

Exercise Topic

Fifteen Shades of Gray Team Exercise

Brief Description/Purpose

The title is a bit of a joke, but this is a team building exercise that involves tying together the wrists of group members and assigning a task. Good fun, not kinky at all, and works for intact groups (members of one team), or as an exercise to look at various aspects of teamwork in general. For example:

- how leadership emerges or doesn't
- what works and what doesn't in teams
- how the team may need to operate differently depending on the task
- how different roles emerge.

This exercise is similar to one described here: [Collaboration and Working Together: Tied At The Wrist](#)

Type

Group exercise, physical movement

Age Appropriate

Teens, Older children, Adults

Ideal Group Size

5-15 people

Time For Exercise

30 minutes

Topic/Subject

Team building, team roles, leadership roles, leading, task orientation in teams

Detailed Instructions If Needed

The purpose of this exercise is to get your group to work together to achieve a common task. To begin, arrange all participants in a circle and have them face each other. Next, ask them to hold out their arms. Then tie the entire group together (while standing in a circle) so that each person is tied to both neighbor's wrists. Doing so should prevent anyone from having a "free" arm. After tying up the group, assign a task. Ideas could include:

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- Make root beer floats for everyone

- Wrap a package with gift wrap, bows and a signed card

- Prepare a snack

- Create a painting, clay sculpture or similar art project

- Pour a cup of water for each person in the group and then have each person drink their

cup

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This is a great exercise for retreats or other opportunities that would allow people to dress down thereby preventing ruined clothing. And if you really want to add an air of challenge, impose a time limit, offering rewards to the team that accomplishes their goal before other teams or within a certain time limit.

As with any leadership exercise, the goal is to enhance individual and team skill. So after each exercise, ask questions to generate discussion related to areas of success as well as those that need improvement. Questions might include:

1. Why were you successful at completing the task?

2. How did the time restrictions aid or hinder your group?

3. Did everyone in the group participate in achieving the goal?

4. If someone didn't help, how did that affect the outcome?

5. Do you ever feel "tied up" with someone you work with? If so, why, and how did you

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deal with this feeling?

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Author: Robert Bacal

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