afraid, apprehensive, comfortable, bored, excited, resentful, proud, etc.*
- *Do you have any other observation about your group?*

Human Scavenger Hunt

Find others in the class who match each statement. Do not to repeat any names.

Someone who:

1. Is the first person in his/her family to attend college _____
2. Has over 20 letters in his/her entire name _____
3. Was not born on the east coast _____
4. Has lived on a farm _____
5. Has ran a race in the last year _____
6. Has a birthday in June _____
7. Can juggle _____
8. Has visited at least 5 other states _____
9. Likes the Phillies _____
10. Plays a musical instrument _____
11. Has more than 3 siblings _____
12. Works out at least 4 times a week _____
13. Lives on a street named after a tree, flower, or other plant _____
14. Likes Dunkin' Donuts more than Starbucks _____
15. Was a member of student government in high school _____
16. Watched less than 1 hour of TV last night _____
17. Has a pet that weighs at least 10 pounds _____
18. Likes to go camping _____
19. Likes asparagus _____
20. Has a favorite color that isn't blue, green, or pink _____

Blind Draw Team Building Activity

In this activity, the team has to instruct their “artist” to draw an item. They have to describe their chosen item without revealing what it is and they are not able to see what the “artist” is drawing. At the end of the activity, the team whose drawing is closest to the actual item wins.

Resources: Flipcharts, markers. A small selection of everyday items (for example: a coin, a well-known company logo, a pencil, a bottle, a key, etc). You could also print pictures instead of actual items.

Space Required: Small. Ideally indoors.

Group Size: 6 – 20 is ideal. Each small team should have 4 – 6 participants.

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 10 minutes to brief and setup
- 10 minutes for the activity
- 10 minutes to review and debrief

Running the Activity

- Explain the activity: Each team appoints a member to be the “artist” and the “artist” is then separated from the rest of the group. The remaining members select an item from those provided by the facilitator and will instruct the “artist” to draw it without saying what the item is. There is a time limit of 3 minutes for the drawing to be completed. Each flipchart is positioned to face away from the group so that they cannot see what the “artist” is drawing. The team whose drawing is closest to the actual item they picked wins the game.
- Get each team to appoint their “artist” who is then separated from the group. Each team selects an item from those provided.
- Once they are ready, they can begin the activity.
- At the end of the activity, all the drawings are revealed.

Rules

- The team cannot tell the “artist” what their item is; they can only give instructions.
- The “artist” cannot ask any questions and can only draw based on the instructions given by their team.
- There is a time limit of 3 minutes for the drawing to be completed.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Communication
- Creative thinking

Activity Guidance and Notes

This activity is great for promoting communication skills. While it sounds like an easy task, the one-way communication from the team to their “artist” needs to be precise in order for the “artist” get the drawing right.

It may be useful to run this activity in two rounds; after the first round, the team will realize how important it is to be detailed in their instructions. Challenge the teams to do better in the second round.

Review

Suggested questions to ask:

- How well did the team describe the item to their “artist”?
- How well did the “artist” understand the instructions and how close were they to duplicating the actual item?
- What problems did you encounter during the challenge?
- Did you identify a leader?
- What leadership was demonstrated during the challenge?
- How well did you communicate during the challenge?
- (If the activity is done in two rounds) How did the team act differently in the second round?
- What did you learn from the challenge?

Commonalities and Uniquities

Form groups of five to eight people and give them two sheets of paper and a pencil or pen. The first part of the activity is Commonalities, where each subgroup compiles a list of the things they have in common. In order for it to make the list, it must apply to everyone in the subgroup. You want to avoid writing things that people can see (e.g. “everyone has hair,” or “we are all wearing clothes”). Try to get them to dig deeper. After about 5 minutes, have a spokesperson from each subgroup read their list.

Then, depending on your goals for the session, you can have half of each subgroup rotate to another group for Uniquities or you can leave everyone in the same group. On the second sheet of paper have them record unquities, meaning that each item applies to only one person in the group. The group tries to find at least 2 unquities for each person. After 5-7 minutes, you can have each person say one of their unquities or have a person read them one by one, having others try to guess who it was. (Again, you want to go beyond the superficial, avoiding those things that people can readily see).

Building Dynamic Groups

Broken Squares



Introduction: Through the "Broken Squares" activity and discussion, participants learn the importance of effective interpersonal skills and discover ways they can develop their own interpersonal abilities. As a result of the activity, participants should be able to identify at least one reason why interpersonal skills are important and at least one way that they can improve their own interpersonal abilities.

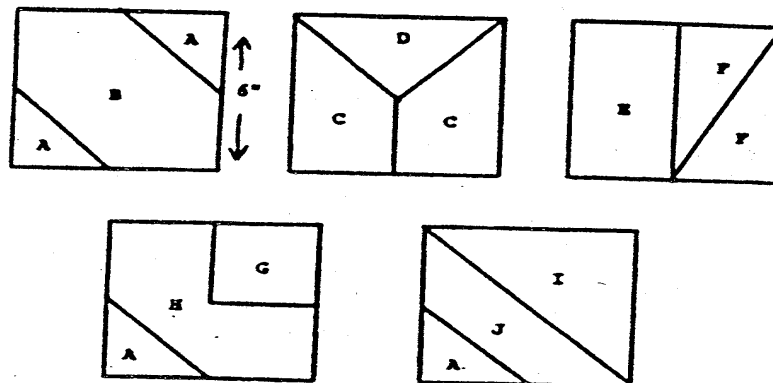
Material:

- Enough sets of "broken square" pieces for each participant to make a square.
- Enough floor space for participants to sit in circles of five participants each with room to make the squares in the center of the circle.

Directions for Making a Set of Squares

A set consists of five envelopes containing pieces of cardboard which have been cut into different patterns and which, when properly arranged, will form five squares of equal size. One set should be provided for each group of five persons.

To prepare a set, cut out five cardboard squares of equal size, approximately six-by-six inches. Place the squares in a row and mark them as below, penciling the letters, a, b, c, etc., lightly so that they can be erased later.



The lines should be so drawn that when cut out, all pieces marked "a" will be of exactly the same size, all pieces marked "c" of the same size, etc. By using multiples of three inches, several combinations will be possible that will enable participants to form one or two squares, but only one combination is possible that will form five squares six-by-six inches.

After drawing the lines on the six-by-six inch squares and labeling them with lower case letters, cut each square as marked into smaller pieces to make the parts of the puzzle.

Mark the five envelopes A, B, C, D, and E. Distribute the cardboard pieces in the five envelopes as follows:

Envelope A.	has pieces i,h,e
B	a, a, a, c
C	a, j
D	d, f
E	g, b, f, c

Erase the penciled letter from each piece and write, instead the appropriate envelope letter. This will make it easy to return the pieces to the proper envelope for subsequent use when a group has completed the task.

Time Required: 30 minutes

Procedure: Divide participants into groups of five by "numbering off" or playing a creative grouping game to separate "best friends" into different groups to encourage "mixing" and interpersonal relationships with additional people.

Depending on the maturity level of the group, "extra participants" left after the groups of five are formed can 1) be observers for the group (give them a copy of the observer instructions), 2) form a smaller group of three or four (you will have to remove the pieces from their packets for the unneeded squares), or 3) divide among the other groups to make a few groups of six (you will have to give those groups pieces for additional squares and have them mix up and re-allocate 3 pieces per person).

Direct the group not to begin until after you have finished reading the instructions.

Read the following instructions to the group...

"In this packet there are five envelopes, each of which contains the pieces of cardboard for forming squares. When the facilitator gives the signal to begin, the task of your group is to form five squares of equal size. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him or her, a perfect square of the same size as that held by others.

Specific limitations are imposed upon your group during this exercise:

- No talking, pointing, or any other kind of communicating among the five people in your group.
- Participants may give pieces to other participants but may not take pieces from other members.
- Participants may not simply throw their pieces into the center for others to take; they have to give the pieces directly to one individual.
- It is permissible for a member to give away all the pieces to his puzzle, even if he has already formed a square.

Are the instructions clear?" (Questions are answered)

Give the signal to "begin working."

With the help of any observers make sure that the rules are observed throughout the activity. As groups complete the task they may applaud to signal that they are finished, but should then sit quietly and observe other groups who are still working until everyone has finished.

When everyone has completed the task, ask the following questions to summarize what happened. If observers were present, direct the questions first to them and then get additional ideas from the rest of the group.

- Who was willing to give away pieces of the puzzle?
- Did anyone finish his/her puzzle then somewhat divorce himself/herself from the struggles of the rest of the group?
- Was there anyone who continually struggled with his or her pieces, but yet was unwilling to give any or all of them away?
- How many people were actively engaged in mentally putting the pieces together?
- Did anyone seem especially frustrated?
- Was there any critical turning point at which time the group began to cooperate?
- Did anyone try to violate the rules by talking or pointing as a means of helping fellow members solve their puzzle?

Processing:

For this activity to be meaningful to participants in developing interpersonal skills, it's important for them to think about what really happened in the group, what they learned from the experience, and how they can apply it in other interpersonal situations. This can be accomplished by having each participant write on a sheet of paper his or her own answers to these questions.

Read the questions to the group and ask participants to jot down their responses as you go. After this has been done, discuss the questions one-by-one with the total group. Make sure that each participant takes part in the discussion, and do not allow anyone to completely dominate the discussion. Encourage participants to make additional notes on their written answers as the discussion proceeds.

1. What part of the experience did you find most enjoyable?
2. What part of the experience did you find most frustrating?
3. What kinds of things could other members in your group have done differently to make the experience more satisfying and successful?
4. What kinds of things could you personally have done to make the experience more satisfying and successful?
5. What did you learn from this experience that could be helpful when you work with other people in other situations?
6. What do you wish other people would do differently or better when they're with you?
7. What would you most like to improve about yourself in relating to other people?

Closing:

- Summarize the purposes of the "Broken Squares" activity.
- Review major points brought out from the processing questions.
- Challenge participants to strengthen their interpersonal skills in everyday life by acting on their personal written answers and notes related to the processing questions.

Instructions to the Observer/Judge

Your job is part observer and part judge. Make sure each participant observes the rules:

1. No talking, pointing, or any other kind of communicating among the five people in your group.
2. Participants may give pieces to other participants but may not take pieces from other members.
3. Participants may not simply throw their pieces into the center for others to take; they have to give the pieces directly to one individual.
4. It is permissible for a member to give away all the pieces to his puzzle, even if he has already formed a square.

Do your best to strictly enforce the rules.

As an observer, you may want to look for some of the following:

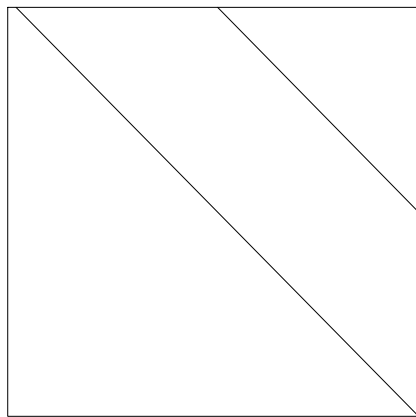
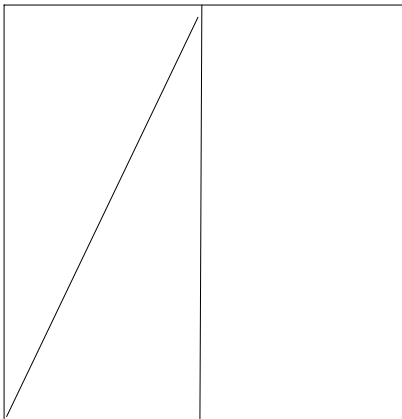
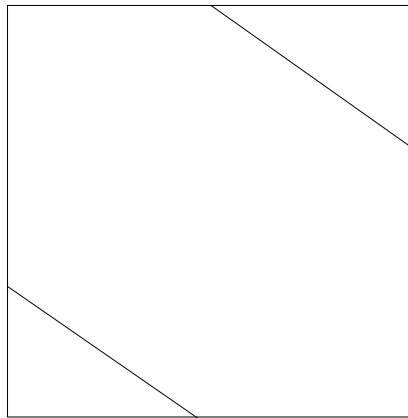
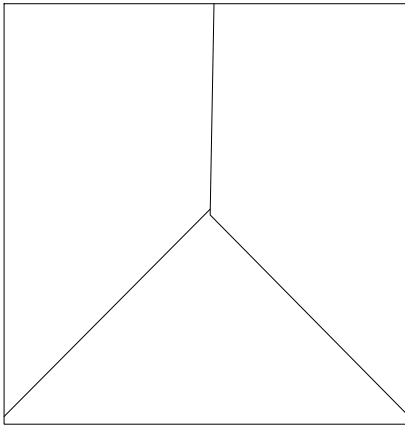
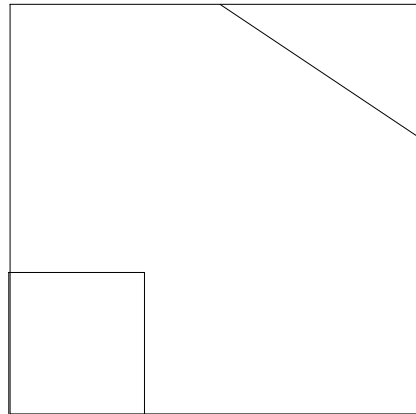
1. Who was willing to give away pieces of the puzzle?
2. Did anyone finish his/her puzzle then somewhat divorce himself/herself from the struggles of the rest of the group?
3. Was there anyone who continually struggled with his or her pieces, but yet was unwilling to give any or all of them away?
4. How many people were actively engaged in mentally putting the pieces together?
5. Did anyone seem especially frustrated?
6. Was there any critical turning point at which time the group began to cooperate?
7. Did anyone try to violate the rules by talking or pointing as a means of helping fellow members solve their puzzle?

Reference: Martin, R.R.; Weber, P.L.; Henderson, W. E.; Lafontaine, K. R.; Sachs, R. E.; Roth, J.; Cox, K. J.; Schaffner, D. (1987). Broken squares (Section 5 p.3). Lasex d.i.s.k. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Extension.

Broken Squares

Answer Key

Squares should be reproduced, either on the computer, or a copy machine to be about 6-8 inches in size. Each square should be the same size before you cut them into the pieces shown.



DATA PROCESSING

The purpose of this initiative is to introduce teamwork and encourage communication. Have the group place themselves in a straight line in a pre-determined sequence. Sound easy enough?? Not really—the group must do this without talking !!! You may ask the group to line according to:

- alphabetically according to first name.
- numerically according to birth date (month and day, 1/1 to 12/31)
- alphabetically according to last name, middle name
- in order of when they started the program
- make up your own variation

Three Words with a Common Bond

What does each set of three have in common?

Easy:

1. picnic – card – pool
2. earth – book – inch
3. car – tree – elephant
4. box – green – sea
5. greeting – credit – library
6. wagon – cart – steering
7. storm – needle – potato
8. blue – goose – black
9. yard – pogo – chop
10. candy – crab – caramel
11. string – kidney – green
12. battery – ocean – electricity

Medium:

1. egg – safe – whip
2. days – continents – seas
3. marigold – mustard – canary
4. eyes – eggs – laundry
5. lung – brain – ears
6. little red riding hood – hot air balloon – high school gym
7. fishing pole – broken leg – Broadway play
8. turtle – M&M candy – ocean
9. French – car – unicorn
10. Tent – baseball – horseshoe
11. Map – wallet – laundry
12. Fortune – bank – story

Hard:

1. dime – Pluto – Rhode Island
2. Ford Motor Company – Nebraska – US \$5 bill
3. Florist – furniture store – obstetrician
4. Head – tail – cross
5. Bicycle tire – toothpaste – chemistry lab
6. Africa – little red riding hood – matador
7. Rain – wind – carbon
8. Electronic – fan – junk
9. Highway – catcher – astrologer
10. Radio – car engine – piano

Answers for Easy Set:

1. table
2. worms
3. have trunks
4. types of turtles
5. types of cards
6. wheels
7. have yes
8. berries
9. sticks
10. apples
11. beans
12. have currents

Answers for Medium Set:

1. cracked
2. seven of each
3. shades of yellow
4. have whites
5. have lobes
6. have baskets
7. all are cast
8. have shells
9. types of horns
10. pitched
11. get folded
12. have tellers

Answers for Difficult Set:

1. smallest of their kind
2. have Lincoln's
3. make deliveries
4. wind directions/types
5. have tubes
6. have capes
7. are elements
8. types of mail
9. have signs
10. are tuned

Restorative Problem Solving

(brainstorming) – The facilitator leads the group through an experience called “restorative problem-solving”, this exercise has 3 parts:

First, one member of the PLG is selected to share an issue or problem they are currently experiencing and for which they would like to receive some help. The person shares all the pertinent information about their situation with the group. The person then decides if they want to write down the brainstorm or if they want someone else to write down the brainstorm for them. (A specified amount of time is set for this – usually 3-5 minutes)

The group then offers restorative suggestions or brainstorms. It is best for these brainstorms to be in the form of direct suggestions, not questions. The person must listen to all restorative brainstorms without question or comment. (A specified amount of time is set for this – usually 10 minutes)

Finally, at the end of a specified amount of time, the person receiving the suggestions reviews the brainstorms and shares with the group something they would like to try from the brainstorms. It is important that there are no qualifiers to the brainstorms (such as “I like this one”, “I have already tried this” etc.)

TRAFFIC JAM

The object of this mind twister is to have two groups of people exchange places on a line of squares that has one more place than the number of people in both groups. This setup can be arranged almost anywhere. The boxes can be made of anything including chalk, masking tape, or what I find best...paper plates. The markers should be placed an easy step from one another.

To begin: one group stands on the markers to the left of the middle marker, the other group to the right. Using the following moves, people on the left side must end up in the places on the right side and vice-versa.

ILLEGAL MOVES:

1. Any backwards moves
2. Any move around someone facing the same way you are
3. Any move which involves two persons moving at once.

LEGAL MOVES:

1. A person may move into an empty space in front of him/her
2. A person may move around a person who is facing him/her into an empty space.

Example:

Here, 1 or 2 may move into the empty space.



Here, 1 may move into the empty space because two people are facing one another.



THE ALLIGATOR RIVER STORY

Instructions: Please read the following story. After reading the story, rank the five characters in the story in the space provided below it, beginning with the one you consider as most offensive, and ending with the one you consider as least objectionable. Also, briefly note your reasons as to why you ranked them in that order.

There lived a woman named Abigail who was in love with a man named Gregory. Gregory lived on the shore of a river. Abigail lived on the opposite shore of the same river. The river that separated the two lovers was teeming with dangerous alligators. Abigail wanted to cross the river to be with Gregory. Unfortunately, a heavy flood had washed out the bridge the previous week. So Abigail went to ask Sinbad, a riverboat captain, to take her across. Sinbad said he would be glad to if she would consent to go to bed with him prior to the voyage. Abigail promptly refused and went to a friend named Ivan to explain her plight. Ivan did not want to get involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Sinbad's terms. Sinbad fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her into the arms of Gregory. When Abigail told Gregory about her amorous escapade in order to cross the river, Gregory cast her aside with disdain. Heartsick and rejected, Abigail turned to Slug with her tale of woe. Slug, feeling compassion for Abigail, sought out Gregory and beat him brutally. Abigail was overjoyed at the sight of Gregory getting his due. As the sun set on the horizon, people heard Abigail laughing at Gregory.

Now rank the characters (1=most repulsive to 5=least repulsive)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now that you have done this individually, pair up and discuss the reasons (try and change the mind of your partner). After completing the pair discussion, discuss it as a group. Attempt to have the group come to an acceptable consensus.

Human Knot

Goal	Group problem solving, Surfacing group dynamics
Time	10-15 minutes (not including processing)
Physical contact	Extensive
Physical challenges	Must be able to move, twist, and turn
Number of participants	8-20 people
Space requirements	Open floor space
Materials needed	None
Preparation	None

Note: This exercise and all of its variations are high-risk due to the level of physical contact involved. Observe carefully to ensure that people are respectful of each other's bodies.

Instructions

- This exercise works well with “knots” of between five and eight people. If the group is larger than eight, break into smaller groups.
- Have each group stand in a circle.
- Have people cross their arms in front of their bodies and join hands with two other people. People who join hands should not be standing next to each other, and everyone should be connected to two different people (that is, not holding both of one person's hands).
- The group has now formed a “human knot,” and their job is to get out of it without letting go of each other's hands. In most cases, with a lot of twisting and turning and stepping over and under each other's arms, this can be done in a few minutes. It is all right if people end up facing outside the circle.
- If the group seems hopelessly entangled, the question can be posed as to whether the group wants to change the rules (let go of some hands) or start over.

Processing suggestions

- The Human Knot can be used to illustrate the importance of group cooperation, trust, being considerate of each other, and working together.
- You can make points about teamwork and the flow of leadership in a group.
- What was it like trying to get out of the knot? Did people think they would be able to do it when they first began?
- Did anybody take the lead? If members of the group were not helping to get out of the knot, how did that affect the outcome of the exercise or people's feelings about it?
- If the group gave up trying to get out of the knot: What were the dynamics of it?
- If you had two knots going at once: Did the groups become competitive? Did one group give up because the other group had finished?
- What kind of “knots” is this group in? What do we need to unravel those knots?