



# FEAR BAG

## **PURPOSE & FOCUS**

Talking about fears and overcoming them.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Any number of participants.

## **TIME ALLOTMENT**

30 + Minutes

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

Low

## **MATERIALS**

- Strips of Paper
- Pencils or Pens

## **PREPARATION**

- Explain that in this activity, participants must respect the thoughts and fears of others.
- While analyzing the fears of others, most of them will be able to come to terms with their own fears.

## **METHOD**

- Distribute strips of paper to each participant and ask them to write down their deepest fear, without mentioning their name.
- After a couple of minutes collect the strips of paper into the bag, shuffle and read the strip of paper that you pull out.
- Let participants discuss each fear.

## **DISCUSSION**

- Why it's a legitimate fear?
- How they might be able to relate?
- How one might overcome that fear?



# LIFELINE

## **PURPOSE & FOCUS**

Allows the participants to think about their futures in logical, realistic ways and begin to plan.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Any number of participants.

## **TIME ALLOTMENT**

30 + minutes

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

Low

## **MATERIALS**

- Large pieces of paper
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue

## **METHOD**

- Have participants take a sheet of paper and draw a horizontal line in the top half of the page and one in the bottom half of the page. Divide each line in half, then quarters, then sixteenths.
- Ask participants mark the beginning of the top line with their birthdate and the end of the line with today's date.
- Ask each participant to create a timeline of their life and significant event on the top line. They can write, draw, or create a collage.
- Ask each participant to share what they like from their timeline.
- Ask each participant to look at the second line and consider it as their future. Use writing, drawing, or collage pictures to mark on the timeline their goals and dreams.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What do you think you are going to have to do to reach your goals?
- Which things seems harder to you and which things seem easier?



# MY COMMUNICATION STYLE

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

Helps participants recognize how they express themselves and understand how different ways of communicating and learn more tolerance for one another's communication style.

## PARTICIPANTS

Any number of participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30 + minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

Low

## MATERIALS

Materials are available on Texas Model site are noted with an asterisk (\*)

- Communication Styles Inventory (\*)
- Communicating for Results (\*)
- Pencils or pens

## PREPARATIONS

Read over and make sure you understand the supporting materials before conducting this group exercise.

## METHOD

- Have each participant identify their basic communication style by completing the inventory. Provide help and support. Have the participant circle any word in each box that best describes their personality. Circle any word that feels "right". Don't think too hard!
- Have each participant score the inventory and place the numbers in each area located at the bottom of the inventory.
- The highest score will tell them what communication style they operate in most of the time. The second highest score determines their next most used communication style.
- Let the participant look over the descriptions of the style combinations.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Every type of communication style has some positive and negative parts. Do you think your style can make you misunderstood sometimes?
- Do you ever feel frustrated communicating with other people? Do you think that there are ways to help people understand you better?
- What do you wish people would do when communicating with you?



# PLANT & GROW

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

Allows the participants to learn more about the life skills and that some will always be harder than others but that learning them has real value.

## PARTICIPANTS

Any number of participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30 + minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

Low

## MATERIALS

- Life skills
- Popsicle sticks or other items to use as a plant marker or tag
- Seedling plants
- Disposable cups or small unbreakable pots
- Potting soil

## METHOD

- Ask the group to name the life skills and work with them to remember, if needed. OR, introduce the life skills by writing them on the wall on paper or white board.
- Give each person a stick and ask them to write down the life skill they most want to work on.
- Give each person a seedling, pot, and soil and ask them to plant their plant and add the popsicle stick in the soil.
- Use the plants to decorate the common room.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think you are going to have to do to reach your goals?
- Which things seems harder to you and which things seem easier?



# STOP, START, CONTINUE

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

Participants take ownership of what is going on within the dorm. Learn to brainstorm and develop strategies to work through issues.

## PARTICIPANTS

Any number of participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30 + minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

Low

## MATERIALS

- Poster board
- Markers
- Art supplies: sticks, scrapbooking materials, foam letters, etc.
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pictures or magazines

## PREPARATION

- Explain to the participants that their opinions matter and it is important to provide good input into decision making in their lives.
- Explain that discussing things with respect and using good negotiation skills can result in good compromises for all.
- Be prepared to make some compromises that make sense or to take their ideas to others who need to make these final decisions.

## PREPARATION

- Ask participants to think about the dorm as it is now and consider what is working, what they'd like to see happen or change, and what is working now—that they like.
- Participants brainstorm & discuss:
  - Stop: What is not working?
  - Start: What could you try that might work?
  - Continue: What is working?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- For what participants think isn't working:
  - Can you think of things we could do that would help?
  - How do you think your new ideas would help life on the dorm?
- For what is working:
  - Why do you like it?
- How did this go, what was it like to talk about this using respect and negotiation?



# VISION BOARD

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

To help the participants focus on their goals for the future.

## PARTICIPANTS

Any number of participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30 + minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

Low

## MATERIALS

- Poster board
- Markers
- Art supplies: sticks, scrapbooking materials, foam letters, etc.
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pictures or magazines

## PREPARATION

- Give time for each individual to create their board throughout the week ( set a start and end date)
- Let participants know that the design must follow a theme (Growth, future, my best life, etc.)
- Participants who are willing to share their board may present them to their peers.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When you think about your life in a few years from now, what does it look like?
- What do you think will be hard about achieving your goals?
- How does setting goals for yourself keep you motivated?



# WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

## **PURPOSE & FOCUS**

We sometimes take for granted the positive aspects of others.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Any number of participants.

## **TIME ALLOTMENT**

30 + minutes

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

Low

## **MATERIALS**

- Paper
- Water-based markers

## **METHOD**

- For this activity, tape a blank piece of paper to each participant's back.
- Participants are to write a compliment or positive comment on everyone's back.
- Have the group members pair up with someone and remove the paper from each other's backs.
- Have participants read what was written about them.

## **DISCUSSION**

- Were and participants surprised to read the compliments or positive comments about themselves?
- Explain that we tend to give compliments behind someone's back rather than telling them directly.



# LIGHT HOUSE

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

To inquire how much knowledge and experience each individual has about danger and rescue. Creates an opportunity to express feelings such as fear, helplessness, hopelessness, bravery, etc.

## PARTICIPANTS

Any number of participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30+ minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate

## MATERIALS

- Large sheets of paper or poster boards
- Markers for each group member

## METHOD

- Provide a large flat surface for drawing activity.
- Explain to each group member that they are to fill a poster board with one drawing of a boat, a storm, and a lighthouse.
- They are to complete the task silently.
- Upon completion, ask each person to write a story about what he/she thinks happened before, during, and after the storm.
- Ask each member to share their story.

## DISCUSSION

- We all get scared sometimes. What do we need when that happens?
- Who do we need to help us?
- How do we try to get people to help us?





# MINE FIELD CHALLENGE

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

This exercise gives participants a chance to work on their relationships and trust issues, which is why they are paired into teams of two.

## PARTICIPANTS

Teams of 2 participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30+ minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate

## MATERIALS

- One blindfold for each team.
- "Mines" such as balls, bowling pins, cones, pillows, etc.
- Large, open area

## PREPARATIONS

- The Youth Development Coach must distribute "mines," which they place haphazardly around the area.

## METHOD

- One team member will be blindfolded and cannot talk and the other can see and talk, but cannot enter the field or touch their blindfolded teammate.
- The activity requires each blind-folded person to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the mines by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners.
- Penalties can be put in place for each time a blindfolded person hits a mine, but the real idea behind the activity is to get the team members to trust their partner's directions and to teach them to communicate in a more effective way.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Was it more difficult to give or receive directions?
- What might you do differently to communicate better next time?



# CATERPILLAR RACE

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

This activity focuses on working together as a team.

## PARTICIPANTS

Teams of 4 or more participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

30+ minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

High

## MATERIALS

- Hoola Hoops
- Beanbags or other small objects
- Blindfolds (optional)

## PREPARATIONS

- A large open space is required
- The Youth Development Coach must distribute beanbags (or other objects) haphazardly around the area.

## METHOD

- Each team is a caterpillar.
- Each team stands in a line with each participant standing in a hoop (the hoops should be touching).
- The goal of the activity is to collect as many objects off the ground by having your caterpillar move forward.
- To move forward, the last participant in line steps into the participant of front of their hoop, picks up their empty hoop, and passes it to the front.
- The front participant then places the hoop on the ground and steps into it. Every participant then shifts forward and the caterpillar has moved.
- Only the front participant may pick up objects, but it is the team's job to carry collected objects throughout the activity.
- The activity ends when there are no more objects on the ground.

## VARIATIONS

- Add a time constraint.
- Have all the participants on a team blindfolded except for the last participant of that team. That participant must guide their team throughout the activity.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What system did you set up to have your caterpillar move efficiently?
- What were some obstacles you faced as a team in this activity? How did you overcome those obstacles?



# TALENT SHOW

## PURPOSE & FOCUS

To teach participants how to think creatively, work as a team, and negotiate and compromise.

## PARTICIPANTS

Any number of participants.

## TIME ALLOTMENT

60+ minutes

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

High

## MATERIALS

- None, or anything laying around

## METHOD

- Divide the participants into groups of 4 to 5. Discuss how much having fun together is tied to respect for each other.
- Give groups about 15-20 minutes to come up with a challenging small group activity. Then all groups come together and take turns to present their activity.
- Groups earn points if: No other group can beat them at their activity (+2) or can do another group's activity (+1).
- Be warned: This is harder than it sounds - requires all elements of teamwork including creativity, communication, trust, problem solving, time management, etc.
- To help groups succeed, check in with the progress during planning. Help with ideas or problem solving strategies if the group is struggling. Encourage creative out-of-the-box thinking e.g., singing, dancing, joke telling, non-verbal, as well as physical or mental-type activities.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Talk about some negotiation or compromise that happened while you were deciding what to do.
- Were you all happy with the outcome of what you picked?