# Table of Contents

**Ice Breakers & Name Games**  4
- Handshakes  5
- The Bus  6
- Believe It Or Not  6
- Oh Fwap!  7
- Have You Ever  7
- Toss a Name  8
- Peek a Who  8
- Pneumonic Names  9
- Bumpity Bump!  10
- Whomp ‘Em!  10

**Energizers**  11
- Speed Rabbit  12
- Rock Paper Scissors Evolution  12
- Your Biggest Fan  13
- Cat and Mouse Tag  13
- Fox and Hound Tag  14
- Aerobic Walk Tag  14
- Zip Zap Zoom  15
- Samurai  15
- 40 Steps  16

**Problem Solving Initiatives**  18
- Arrowheads  20
- Bullring  20
- Helium Stick  22
- Inside Out  22
- KeyPunch/Calculator  23
- Magic Carpet  23
- Marble Tubes  24
- Mergers  24
- Minefield  24
- Mix Master  25
- Not Knots  25
- Stepping Stones  26
- Tin Shoe  26
- Tree of Knots  27

**Spotting/Trust**  28
- Spotting Sequence  30
Regardless of the types of groups you work with it is useful to have a repertoire of simple and palatable name activities.

Knowing and using each other’s names in a respectful way builds trust and positive communication establishing a supportive group environment. Activities that clarify names can be helpful even to groups that you might think already know each other. A person’s name is very important to them and should be honored with correct pronunciation and proper use.

Presenting a series of activities that help participants use and practice names can be very helpful to establishing a strong foundation of trust and understanding. I like to weave name activities and practice into introductory activities in a “natural” way starting with simple partner greetings and sharing before engaging participants in a whole group name activity. I try to avoid contrived name activities that put people in the “on the spot” too early, or require them to feel under pressure to memorize. The following are my tried and true activities to help groups learn, practice and reinforce names in a meaningful, but playful non-threatening and palatable way.

-Jennifer Stanchfield, Experiential Tools
Handshakes

Equipment: None.

Task: Allow the group to meet new folks with peculiar handshakes. Playing Handshakes early on in a program gives you a great way to quickly break up into pairings later on in the program. You can make up any handshake you like, but here are a few to get you started in the right direction:

- High Five: Raise your hand above your waist, palm facing away from you, and find a partner to slap hands with.
- Low Five: Lower your hand below your waist, palm facing away from you, and find a partner to slap hands with.
- Alaskan Salmon Fishermen: Lay your fingers along side your partners’ forearm, and lightly slap their arms repeatedly, as though your fingertips with the splashing tail of an Alaskan Salmon.
- Logger: Put both hands up as if you were going to box, with one hand closer to your partner. Put your thumbs up. Have one partner put their fists on top of their partners’ thumbs, and rock back and forth as if using a two-man saw.
- Wisconsin Dairy Farmer: One partner interlocks their fingers, and turns their hands upside down, so their thumbs hang down, as udders from a cow. The partner pulls gently on their thumbs as if they are milking the imaginary udder.
- Secret Buddy: Two partners develop their very own secret handshakes that is unique to them. It it not to be demonstrated for all the world to see!

Variation:

- Make your own special handshakes.
- Give the group a simple question to discuss between the pairs, each time they find a new buddy. For example “What are you most excited for, today?” or “If you were going to be a kitchen appliance, what would you be and why”. Questions should start off simple and easy, and could potentially become deeper or more meaningful.
- After people have 3 or 4 different partners, you can do a rapid fire rotation. “Find your Fishing partner!” Wait 5 seconds, and call out “Find your High 5 Buddy!”, wait 5 seconds and call out “Where is your Secret Buddy?” and so on.

Instructor’s Role: Encourage the silliness!

Participant’s Responsibilities: Have Fun!

Debriefing Questions: None.
The Bus

**Good For:** Finding people in a group who have similar interests. Discovering similarities within your group.

**Equipment:** None. Though you could lay down two parallel lines of rope to mark your “bus”.

**Task:** Lay the two ropes on the ground, parallel to one another, about 4 feet apart. Ask the group to “get on the bus!”. The facilitator is the “driver”, making frequent stops. Although the “bus” never actually moves, the driver will call out stops, citing two opposite things on either side of the bus. For example “FIRST STOP. Hot Dogs on the Left, Hamburgers on the Right! Each member of the group decides which they prefer, and steps to that side of the bus. Now, all of the people in their new groups have one thing in common. Next, the Driver yells out “Back on the Bus!”, and continues on. Repeat this process with as many as 10 “bus stops” along the way.

**Instructor’s Role:** Encourage the silliness!

**Participant’s Responsibilities:** Have Fun!

**Considerations:** Research (According to Chris Cavert on Jim Cain’s website) shows that when people are made aware of their commonalities with others in a group, they are more likely to bond with them. It helps them focus on similarities, while focusing less on their differences.

Try this one with different levels of opposites. Lighter topics like the example above are good for starting out. As the group gets involved in it, try higher level “stops” such as “NEXT STOP! Shy right, outgoing on the left. For older groups, push them to thinking a little bit with stops like “NEXT STOP! Thinkers on the Right, Workers on the Left” and so on

**Debriefing Questions:** None.

Believe It Or Not

**Also known As:** Knot Me! (with and without Two Truths and a Lie)

**Good For:** Getting to know a little about the members of your group.

**Materials:** 30’ of climbing rope, tied in a circle.

**To Start:** All participants in a circle holding the rope at waist level.

**To Play:** Participants pass the rope to the left, continuing to pass it until someone says stop. When the rope stops moving, the person holding the knot in the rope will say one thing about themselves. Once they have finished, the rope moves again, until someone else yells “Stop”.

**Variation:** For a twist, mix this game with Two Truths and a Lie. When the knot stops, the person closest tells three different things about themselves, two of which are true and one is a lie. The rest of the group then gets to ask a total of three questions to determine which of the statements is a lie. After three questions have been asked, the group votes on which statement they think is the lie.
Oh Fwap!

**Good For:** Rapid fire sharing of interesting tidbits and factoids about your group members in a low-pressure environment.

**Materials:** 80-100 foam discs (Styrofoam boffers sliced into 1” thick pieces)

**To Start:** Break the group up into smaller groups of 3-5 people per group. Scatter equal portions of the discs in the center of each small group.

**To Play:** Groups elect one “Sandwich Maker” person who holds a foam piece in each hand, representing the bread. Each other person in the group adds foam pieces to the “sandwich” as fast as they can, to make the tallest sandwich possible. Each time they add another piece, they must state one fact about themselves. Eventually, the tower will become so large that it will collapse, at which time, all members of that small group yell out “Oh Fwap!!” as loud as possible. They then select a new sandwich maker, and start over.

Have You Ever

**Also Known As:** Sun Shines On, Adirondack Jack, Switch If...

**Good For:** Finding common ground among participants in a non-threatening, high energy way.

**Materials:** Enough place markers to have one for each person. Can use playing cards, poker chips, plastic “spots”, or any other suitable place marker.

**To Start:** All participants in a circle with their carpets at their feet. One stands in the center with a carpet at their feet also.

**To Play:** The center person thinks of something that is TRUE about themselves. They then say “Have you ever…” and finish the sentence with whatever they’ve thought of that is true of themselves. For example: “Have you ever flown in an airplane”.

At that point, everyone who has ever flown in an airplane must leave their carpet square, touch the center carpet, and then find another square to call home. They cannot return to their original square.

If they are unable to find an open carpet, they are stuck in the center, and it is their turn to see what they have in common with the group.

**Considerations:**
People tend to get very active in this game. Be careful to watch the group for folks who are getting overly aggressive, as it won’t take long before people get knocked to the ground, trampled by other folks trying to beat them to the squares. One common variation is to remove the center tile and simply instruct that they have to leave their tile and go to another tile (not one adjacent to their current tile).
How Do You Do?

**Good For:** Creating a space where people are comfortable asking the people in the group what their name is.

**Materials:** None

**To Start:** One person is selected “It”. The rest of the group stands in a circle, arms length apart, facing in.

**To Play:** “It” walks around the outside of the group until she is behind the person of their choice. It taps this person on the shoulder who turns around to face It. The two shake hands while It introduces herself by saying “Hello, my name is Jill”. While still shaking hands the selected person introduces himself by saying “Hello, my name is Jack.” Continuing to shake hands, the two people introduce themselves another two times in this manner. At the conclusion of the third introduction, It takes off running one way around the outside of the circle of people. The other person must immediately go in the opposite direction around the outside of the group. It is now a race to see who can make it back first to the selected person spot. If It makes it to the spot first, the selected person becomes It, and then chooses another person to introduce themselves to. If the selected person makes it to the spot first, It moves on to select another person to introduce themselves to.

**Instructor’s Role:**
1. Check area for unsafe ground cover.
2. Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
3. Provide an out for It if they are unsuccessful in winning the race around the outside of the group in three successive attempts.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
1. To safely and under control run around the group without crashing into the other person running or other group members.
2. Not to dive for the open spot.

Toss a Name

**Equipment:**
One soft and round throwing object (ball).

**Task:**
A leader introduces the game by saying his/her first name, then tosses the ball to the person on his/her right/left. Continuing in one direction, each person says his/her first name and continues tossing the ball in sequence until the leader again has the ball. The leader then calls out someone’s name in the circle and lofts the ball to her/him and person calls another individual’s name, etc., etc.

After the ball has been flying about for a few minutes, or more usually after you begin to get a feel for all the names in the group, start up another ball, increasing the frequency of names being called. Add a third ball toward the end of the game just for fun, because at this point the law of diminishing returns creeps in.

Ask for someone who can name everyone in the group.

**Instructor’s Role:**
1. Check area for unsafe ground cover.
2. Clearly present the problem, participants responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
1. Gently toss the ball in an underhand manner to other group members.
2. Value each other by making sure everyone is included in the activity.
**Peek a Who**

**Equipment:**
Blanket or Tarp

**Task:**
Two people hold a blanket so that it may act as a temporary wall that two groups can hide behind (one on each side). Split the remaining participants into two equal groups (one group may have an extra person if you have an odd number). The groups hide behind opposite sides of the raised blanket. Each group chooses one person to kneel near the center of the blanket on their side, facing the blanket. The two people holding the blanket drops the blanket on the count of three, allowing the two people kneeling to see each other. The two kneeling people try to be the first to call out the name of the person kneeling on the other side of the blanket. The kneeling person who correctly states the other person’s name first wins and has that person join their team. Raise the blanket and repeat until everyone is on one team.

**Variations**
People kneeling near the center of the blanket face away from the blanket. When the blanket is dropped, their other group members describe the person on the other side. Groups cannot use put-downs to describe the person on the other side or use rhymes for their name (e.g. Tim – His name rhymes with rim).

**Instructor’s Role:**
Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Pneumonic Names**

**Equipment:** None

**Task:** A leader introduces the game by saying his/her first name, and one word that describes themselves. This adjective should begin with the same first letter as their first name.

The person standing next to the leader goes next, repeating the process of stating their name and one adjective to describe themselves to the group. Again, the word should begin with the same first letter as their own name. Once they have stated their own Pneumonic Name, they repeat the leaders Pneumonic Name.

Each subsequent person, in order, comes up with their own Pneumonic Name, and then repeats each of the previous peoples’ Pneumonic Names. The last person (the person next to the leader, opposite of the person who went first) must give their own Pneumonic Name, and that of everyone else in the group.

**Instructor’s Role:**
1. Clearly present the problem, participants responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
1. Value each other by making sure everyone is included in the activity.
**Bumpity Bump!**

**Good For:** A rapid fire game for learning names

**Materials:** None

**To Start:** All participants in a circle, one in the center.

**To Play:** The person in the middle approaches any one person on the circle, and says any of the following: “Left”, “Right”, “You”, or “Me”. The person then has to reply with the name of the person indicated (the person on their left if the center person says “left”, and so on). The center person immediately begins to say “Bumpety Bump Bump Bump”. If the center person can finish before the center person can name the indicated person, the center person becomes the new center person.

**Considerations:**
Be sure to start off slowly so that the circle person has a chance to name the specified person. If the center person is too quick, the circle folks will begin to whine.

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**Whomp ‘Em!**

**Good For:** A rapid fire game for learning names

**Materials:** One Foam Boffer.

**To Start:** Group in a circle, one in the center.

**To Play:** The facilitator calls out the name of one person in the group. The center person then tries to find and wamp (below the knees) the person named. The named person can avoid being tagged by calling out the name of another person in the group. If the center can’t get there in time, they need to try to tag the next person named and so on. If the center person tags the named person before another name is called, the tagged person comes to the center, and the center person takes their place. The process starts all over again.

**Considerations:** Just be careful that people are tagged below the waist. Wamping someone in the face hurts, even with a foam boffer.
Energizers

Sometimes you just need to pick up the pace and/or set the tone for the group. Coming back from lunch, want to get the group jazzed up about the afternoon? You might need to get the blood pumping with a quick energizer! These are also great when you have a few minutes to kill before moving on to the next activity. These are sure to put a smile on the faces of your participants!
**Speed Rabbit**

**Equipment:** None

**Task:** Bring the entire group into a circle formation with the facilitator standing in the center. Inform the group that when you point to a person in the circle, that person (herein described as the “primary”), along with the one person on either side of them (herein described as “secondaries”) will have to perform an appropriate action, as noted below:

**RABBIT:** The primary will hop up and down like a rabbit, and bring their paws up to chest height, like a bunny. The secondaries then lean in toward the rabbit, and stomp their outside feet on the ground.

**PALM TREE:** The primary will raise both arms up and other their head, while the secondaries hula dance on either side.

**MONKEY:** The primary will make the motion of peeling a banana, and grunt with monkey noises while the Secondaries lean in and raise their outside arms, while using their inside arms to scratch their outside armpits.

**ELEPHANT:** The primary will make a “trunk” with their right arm, putting their nose on their right shoulder and letting the trunk swing side to side. The primary should also make the sound of an elephant. The secondaries will form the elephant’s big ears, by putting their inside arm near the elephants hip and their outside arm over the primary’s head.

**SKUNK:** The Primary turns around, and shakes their tail to the inside of the circle. The secondaries turn away from the skunk, pinch their noses, and say “Peee!! You!!”

**MOO COW:** The Primary interlocks their fingers, and then points his/her thumbs down, at arms length. The secondaries then make the motion of milking the Primary’s Udders.

It is advised to give only two commands to start, then add one at a time as the group becomes comfortable with it.

If the caller in the center calls a command, and someone in the indicated trio does not perform their assigned role, they are brought into the center to be the next caller. The name of the game is SPEED rabbit, so as a facilitator, you should try to keep the action fast paced. When a caller makes a command, the trio should have no more than 5 seconds to comply. Also, the caller should be making calls fairly quickly.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Keep the pace of the game rather fast. It can become bring very quickly if it goes too slow.
- Start with just one or two commands and add a new one in every few rounds.

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**Rock Paper Scissors Evolution**

**Equipment:** None

**Task:** The goal is to evolve from an Egg to a Human by winning a series of Rock, Paper, Scissors challenges. To start, each person is an “Egg”, and as such, they must crouch down and make themselves as small as possible. At the signal to start, each Egg must find another Egg and challenge them to a round of Rock Paper Scissors. The winner of the challenge, using the traditional “rock beats scissors” protocol, evolves to become a Chicken. Chickens walk slightly crouched while flapping their wings. After the battle, each person must find another person who is at the same level of evolution, and the process continues. The loser of a challenge devolves to the status lower than they went into the battle with. For example, a Chicken who loses becomes an Egg. A Chicken who wins, evolves into a Dinosaur and stands tall, arms outstretched over their heads, while roaring to find another Dinosaur to battle with. The final stage of evolution is when a Dinosaur defeats another Dinosaur and evolves into Human. Humans can step outside of the game and watch as the hilarity ensues for all those still battling to become Humans. You can end the game when the first person evolves to humanity, or continue playing until most people have evolved.
Instructor's Role:
• Check area for unsafe ground cover.
• Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
• Stress that everyone’s participation is valued

Debriefing Questions: When you lost a battle and devolved into a lesser being, how did it feel? Do you think that other players looked down on you? When you were rising in the ranks, did you ever feel like you were so close to being Human that it became really disappointing when you devolved?

Your Biggest Fan

Equipment: None

Task: Similar to Rock Paper Scissors Evolution, this game is a series of Rock Paper Scissors battles. To start, each player finds another player to battle. The Winner of the battle moves on to find another player to battle. The Loser of the battle, however, becomes the Biggest Fan of the player who defeated them. The fans follow the Winner around to each successive match, cheering and chanting and rooting on their Player. As the rounds progress, the Winner takes the Loser AND all of THEIR fans, and continues battling. In the end, the last two players will each have a massive group of fans cheering for them, until ultimately only one Grand Champion remains!

Instructor’s Role:
• Check area for unsafe ground cover.
• Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
• Stress that everyone’s participation is valued.

Debriefing Questions: Everyone needs a little cheering squad once in a while! How does it feel to have a group of people cheering you on? When you eventually lost your challenge, did you feel like you were disappointing your fans?

Cat and Mouse Tag

Equipment: None

Task: Two volunteers are selected to play the role of the Cat and the Mouse. The remainder of the group stands in a large circle. At the start of the game, one volunteer is on the inside of the circle, and the other is outside. At the facilitators “GO!”, the cat chases the mouse, weaving in and out of the circle. Each time one of them passes through a gap in the circle, the people on either side of the gap link hands, thereby closing the gap. As play continues, more and more gaps are closed. The game ends either when the cat catches the mouse, or once all of the gaps are closed. If play continues till the point where all gaps are closed, and both the cat and the mouse are on the same side (both in, or both out) of the circle, then the cat wins. If the gaps close, and the cat and the mouse are on opposite sides (both in, or both out) of the circle, then the cat wins.

Instructor’s Role:
• Check area for unsafe ground cover.
• Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
• Stress that people should play under control (e.g. not running into people) and that tags should be in gentle and in appropriate places.
• Stress that everyone’s participation is valued (everyone should have the opportunity to either chase or be chased).
• Provide an honorable “way out” for a person who has been chasing other people for a long time.

Debriefing Questions:
Identify how individuals showed value for others. (Allowed a tired person who was chasing to tag them. Making sure that everyone got a chance to be chased.)
Fox and Hound Tag

Equipment: None

**Task:** Each participant finds a partner and the pairs stand next to one another, with their arms linked at the elbows. Groups of players should be spread all around the playing area. Be sure to set out some sort of corner markers to denote the boundaries. Playing field area depends on the number of players, but for 20 players, an area of 50’x50’ should be sufficient.

The Facilitator selects one pair to separate, and become the Fox and the Hound. The Hound is given a brief head start to get away from the Fox. The Fox tries to tag the Hound, while the rest of the pairings represent burrows, bushes, or other hideaways where the Hound can find shelter. At any time, the Hound may duck into a shelter by linking arms with another pair of players. When the Hound links into a shelter, the person, within the pairing, that is NOT linked directly to the Hound, becomes the NEW HOUND. That person then must break away from the shelter and is now being chased by the Fox.

If the Fox is able to tag the Hound, the two players reverse roles, and the former Hound becomes the Fox. The new Hound gets a 5-second head start to get away from the new Fox, and play continues.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Stress that people should play under control (e.g. not running into people) and that tags should be in gentle and in appropriate places.
- Stress that everyone’s participation is valued (everyone should have the opportunity to either chase or be chased).
- Provide an honorable “way out” for a person who has been chasing other people for a long time.

**Debriefing Questions:**
Identify how individuals showed value for others. (Allowed a tired person who was chasing to tag them. Making sure that everyone got a chance to be chased.)

Aerobic Walk Tag

Equipment: Boundary markers

**Task:** To start, each person must find a partner for the game. Within the partner groups, ask them to assign a 1 and a 2 to the players of that pairing. Ask all members of the group to come in to a tight grouping in the center of the playing field. When the facilitator says “GO!” the #1’s will spin in place three times, while the #2’s will walk quickly away from their partners. After the #1’s have spun, they will try to locate their partner, and tag them. At no time can any two people who are not partners touch. The only permitted contact is between the partners in a single pairing. Once the #2 is tagged, s/he must then spin three times, and chase their partner, reversing the roles of “tagger” and “tagged”.

It is important to remember that this is a “WALK TAG” game, and no running is permitted. It is also important to stress that they are not permitted to contact other teams. Avoiding contact with other teams is a major piece of the strategy to this game.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Stress that people should play under control (e.g. not running into people) and that tags should be in gentle and in appropriate places.
- Stress that everyone’s participation is valued (everyone should have the opportunity to either chase or be chased).
Zip Zap Zoom

**Good For:** Gaining focus, blocking out distractions.

**Materials:** None

**To Start:** All players in a circle, sitting on the ground.

**To Play:** The facilitator begins by placing one hand on the top of their head, pointing to one side or the other (using the right hand will result in pointing to the left, and vice-versa) and shouting “ZIP!” The person beside the facilitator, in the direction of the point will respond with a hand under the chin, pointing one direction of the other, and shouting “ZAP!” The person next to the second person, in the direction of the point, will then respond with “ZOOM!”, along with both arms outstretched, and hands clasped together, pointing to anyone else in the circle. The process continues starting now with the person who was last pointed to.

**Considerations:** This is a fun one to just be silly. Once they get the hang of it, you can add the “elimination factor”. In this variation, people who don’t respond quickly enough, or respond inappropriately are eliminated. Eliminated people are not allowed to sit outside the circle quietly watching. They assume the responsibility of the “heckler”. The heckler’s job is to try to make other people in the circle mess up. They may not touch them or cover their eyes, but they can shout, yell, jump, wave their arms, and do whatever else they like to distract the participants still in the game.

Samurai

**Equipment:** Pair of Boffers

**Task:** Bring the entire group into a circle formation with the facilitator standing in the center. The facilitator (aka “Samurai”) stands in the middle with a boffer in hand. The other boffer is on the ground in the middle of the circle. The samurai cannot stand on the boffer.

The samurai will then swing his/her boffer either high or low. A high swing would be a swing above the head, and a low swing would be touching the ground. The swing should be a sweeping motion, with about a quarter of the group being “pointed at” during the swing. The people on the edge of the circle should respond appropriately. If the samurai swings HIGH in their general direction, the people should DUCK! If the Samurai swings HIGH in their general direction, the people on the outside circle should JUMP! Outside circle members who don’t comply with these motions are killed off, and roam the outside grounds trying to make other people screw up.

While the samurai is swiping high and low, members from the outside circle may attempt to penetrate the circle, grabbing the unused boffer in the center of the ring before the samurai can tag them. If they successfully reach the boffer without being tagged, the samurai and the challenger will bow to each other in the center of the circle before a proper duel takes place. The winner of the duel will be the next samurai.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Keep tags appropriate. Tags should be made from the waist down, and light touches are all that is needed.
40 Steps

**Good For:** Filtering the noises around you to be able to listen to what is important.

**Materials:** None

**To Start:** Group members partner up with one another.

**To Play:** Ask each person to think of any number between 1 and 20, but not to share that number with their partner. Then, when you signal to start, all members of the group simultaneously shout their numbers out loud only one time. Each participant should listen carefully for their partners number, and add that number to their own number. Make sure that they only say their number once, repeating your number will sabotage the game. Once each person has added the two numbers together, they then begin to jump up and down. The number of jumps is determined by the sum of the numbers within that pair. For example, if one person shouts the number “12” and their partner shouts “8”, then they would begin jumping 20 jumps.

**Considerations:** The object is to see if they can pick out their partners numbers among all the yelling. If they are able to do that, then they should arrive at the same number of jumps. If they heard another number, instead of their partners, then one partner will be jumping more than the other. The object is to get both partners jumping the same number.
Problem Solving Initiatives
Problem solving: Google defines the phrase as “the process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.” The key word here is “process.” As the old saying goes, there is more than one way to skin a cat. And there is no one way to solve a problem. You need to think outside the box. You need to look at a situation and realize it’s not black and white. There are multiple ways to go about problem solving.

Unfortunately, not everyone is a great problem solver. The good news: problem solving is a skill, not an inherent trait. And, like all skills, problem solving can be learned and developed. Even good problem solvers can benefit from a little refresher.

Once your group has moved beyond the introductory stage and you want to give them an opportunity for some higher level group challenges, these problem solving initiatives will give participants the opportunity to explore a challenge, formulate solutions collectively, attempt different strategies in a relatively low-risk environment. One word of note, though. This physical risks are minimal in these activities, emotional risk is elevated, particularly when a group is struggling to come to consensus on a solution. It is important to remind them that it is perfectly acceptable to learn through a bit of trial and error. Monitor participants responses to the problem solving process and be prepared to intervene if the group dynamic reaches a point that is detrimental to the group growth you seek.
Arrowheads

**Equipment:** Arrowhead game pieces.

**Game:** Arrange game pieces on the ground, table, or other work surface, and instruct the group that there are enough pieces to create FIVE identical arrowhead shapes. One is already formed (show them the one whole arrowhead). Using the remaining pieces, they need to create four more arrowheads.

**Solution:** Make four individual arrowheads from the pieces provided. Arrange these arrowheads in a manner so that a fifth arrowhead is formed in the middle of the other four, similar to the pattern shown on the next page.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Clearly explain the game directions.
- Assist other player and observers in learning how to win this game through SMALL hints.

**Participant’s Responsibility:**
- Have fun.

**Debriefing Questions:**
- How did different people approach this problem differently?
- What resources are limited within our group/organization?
- How can we use these resources differently to get more from them?

Bullring

**Equipment:** A metal ring (approximately 1½ in diameter) with 16 pieces of twine attached, a tennis ball, and a Frisbee.

**Task:** Each group member holds onto one or two ends of twine attached to the metal ring. The group then tries to pick up the tennis ball located inside an upturned Frisbee while only holding the ends of the twine. If the tennis ball touches the ground at any time it is returned to the Frisbee and the group must start over.

As a variation, if the group finds it too easy to get the ball onto the bullring, you may set a goal some distance away, and ask that they transport the tennis ball to the goal. The goal can be as small or as large as you like. Anything from a campfire ring to the top of a 2-Liter soda bottle can make a goal. Also, selecting a goal that requires the group to maneuver through some obstacles can add to the complexity of the challenge. Such obstacles could include having the group pass through a doorway (or between two trees), up or down stairs, through a pool, etc.

For advanced groups, once they have attained their goal, have them raise their tennis ball to waist height as a group, and then ask them how many people are needed to support the ball in the air. Ask them to invite certain members of the group to drop their strings, one at a time, until there are only a few strings left.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Not to allow the group to weave the twine around the ball.
- Disallow campers from wrapping the twine around their fingers as this may cause injury in the event of someone else tugging the string too hard.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
- Understand that their actions (e.g. yanking on their twine) effects the whole group.
- Provide supportive, verbal assistance to other group members to keep the tennis ball in the metal ring and to keep them from tripping over obstacles.

**Debriefing Points**
- Each member of the group has meaningful characteristics that play an important role in the success of the group.
- For the version where the group tried to support the ball with the fewest strings possible, each remaining line becomes more valuable, and if any of these few remaining lines is disrupted, it becomes early impossible to support the ball.
Arrowheads Template

Photocopy this page. Cut out the 4 arrowhead shapes, including the cut lines through the middles of three of them. The fifth arrowhead becomes apparent here in the middle of all four physical arrowheads.
**Helium Stick**

**Equipment:** 1 strip of molding, 8’ long (alternatively, use a collapsible tent pole)

**Task:** Hold the molding strip (aka the “Helium Stick”) in a horizontal plane, about chest height. Ask each group member to put just one fingertip each, under the helium stick. The facilitator should still be holding it. As people begin to put one finger under, tell them that they MUST keep one finger on the stick, only on the underside of it. They can’t touch the top of the stick, and they can’t use more than one finger. Describe how the helium stick is actually made of a solid form of helium, that is actually lighter than air, and that if you let go of it, it will actually rise up out of their fingers. Their goal is to get the stick to lower to the ground. Remember, everyone must be touching it, with one finger, from below. As you let go, it will slowly start to rise up.

**Instructors Role:**
- Check the area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Debriefing Question:**
- How did the actions of other group members impact your own ability to do your part?
- How did you overcome the challenge?

**Inside Out**

**Equipment:** One loop made out of webbing or rope, approximately 25’-30’.

**Task:** The loop is laid on the floor in an oval or circle. Group members stand inside the loop. Without using their arms or hands, the group is to get all their members out of the loop only by passing underneath it. The group must start over from the beginning if anyone uses their arms or hands. After the group has gotten outside and completed an initial debrief, have the group get back inside the loop by passing back underneath it without using their arms and hands in any manner.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Observe how group members are using their hands and arms beyond touching the loop. Participants will typically use their hands and arms to balance themselves and others by holding onto each other or by touching the floor or wall.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
- Not to use their arms and hands to complete this activity.
- Be honest with the group if they used either their arms or hands.

**Debriefing Questions:**
- Did you use your hands?
- Why is it difficult sometimes to follow instructions?
- Where is it difficult to follow instructions in our lives?
- Was it difficult to tell the group that you had used your arms or hands, causing them to restart?
- Where is it hard to be honest in our lives out of concern for upsetting someone?
- Is it frustrating when the “rules” are not clear and consistent and open to interpretation?
KeyPunch/Calculator

**Equipment:** Markers numbered from 1-30 (e.g. gym dots, carpet squares), Boundary marker (e.g. rope), Stopwatch

**Task:** Place the boundary marker in a large circle to designate a playing field. Randomly place the numbered markers throughout the playing field.

Upon the starting command by the instructor, one person enters the playing field, touches marker number 1 and then exits the playing field. Either the same person reenters, or another person enters, the playing field to touch marker number 2 and then exits. Continue in this manner until all thirty markers are touch. The instructor stops timing as soon as the person touching marker number 30 leaves the playing field.

Groups may be assessed 5 second penalties each time they:
- Have two people in the playing field at one time
- Touch a marker in the incorrect order

Upon completion, allow groups to try to complete this task even faster after a few minutes of planning.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Be sure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute (e.g. stepping on at least one marker).

Magic Carpet

**Equipment:** Blanket

**Task:** Begin by having the group stand on a blanket, which is stretched out on the ground. The group is to flip the blanket over and stand on the other side without ever getting off the blanket.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
- Do not get on each other’s backs (e.g. piggy back).
- Step off the blanket if you feel you are going to fall.

**Debriefing Questions:**
- Prior to the beginning of the task, have the group write on the blanket the problems/barriers/challenges that they are experiencing. After the task, have them talk about how they will work together to turn those problems/barriers/challenges around.
- OR
- You were able to turn the blanket around by working together. What problems do we need to work together to turn around?
Marble Tubes

**Equipment:** Sections of 1” PVC pipes, cut into roughly 12” sections. Some of these pipes should be full, but others will be sliced lengthwise, leaving an open “gutter” type of PVC. These lengths may be half round but could also be more or less than half. Each person in the group is given ONE length of marble tube. Group also needs one marble.

**Task:** Move a marble from a fixed starting point, as far as the group can carry it. To move the marble, the facilitator puts the marble in one persons marble tube, and from there, the teammates need to work together to transfer the marble from one tube to the next. Once they have the marble in their magic tube, they cannot move their feet.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Provide all of the materials to the group
- Watch the group to ensure that they are playing by the rules.
- Measure and record the distance achieved by each group for each trial.

Mergers

**Equipment:** 6-12 rope hoops or hula hoops per group.

**Task:** Hoops are spread out approximately 8’ away from each other. When the facilitator says “go” everyone is to get both feet inside a hoop. Hoops can be shared. When the facilitator says “switch”, the facilitator takes away a hoop while everyone goes to a new hoop. This continues until the facilitator takes away all the hoops except one medium sized one. The goal is to get everyone’s feet (both) in one hoop.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Do not allow people to get picked up or on other people’s back.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
- Commitment to getting both feet fully inside the hoop.
- Regain their balance by stepping out of the hoop if they feel themselves falling.
- Do not pull other group members down if they fall.
- Do not pick up other people or allow people to get on someone else’s back.

**Debriefing Questions:**
- What do we need to do to get away from small cliques to become one big group/family?
- How do we invite people to “join our circle”?
- How does a different perspective help solve a problem?

Minefield

**Good For:** Learning from your mistakes.

**Materials:** One tarp marked with a grid of Duct tape. One piece of paper, marked with the identical grid.

**To Start:** Before the game starts, use the paper grid to map out a “safe” path through the minefield. A “path” is a series of squares on the grid that snake across from one end of the minefield to the other. Paths are connected left, right, forward, and backward, no diagonals.

**To Play:** The group sends one member to the grid, and that person steps on one of the squares on the front edge of the grid. If that square is part of the safe path, the facilitator stays silent. If it is NOT on the safe path, the facilitator makes some exaggerated KABOOM and sends that person off the mat. The group then sends another member into the minefield. If they were paying attention, they can repeat the successes of their predecessor, if not, they will repeat their teammates errors. They continue progressing across the minefield until they can safely cross the entire minefield.
Considerations: There are several variations to this. You can try muting the entire group, so each member of the team must learn the path independently. Another variation that is very effective involves breaking the group into two halves, and have them approach the minefield from opposite directions. In this challenge, you need to alternate teams, so that team one sends someone to the minefield, then, once that person makes an error, team two would have a chance to try it out. If they are observant, each team will watch the other to learn the path on the opposing side of the minefield. A third variation, which is very advanced, involves blinding the person who is navigating the minefield, forcing them to listen to their teammates for assistance.

**Mix Master**

**Equipment:** Rope approximately 30’ long.

**Task:** Two people turn the rope in a jump rope fashion. Each participant tries to run through the turning rope on an individual basis without touching it. After everyone has been successful, have pairs run through the turning rope together. Next try four people at a time. Then one-half the group. Then the whole group. Finish by having the group send one person through the turning rope on each turn, without missing a turn where no one goes through.

**Instructors Role:**
- Check the area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Participant’s Responsibilities:**
- Do not try to jump the rope.
- Do not drag another person through the rope.

**Debriefing Question:**
- What communication problems did you experience when trying to get the whole group through the rope together?

**Not Knots**

**Equipment:** A length of rope or webbing at least 20 feet.

**Task:** The facilitator arranges the rope on a flat surface (floor, table) with what may be a knot in the middle. The “knot” is made with twists, loops, and turns in the rope. The arrangement of rope needs to challenge the group to determine whether it will form a knot or simply pull through when both ends are pulled.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Set up the rope a manner that makes the initiative challenging.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Ask the group to stand on one side if they believe the rope will form a knot when pulled at both ends. Ask the rest of the group to stand on the other side if they believe the rope will simply pull through when pulled at both ends.
- Have each group (will form a knot, will pull through) try to convince someone from the other group they are right. These dyads must achieve consensus and move to the side they believe is right (will form a knot side, will pull through side).
- Slowly pull the rope from each end, allowing people to change sides as they acquire new information. People can change sides as many times as they would like.

**Debriefing Topics:**
- Was it difficult to achieve consensus within your dyads?
- How did it feel to have to move sides while the rope was being pulled?
- When do we get additional information that helps us make a change in our lives?
- Who provides this information to make a change?
Stepping Stones

**Equipment:** One carpet square for each group member, two boundary lines.

**Task:**
- Group is to traverse over “toxic waste pit” (two boundaries) by using the carpet squares.
- People can only step on carpet squares while in the pit. People are mutated (blindfolded, hands/feet tied together, hand tied to group member next to him/her) or sent back to the beginning if they touch the pit.
- Human contact must be maintained with the carpet squares when they are touching the pit. Group loses a carpet square when it is touching the pit and there is no human contact.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.

**Debrief:**
- How did you support each other?
- How did you compensate for individuals mutations?
- How did “mutated” people assist the group? (respect, caring).

Tin Shoe

**Good For:** Silly problem solving.

**Materials:** A variety of tossables and other “stuff”.

**To Start:** The group sits down in a circle, stretching their legs toward the center.

**To Play:** Place an object on the legs of the person to your right, between their knees and ankles. They then need to use only their legs to pass the object around the group and back to you. Once the first object has been transferred around to the first 3-4 people, you can add another object. Add as many objects as you like.

**Considerations:** For an added twist, send objects in opposing directions, so that half way around the group, someone will have both objects at once, trying to pass them each in different directions.
Tree of Knots

**Equipment:** One long rope, around 50’ long

**Task:** Bend the rope in half, around a rigid pole, post, tree, (or in a pinch, around the facilitator!) etc. Break the group into two halves, and have each half stand along one half of the rope. Ask all players to hold onto the rope. Once they hold the rope, they become “fused” to the rope, and cannot slide their hands along it. (See diagram, below)

Once everyone is “fused” to the rope, the group must work together to tie a simple square knot in the rope, around the post. To do so, participants must imagine how the knot would normally be tied, and try to replicate that same motion with their entire group attached to the rope.

**Instructor’s Role:**
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Clearly present the problem, participant’s responsibilities and answer questions before the group begins the task.
- Stress that everyone’s participation is valued.
- Monitor the levels of frustration throughout the activity, and provide encouragement as necessary.
Spotting/Trust
We’ve all done them... Some people love the trust fall, others hate them. Mike Cardus even claims that “Trust Falls make me hate you more”. Yet they continue to be a mainstay in Adventure Education. At 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, we typically stay away from true Trust Falls, but we do believe that the techniques learned and practiced in these activities are critical for the safety considerations that are necessary if you are preparing a group for participation in the low-ropes portion of the Adventure Program. It is imperative, however, to set the tone appropriately before engaging a group in these activities. Your group must be ready to be focused and serious and attentive to the physical needs of each member of the team. Precede these activities with some good debriefing and really set the stage for people to understand the importance of good technique when it comes to spotting. Running a Tag Game or a boffer style game immediately prior to Spotting Activities is likely to put your group on high-energy mode, and make it difficult for them to take the activities in this section, seriously.

At 4-H Camp, we prefer not to do “Trust Falls”, but we like to tell campers that we will be teaching them “how to fall down and not get hurt”. These activities are designed more to teach the spotting skills and give members a chance to practice, and experience what good spotting is and looks like. Giving “fallers” (or “leaners” as we refer to them) a chance to experience the rush of the fall is just an added bonus.

Please Note: These activities inherently present a higher level of physical and emotional risk. As a facilitator, it is essential that you are able to evaluate your groups readiness to successfully complete these activities before attempting them. Reading these activities in this booklet does not qualify you to be facilitating them. Be sure to seek qualified training from an experienced source, apprentice under an veteran facilitator and learn both the technical and the soft skills necessary to safely present these activities. 4-H Camp Bristol Hills is not responsible for any injuries that may result from improper use of these activities outside of any officially sanctioned 4-H Camp Bristol Hills Adventure program.
Spotting Sequence

Equipment: None

Task: An individual leans backward into the hands of a spotter(s).

Instructor’s Role:
- Check area for unsafe ground cover.
- Present the task, and review all spotting requirements.
- Only do this activity when a group is ready.
- Make sure all jewelry, watches, pencils, and pens are removed from all participants.
- Carefully supervise this activity to ensure that all participants and spotters take their responsibility to value each other’s physical safety.

Spotter’s Knowledge:
- Clear understanding of what the activity entails from their standpoint as spotters and to buy into this experience.
  - Understanding of the strongest catching position.
  - Legs apart, one in front of the other.
  - Knees are flexed.
  - Arms are extended and bent at the elbows with palms facing up.
- Attention is focused on the participant at all times.
- Spotters communicate with the participant to let them know when they’re ready.
- Upon catching a participant on the shoulder blades, spotters need to gently push the participant back up to an upright position.
- If the participant is willing, spotter can move slightly further away from the participant, repeat the commands, and re-catch the participant. Repeat until the spotter or participant is no longer comfortable with the increased distance between the two.

Participants’ Responsibilities:
- Wear closed-toe shoes and remove all jewelry and wrist bracelets (except medical alert tags which must be taped to the body).
- The commands are: Spotters Ready (participants) – Ready (spotters)  Permission to Lean? (participant) – Lean Away (spotters) – Leaning (participant).
- Maintain a straight, rigid position.
- Participants draw their hands, fingers interlocked, into their chests in a firm grip, or use some alternate hand fixing system.
- Communicate with the spotter if they would like the spotter to move slightly further away to increase the lean.

Three Person Trust Lean Variation
1. Form groups of three (one participant, two spotters). One spotter is located behind the participant and the other is located in front.
2. Both spotters use the same catching position.
3. The front spotter catches the participant on the shoulders.
4. Prior to falling, the participant initiates the commands. Both spotters respond to communicate that they both are ready.
5. Upon completion of the commands, the participant may fall either forwards (being careful not to pike) or backwards.
6. Upon catching the participant, spotters are to gently push them back to an upright position being careful to avoid penduluming the participant between them.

Wind in the Willows Variation
1. Similar to the trust leans, but rather than having 1 or 2 spotters, now the entire groups forms a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder.
2. The leaner stands in the center of the circle, and begins his/her series of commands. Use the same commands as in the 2- or 3- person leans.
3. Upon the completion of the commands, the leaner is permitted to lean in any direction around the circle. Allow the participant to be passed around 10-15 touches, or until the group is no longer able to focus effectively on the leaner (giggling, talking, etc)

Levitation Variation
1. The participant lies on the ground with their arms locked in the same position as indicated in 2- and 3- person trust leans.
2. One spotted is chosen by the participant to be the “head spotter”. The Head Spotter stands at the head of the participant and has primary responsibility to protect the head and neck, and also to lead the group in carrying out their duties.
3. The rest of the group surrounds the participant, and carefully (and appropriately) places both of their hands, palms up, under the participant’s body.
4. The Head Spotter directs communication for this activity.
• Spotters Ready? (Head Spotter)
• Spotters Ready! (Group)
• Ready to Lift? (Head Spotter)
• Ready to Lift! (Group)
• Lift to the Knees (Head Spotter)

5. Once the group has lifted the participant to approximately 18”, they will pause and wait for the Head Spotters next command. 
   Head Spotter will be sure that the group is still together, and then call “Lift to the Waist!”

6. Once the group has lifted to approximately waist height, they will again pause and wait for the Head Spotter’s next command. 
   Head Spotter will be sure that the group is still together and then call “Lift to Shoulders!”

7. Once the group has lifted to approximately Shoulder height, they will again pause and wait for the Head Spotter’s next 
   command. Head Spotter will be sure that the group is still together and then call “Over the Head!”

8. Once the group has lifted to approximately 6’, they will again pause and wait for the Head Spotter’s next command. Head 
   Spotter will be sure that the group is still together and then call “Clockwise!” or “Counter-Clockwise!”.

9. The group will rotate the participant in the indicated direction, completing a full 360 degree horizontal rotation.

10. The Head Spotter will then repeat the levitation sequence in reverse order, bringing the participant to the shoulders, back to the 
    waist, back to the knees, and finally, resting the participant on the ground.

11. As a flourishing touch, the group may choose to finish by placing their hands on top of the participants body and gently pressing 
    down.