



# Facilitation Manual

*For Project Great Outdoors Head Facilitators and Guide/Facilitators*

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Project Great Outdoors, Inc. is a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Our mission is to guide youth towards broader perspectives and self discovery through adventures in the great outdoors. Programs are offered to underserved youth in northern California and western Nevada.

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**Facilitaion Manual**  
for Project Great Outdoors' volunteers



As experiential educators, it seems a little odd to have a tool as non-experiential as a book. Nonetheless, this book is intended to serve two purposes. The first is to supplement the Project GO training library by providing an over view of the role and function of facilitation in the Project GO experience. The second (and more exciting) purpose is to provide background information to be used in conjunction with our facilitation workshops, which help bring the words to life.

With this in mind, it is important to realize that facilitation is much too large a subject to be contained in a few pages or learned in a workshop. Rather, it comprised of a series of skills that require time, practice and experience to develop and hone. Wherever you are in your journey as a facilitator, we invite you to make us a part of it.

The publication of this manual marks a fundamental change in how we ask our guides and volunteers to see themselves. We can be so much more than “just” river guides. We can grow to become guide/facilitators who take an active role in helping youth make the most of their Project GO experience.

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*The mission of Project GO is to guide youth towards broader perspectives and self-discovery through adventures in the great outdoors.*

## **Envisioning the Project GO Experience**

Think about the last time you tried something new and just a little bit scary. Were you nervous? Excited? Downright terrified? And yet you did it, and perhaps learned a little something about yourself and the world in the process. This is the essence of Project GO.

What we do is known as experiential education, and we do it through adventure-based learning. Adventure is a powerful tool. It is physically, mentally and emotionally stimulating and challenging. It involves the whole person, thus providing the chance for an individual to test all aspects of him or her self, as well as to assess strengths, acknowledge weaknesses, and learn about character. Some of the benefits of participating in adventure outings include having the chance to gain confidence, a stronger sense of self, a sense of belonging, compassion, friendship, and problem-solving skills (*Ewert, 1989*).

According to Luckner and Nadler (*1997*) adventure education is effective in providing these benefits for five reasons:

1. It is experiential, and we learn best when we are actively involved.
2. It uses perceived risk in a social environment to prepare us to learn.
3. The activities and setting are foreign to us, forcing us to rely on our group members.
4. The consequences of our actions are immediately apparent.
5. We can recognize patterns of behavior as being consistent across a variety of settings.

Participants on Project GO trips are actively involved in the successful navigation of the river and the day. They learn to paddle together, to look out for one another, and to celebrate success as a team. Whitewater rafting is perceived by our participants as risky business, and for the majority of our participants, being on the river presents a new and novel environment, taking participants to the edge of their comfort zone. This is the essence of adventure-based learning – the belief that engaging in activities that are physically and psychologically demanding and have a level of perceived risk promotes growth (*Bagby & Chavarria, 1980*).

All of this sounds fabulous, doesn't it? Whether you are aware of it or not, these very things are likely a big part of what drew you to whitewater rafting in the first place. It is also part of what makes the Project GO experience so rewarding for the participants.

As a guide, you know about letting the river do some of the work for you. Indeed, it is a powerful force, however, sometimes we have to take action to get to where we want to be. The same is true of experiential education. While the river plays a key part in creating the experience, that experience needs some sort of reflection or processing in order to create lasting change through transference to other situations (*Priest, Gass, & Gillis, 2000*). In other words:

***Doing + Reflecting => Learning***

With Project GO, “doing” refers to the experiences our participants have rafting, as well as the activities and initiatives both on and off river. “Reflecting” is accomplished through guided debriefs where teachable moments are discussed and connections are drawn to other situations. Through the help of a skilled facilitator (that’s you!) participants can identify elements of their behavior on the river and recognize that those patterns exist elsewhere in their lives. This is “learning”, where participants embark on self-discovery and broader perspectives, which, we hope, will transfer into the rest of their lives. This transference is key to the mission of Project GO and is made possible through facilitation.

## **Facilitating the Project GO Experience**

*“Facilitation is the process of moving a group or individual toward a desired outcome. A facilitator, therefore, is a catalyst for making experiences possible.”*

*(Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff & Breunig, 2006, p. 106)*

At Project GO, facilitation is a key part of the experience for our youth, and we expect every guide to take on the role of guide/facilitator. A day on the river is ripe with teachable moments and opportunities for reflection, and facilitation extends far beyond games and other activities that might take place off river. The skills discussed in this manual prepare you to work with our participants in a caring, connected, and creative manner. Keeping these tricks of the trade in mind when working with the entire group and with the smaller group of participants you have in your boat can make Project GO truly a rich experience for both you and the youth we serve!

In addition to facilitation skills that everyone can use to successfully implement the Project GO mission, this manual also contains the necessary information and guidelines for each trip’s Head Facilitator. This person will be responsible for communicating the group’s goals for the day; gathering necessary facilitation equipment; choosing and leading appropriate activities at the beginning of the day, at lunch, and at the end of the day; and encouraging all guides to remember their role as facilitators of the experience.

## **Five Question Debrief Model**

A popular technique in experiential education is for facilitators to ask a series of questions as tools to spark reflection and discussion. The goal is to help with transference of knowledge gained on the river to situations at home. At Project GO we believe that a skilled facilitator asking the right questions before, during, and after an experience can help open a gateway to powerful new thinking and learning. To enable this new thinking and learning, the facilitators at Project GO use the five-question debrief model created by Micah Jacobson and Mari Ruddy in their book *Open to Outcome (2004)*.

When used correctly, the “five questions” can help individuals and the group as a whole to recognize a learning experience. The questions can be used after any teachable moment or at the end of the day, and can be effectively used in debriefing problem-solving initiatives. It requires from the facilitator a genuine curiosity in the group’s dynamics and careful observation of the group’s interactions during an activity. When the facilitator asks the questions, it is important to listen to the answers, as they will help frame the next questions.

The questions are:

1. Did you notice that...?
2. Why did that happen?
3. Does that happen in life/on river?
4. Why might that happen in life/on river?
5. How can you use that?

Did you notice that...?

It is up to you, the facilitator, to notice something of relevance during an activity or experience that you will ask the group about. You will likely notice many things during the day, and you will need to choose one thing in particular to open up to the group. Whenever possible, you should try to notice things that address the goals of the group. This first question is intended to call attention to the specific observation that you made. Because it is a yes/no question, it is easy and safe for a participant to answer. This is your foot in the door of the debrief process.

There are three types of observations you can ask about:

The first is objective:

How long did something take? Who contributed?

The second type of observation is anthropological:

Who had the power in the group? Are there rules that the group works under?

The third type of observation is psychological:

Who was most focused on completing the task? Did anyone display strong emotions?

Why did that happen?

When your first question was answered, you received an invitation to the second question, "Why did that happen?" This question is about interpretation. If your observation was a good one, the group most likely answered your first question with a yes. If they said no, the second question can be rephrased to "Why did you not notice?", and you are still in the conversation. You should not be concerned with whether the response matches your expectations. Instead, you are looking for a response that is real and connected to the actual observation.

Even if the answer you get to this second question comes from left field, avoid saying "no." Instead acknowledge the response while soliciting another answer. Try, "Were there other reasons?" "Yes, and..." or "Why did that really happen?"

Does that happen in life/on river?

All the questions are important, but the third one, "Does that happen in life/on river?" gets to the heart of what Project GO is trying to accomplish. If our clients are to transfer learning from the initiatives and experience on the river to home, we must



help them connect their experience to “real life”. It is important that you avoid providing an answer for them. Whether your answer is right or wrong, it will not be real to participants. They must draw the connection themselves for it to be meaningful. Your role is to help the group go where they need to go.

Why does that happen in life/on river?

This fourth question, “Why does that happen in life/on river?” is a way of restating the second question. Your goal here is to help participants explore their answer to the third question and help them anchor the answer more securely to their “real life”.

How can you use that?

The fifth question, “How can you use that?” is the cornerstone of experiential learning as practiced by Project GO. The final three questions help place experience into a context where it can have relevance to “real life”. This question nails it into place. Referring to the participants’ jobs, school, family, friend interactions, etc. helps them to transfer the understandings they gained through the initiative or experience. The answers to this question will help participants realize how they make choices in life, learn to cooperate, and challenge themselves.

See Appendix A for a sample scenario of how to use the five-question debrief model to discuss a teachable moment on river.

### **Playing with the Project GO Population**

The majority of the guests we serve are teenagers, and they come to us with challenges that we would not face if we were playing with adults. It is important to realize that dozens of things can become an obstacle to full participation. As a facilitator, you need to keep in mind that these challenges are real for our participants, and you need to accommodate or address them in order for them to fully engage in the experience.

One set of challenges particular to adolescents is physiological in nature. Because teenagers are in a period of tremendous physical growth, they need more sleep and have different eating habits than adults. Additionally, their hormones are in flux, which causes other changes in their body as well. Young women are beginning to menstruate, which can be both physically and emotionally challenging. Most teenagers are experiencing significant weight gain and growth spurts, which can often make them feel like they are in somebody else’s body. Finally, the surge in hormones can cause teenagers to lose focus and seem “spacey” or distracted (*Vander Zanden, Crandell & Crandell, 2006*).

In addition to the physiological challenges of adolescence, there are many psychological challenges as well. Adolescents have both a need for and a fear of taking risks (*Ponton, 1997*). At Project GO, our program is about giving participants an opportunity to take healthy risks. In addition, teenagers have a need for boundaries as well as a need to challenge those boundaries (*Lopez, 2002*). It is important that you set boundaries and enforce them consistently; doing this will help participants identify you as a leader they are willing to follow. This will also help the group feel safe and understand their individual roles.

Other pressures that influence teenagers are the need to fit in and feel secure.

Teenagers have a need to feel like they are part of a group, however, they often feel self-conscious, as though the whole world is watching them (*Vander Zanden, Crandell & Crandell, 2006*). They may feel the pressure to be “girly” or “manly”, which can affect their willingness to take on certain tasks. Not only do adolescents want their peers to like them, they want you, the facilitator, to like them as well, which may affect the way they participate during the day. It is important that you be yourself and open to making a connection with the group.

Teenagers also have a growing need for autonomy (*Kutner 1997*). When it is safe and appropriate, you may want to have the participants take on responsibilities and handle things on their own. Finally, it cannot be stated strongly enough that teenagers need to feel respected and acknowledged. Genuine praise and public appreciation will go a long way to making participants feel like they are valued. Remember that they want you to be yourself, they want you to like them and they genuinely want to succeed.

#### Tips for Making a Connection (*from Edginton & Edginton, 1994*)

Here are some suggestions for creating a connection with our participants. Remember that your primary concern is always safety, and that should guide you as you implement these suggestions.

1. Make personal contact.
  - Treat each participant as an individual who is an important component of the team.
  - Make eye contact, use their names, and ask questions about them.
2. Embrace your inner child.
  - Be spontaneous, have fun!
  - Be involved with them; know when it is appropriate to meet them on their level.
3. Create opportunities for community to develop.
  - Keep watch to be sure everyone has an opportunity to be involved.
  - Use small groups when possible.
  - Don't assume they will interact on their own; sometimes they need a little encouragement.
4. Promote ownership and empowerment.
  - Draw them in to help whenever possible.
  - Let them know how important they are to your experience.

### **Working with the Group**

Remember that each group comes to Project GO with a unique set of skills, expectations, and challenges. Before the group arrives, the Head Facilitator will communicate the group's goals to the rest of the PGO team, and reveal as much information about the group as is available. It is easy to make assumptions about our participants based on their background. Rather than falling into this trap, it is your job as a guide/facilitator to meet the group as they are, get to know them, help them get to know themselves and empower them to grow.

It is important to note that the groups who come to Project GO are frequently new to experiential education, and they may have difficulty articulating their goals for

the day. Part of being a facilitator is learning to read the group and assess where they are in the developmental process. You will need to be flexible with your plans. For example, group leaders may tell you that their goal for the day is teamwork, but you may quickly see that the group has communication and trust barriers that they must overcome before they can work effectively as a team. While you are not an expert on the group with which you are working, it is your mission to get to know them as much as you can as quickly as you can, so that you can set them up for success. The Head Facilitator can frequently provide insight into group functioning and help steer you in the right direction.

### **Setting the Tone – Playing it Safe**

Setting and maintaining the right tone with the group is important and should be an element of everything you do. Remember that participants on Project GO trips are in a new environment, and you are a new member of their group. In order to earn their trust and respect you must first assure them that you are concerned for both their physical and emotional safety

*Physical Safety (modified from Priest & Gass, 2005, pp. 93-94)*

According to Priest and Gass (2005), most accidents stem from a combination of unsafe environmental conditions, unsafe client behaviors, and/or unsafe errors by leaders. We have listed some examples below that are relevant to the Project GO experience, but this list is not meant to be exhaustive. It is important to keep these and other hazards, perils and risks in mind when planning the day and throughout the experience. Finally, we are all human, and cannot watch everyone at all times. If you see a fellow facilitator doing something unsafe, speak up!

#### Unsafe Environmental Conditions

- Rapids and rocks
- Uneven and slippery terrain
- Poison oak
- Wildlife - snakes, bees, skunks, etc.
- Sun
- Dehydration
- Hypothermia

#### Unsafe Client Behaviors

- Failure to follow instructions
- Falling
- Rushing
- Getting in the water
- Pushing, roughhousing
- Poor supervision from group leaders
- Not using equipment properly –T-Grip, PFD, ropes, etc.

## Unsafe Errors by Leaders

- Assumptions about abilities
- Attitude toward risk
- Carelessness
- Distraction
- Fatigue
- Inconsistency
- Health status
- Overconfidence
- Ineffective supervision
- Unrealistic schedule

## Emotional Safety

In discussions of safety, the emotional safety of participants is often overlooked. However, creating an emotionally safe environment is critical to the success of the Project GO experience. Project GO participants are frequently taking big emotional risks just by being here. They are in an unfamiliar environment, often with people they do not know well, and are facing situations that evoke fear, uncertainty and anxiety. Here on the edge of their comfort zone lies the heart of the Project GO experience.

An emotionally safe environment is one in which participants feel free to express themselves and take risks and feel as though they are valued members of the community. You can help create and maintain this environment through the use of Project GO's version of a Full Value Contract, The High Five. (See Appendix C for a full description of this activity.)

## Full Value Contract and Challenge by Choice

A full value contract, whether elaborate or simple, implies a mutually accepted contractual agreement among all participants, including the facilitator(s). While we may like to assume that everyone accepts our core values, it is important that they be made explicit and agreed upon by everyone on the trip. The High Five makes all group members responsible for ensuring physical and emotional safety, and creates a comfortable mechanism for individuals to point out instances when others violate the contract.

Another tool at your disposal is Challenge by Choice. It is important for everyone, facilitators and participants alike, to recognize that each participant is different, and what is easy for one person may be terrifying to another. Like the Full Value Contract, the terms of Challenge by Choice must be explicitly stated. It is then up to each participant to choose their own level of challenge, risk and adventure (Priest & Gass, 2005). (A good activity to introduce this is Concentric Circles, described in Appendix C.)

In addition to the Full Value Contract and Challenge by Choice, the following are some suggestions for group ground rules that encourage healthy emotional risks (Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

- Each person should have the opportunity to be heard.
- It's OK just to listen.
- Don't interrupt.

Put-downs are prohibited.  
Speak only for yourself.  
Everyone belongs.

## **Planning the Project GO Experience**

The information in this section is largely geared toward the Head Facilitator; however, it is important for everyone to know what goes into preparing for the Project GO Experience. Moreover, all guide/facilitators will benefit from thinking about the groups' goals and how to meet them in a positive and safe manner.

### **Preparing for the Day**

As the Head Facilitator, you will want to find out the group's goals as early as possible. In an ideal situation, you will know these well in advance of the trip. You may even be asked to work in advance to help the group leaders set some goals. Some typical goals of Project GO participants include: teamwork, communication, overcoming fears, coordination, trust, and simply having fun.

In addition to goals, you will want to learn who the participants are, where they are from, their ages, backgrounds, and the history of the group. For example, you might prepare very differently for a group you know has been working together for several months than for one who will be meeting for the first time. Furthermore, information about the dynamics of the group can be helpful. Is there a history of conflict between any members? Any romantic relationships you should be aware of? Do support networks already exist, or will you have to help build them?

Both the Head Guide and Head Facilitator should also know how many participants, how many staff, and how many guide/facilitators will be on the trip. Other useful information might include whether or not the group is camping, how far they have traveled to get to you, and any special medical concerns.

Once you have learned as much as you can about the participants, you need to examine your internal resources. Who are the other guide/facilitators on the trip? What are their strengths? How can they get involved? What equipment do you have available and/or need? Where will you be leading activities? What kind of space is available? What are potential safety concerns? How much time will you have? What will the weather be like?

Once you know about the group and your fellow Project GO volunteers, you can begin to plan the day! Consider the group's goals and background in concert with the time and resources available, and choose activities accordingly. When creating your play progression, remember to plan more activities than you need and be ready to change your plan. It is also important to communicate with the Head Guide so that your plans are consistent with the logistical needs of the trip such as rigging and shuttle.

As you plan the day, be aware of how you are feeling and try to arrange the day so you are successful. If you are feeling "off", select activities that you are very comfortable with. Don't hesitate to ask other volunteers to lead an activity or share the facilitation with you.

Finally, have all your equipment ready before the group arrives. Let other guide/fa-

cilitators in on your plan. Tell them when you will need their cooperation and talents.

### **What Does the Day Look Like?**

As you can see, the work of the Head Facilitator begins well before the group arrives. What you are about to discover is that it continues throughout the day until well after the group leaves.

#### **When the Group Arrives**

When the group arrives, the Head Facilitator joins the Host in welcoming them. Identify yourself to the group leaders and confirm their numbers and goals for the day. Give them a brief overview of how the day will run. Greet the participants and let them know how excited you are to share this experience with them. You'll learn more about Getting Off on the Right Foot later.

When the participants arrive, they will most likely be tired from a long drive and a bit disoriented. They will probably need time to stretch their legs, use the restroom, get river ready and apply sunscreen. It is the Host's job to facilitate this process, so you should work with him or her to keep the group on schedule. The Host will also collect medical release forms and inform the Head Guide and Head Facilitator of any medical conditions or concerns.

#### **Morning Activities**

At this point the Head Facilitator will want to check in with the Head Guide and the persons in charge of Gear and Shuttle to determine what work is left to be done and who will be available to help lead or facilitate activities in the play progression. The Head Facilitator communicates to all guide/facilitators that their participation in as many activities as possible will help set a positive tone for the rest of the day. It is important to play at least one name game before shuttle leaves while everyone is still available to participate. This is also a good time to frame and communicate the group's goals.

As you progress through the morning's activities, be sure everyone is fed, hydrated and energetic. The group may provide put-in snacks to share during your activities, and there should also be at least two bottles of water dedicated to the facilitator.

While you are leading activities (which we will discuss later), it is important that you use the opportunity to make your initial read of the group. Are they high functioning? Are they good listeners? Do they follow directions well? Are there any apparent conflicts between individuals? All of this information will be useful to the person delivering the safety talk, assigning boats, and getting us ready to push off. It will also be good information for every guide/facilitator, so you should share observations at the pre-launch guide meeting.

#### **On River**

Once you are in your boat and on river, the Head Facilitator's job is very much the same as every other guide/facilitator. Be mindful of group goals, watch for teachable moments, and create fun and learning. Look for opportunities to use the five-question debrief model to help the learning stick! In addition to these basic responsibilities, the Head Facilitator may find opportunities throughout the day to check in with other

guide/facilitators to see how they are doing and offer to help problem-solve any issues that may arise. A good place to do this is at lunch.

### At Lunch

At the lunch stop, the lunch crew will gather a team to set up the food. Depending on the group and how the day has gone, the Head Facilitator may decide to play a game while lunch is being prepared. This helps keep the participants safe, out of the way, and engaged. It also helps gather everyone together for the lunch talk prior to eating. After lunch, the Head Facilitator may want to play another game while the lunch crew is cleaning up and re-rigging the boat, but be careful not to over-structure lunch. Sometimes the participants just need some free time to hang out by the river.

### At Takeout

At takeout, the Head Facilitator can be an invaluable motivator. Participants are tired, distracted, and ready to go home. However, it's critical that each person takes an active role in carrying gear to the parking lot. The Head Guide and person in charge of Gear may ask the participants to help clean, dry and roll boats. Once again, participants will want to use the restroom, change clothes, and may be prone to wandering off. A structured activity can help alleviate these problems. Find a safe space that is out of the way and gather the group together in preparation for the closing circle.

### Closing Circle

The last activity of the day is the closing circle. The Head Facilitator will lead the group in a reflective activity to help them process their day. It is an opportunity to revisit the group's goals and assess their progress. It is also the last chance to make a lasting impression. In addition to reflection on goals, you can find some fun and useful closing activity suggestions in Appendix B.

### After They GO

Back at the locker, once the gear has been put away, the Head Guide and Head Facilitator will gather the guide/facilitators for a debrief. The Head Guide will debrief the logistics of the day and you as the Head Facilitator may want to process the Project GO team's experience. Don't be afraid to use the five question debrief model. While our main goal is to guide youth towards broader perspectives and self-discovery, it doesn't hurt to take a look at our own opportunities for transformation too.

## **The Play Progression**

A progression is a series of activities designed incrementally such that each step builds on the previous one in order to move the group to a desired outcome. At Project GO this means helping the group to trust each other and preparing them to work together on river and in life. Each step in the Project GO play progression is sequenced for a positive and fun learning experience. The activities are designed to progress from lower risk to higher risk; from less complicated to more complicated; from easier to more difficult. Thus, icebreakers lead to name games, which are followed by problem-solving initiatives, which require the most teamwork, risk, and trust.

It is important to remember that the most learning occurs during the problem-solving initiatives, therefore, it should be the goal of every facilitator to help the group reach this stage in the progression. Appendix C provides descriptions of several activities in each stage of the progression.

With that in mind, it is also important to remember that not every group that comes on a Project GO trip will be ready to move through all the levels in the progression. Our goal is for the participants to have fun, learn something about themselves, and be able to work together on river. A successful day is not contingent on the group being able to complete all the activities. It is important that you as the facilitator observe how the group is doing in each activity and determine whether or not they are ready to move on to a higher level. If you allow the group to take on a problem-solving initiative when they aren't ready, not only will they be unable to complete the challenge, you risk losing their trust for the rest of the day. When this happens it is important to reframe the challenge (or even try another one) so the group gets to experience success.

### Icebreakers

Icebreaker activities are designed to “break the ice” for the day. Project GO participants are typically new to whitewater rafting and often new to the outdoors. In the best of circumstances, the guests will be tired from having to get up early in the morning, but will be excited about the day. It is more likely that they will feel anxious about the whitewater, nervous about meeting new people, worried about the wildlife they will encounter, tired from a long drive, and unsure about the whole day. It is important to start things off on a positive note and help the participants begin to let down their guard, and that's what icebreakers are designed to do.

### Full Value Contract/Challenge by Choice

When we do a Full Value Contract/Challenge by Choice talk at Project GO we are setting the guidelines for how to create a supportive environment for people to take risks. This means participants are respectful of other people and their choices, behave safely in action and words, make a commitment to support the group, take responsibility for their own actions, and are encouraging of others in the group. Basically we make a commitment to take care of the group and ourselves.

### Name Games

One of the best ways to help create a positive experience is to build relationships between the participants and the guide/facilitators. The first step in that relationship is to learn each other's names, which is what name games are designed to do. It is unlikely that all the participants will know each other when they come on a Project GO trip. Even if they do know each other, they do not know us, the Project GO volunteers. Remember that the goal is for everybody to learn each other's names, so it is important to play a name game before people leave on shuttle. Chances of remembering everyone's name after just one name game are slim; you can find fun ways to revisit this throughout the day.



## FUNN (Functional Utility Not Necessary) Games

FUNN games are played just for fun and provide an opportunity to get people moving and being silly without having to risk much. Keep in mind, though, that most of these games are designed to make participants feel a little foolish, which can be a pretty big risk for the typical Project GO participant. Before we ask the group to risk sharing things about themselves, trusting each other, or working together it is important to know that they can risk being laughed at during a silly game. In short we want to know what their PDQ (Play Determinant Quotient) is. Another consideration when playing FUNN games is what Plato said, “You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.”

## Get to Know Each Other Activities

During previous stages of the play progression, you have had many opportunities to begin reading the group. Once you have determined that the group is willing to play and take risks in front of each other, it's time to have participants begin to share about themselves. Not only is this important for relationship building, but it is also important for you as a facilitator to get to know the people you are playing with. When doing these activities, continue to observe the group dynamics. Who is participating willingly? Who is helping keep the group motivated and engaged? Who is trying to sabotage the group? Who needs to be coaxed into participating? Who needs to participate less?

## Problem-Solving Initiatives

Now that the participants know each other and are beginning to trust each other, it is time to really build teamwork skills. Remember that this is at the heart of the Project GO mission. Problem-solving initiatives are designed to require communication, collaboration, coordination and many other teamwork skills. Not only will these skills be central to success on river, but we also hope the participants will take these skills with them back to the “real world”.

Problem-solving initiatives require the entire group to participate in order to succeed. They come in a variety of flavors. They vary in terms of how physically demanding they are, the amount and type of communication required for success, and which teamwork skills are targeted. While you may find certain initiatives to be more challenging than others, it is important to keep in mind that they can all be modified to make them easier or more difficult to accomplish.

In order for the group to get the most out of the initiatives, it is important that you avoid the temptation to solve problems for the group. Instead, encourage the group, make things easier when appropriate, serve as a resource, and act as a sounding board. During these activities, conflict may arise within the group. This is a great learning opportunity! Don't take sides. Instead, reinforce rules and set the tone, remain neutral, and encourage discussion.

## **Implementing the Project GO Experience**

### **Getting Off on the Right Foot**

As you know, when the group arrives they will be greeted by the Host and Head Facilitator. Just because they are not yet officially meeting you does not mean that they are not watching you. They are curious, excited, and want to know about you. It is important that you be on task, enthusiastic, and friendly. Remember that the choices you make now may set the tone for the entire day.

Depending how the morning has gone, there may be work left to do rigging boats, etc. It is important that each Guide/Facilitator be as involved as possible in every morning activity. Try to be involved in at least one large group activity before you get on river. Participate in the name game, introduce yourself, and start getting to know the participants and their trip leaders. This gives the participants a chance to know you and begin to trust you.

### **Reading the Group**

You can start reading the group from the moment they arrive. As they pile out of the vehicles, do they seem tired, excited, or anxious? Body language can communicate a great deal. Reading the group entails reading body language and actions, as well as verbal cues, to determine the group's level of functioning, attitude, and their readiness to play.

Once activities get underway, it will be the Head Facilitator's responsibility to constantly assess the group's energy level and be flexible with the play progression. The Head Facilitator will work hard to meet the group where they are and design activities to help them reach their goals. You can help by being on the lookout for key behaviors and characteristics.

### **Things to Look For**

How individuals and the group as a whole approach various issues can tell you a lot about their level of functioning and attitude toward the day. While the Head Facilitator will decide which of these areas present opportunities for growth and which are beyond the scope of the day, it is important that everyone be attuned to group dynamics.

Below are some potential opportunities for growth that commonly appear in Project GO participants and groups.

#### **Gender roles**

Look for stereotypes, sexual tension, and basic respect for each other.

#### **Authority issues**

Participants may have a fear of authority and/or lack of respect for it.

#### **Communication barriers**

Communication difficulties may stem from language differences, shyness, and talking over each other.

### Fear

Adolescents are good at hiding this; it may manifest as aggression, bravado, apathy or disengagement.

### Arguments

They happen; defer to the group's leaders for solutions and discipline.

### Listening skills

There is a wide range of ability and willingness to listen; for the sake of safety, this one is critical to navigate.

### Exclusion/inclusion

Be aware of cliques, outcasts, and loners.

### Respect

The group or individuals may lack respect for you, for each other, for themselves, and for the process and experience.

### Leaders and followers

Every group has them; learn who they are as soon as possible so you can use them to your advantage.

### Stereotypes

Watch and listen for all kinds of stereotypes, particularly those based on gender, race ethnicity, physical characteristics, intelligence, and ability.

When reading the group, be aware of the needs of individuals as well as the group as a whole. Are they tired? Scared? Shy? Hungry? Embarrassed? Feeling fat? Address these needs as best you can or else you're unlikely to get real participation in any of the day's activities. Remember that the purpose of reading the group is to identify where they are so that you can help them move toward achieving their goals for the day.

### Interacting with the Group –Tricks of the Trade

While all of this may seem daunting, it is important to remember that good facilitators come in two varieties, those who seem to have an innate talent, and those who learn through practice, experience, and observation. In reality, most of us lie somewhere in between. No matter where on the spectrum you find yourself, the following are some tricks of the trade you will find useful.

### Communication

What you say and how you say it are important. Avoid using negative language such as "don't" and "can't." Use descriptive words rather than evaluative words. Avoid humor that puts down or discounts members, or that can be misinterpreted, such as sarcasm. Finally, remember that nonverbal communication plays a key role as well. Be aware of what messages you are sending. Smile!

### Trust and Respect

Earning the trust and respect of the group is important. One way to do this is to be sure you only say things that you can back up. Another technique is to make a mistake and correct yourself. Show that it's okay to be wrong, and that when you are wrong, you admit it.

### Respect the Participants

The way you communicate conveys your respect for the participants, but your actions speak loudly too. While many Project GO activities are 'high touch', it is important that you refrain from touching the guests unless it is necessary. If safety isn't at immediate risk, always ask before you make physical contact.

### Eye Contact

As you learned in Making the Connection, eye contact is important. This is hard to do if you are wearing sunglasses; take them off. Also, stand facing the sun so the participants don't have to.

### Be Professional

Be mindful that we work with young people, and what may be appropriate at the locker is not necessarily appropriate with participants. Do not use vulgar language or tell off-color jokes.

### Play the Safety Card

When things get difficult or challenging, make safety the primary issue. It is hard to challenge the importance of safety.

### Using Circles

Circles can be magical. There is no power position in a circle. Circles allow everyone to see everyone else, create a sense of belonging and engagement, and help ensure that everyone is included in the conversation.

### Enlist Their Help

Chat with the ringleader to get him/her on your side. If you can turn this person into an ally, you are more likely to be successful with the whole group. Similarly, you can build a relationship with the most "difficult" kid. This can minimize their impact on the group.

### Establish Authority

Authority is a role or position and whoever has it (participant or guide/facilitator) needs to be respected. Share authority by allowing them to be in charge of something: getting everybody in the circle for the safety talk within the next 10 minutes, or guiding the boat down stream without your help.

### Self-Awareness

Continually ask yourself, “Why am I doing this?” If you don’t know, you probably should be doing something different. Also, remember not to take things too personally.

### Work With the Group Leaders

Check in with the group leaders and get feedback before and during the day. They know the participants better than you and can help you understand participants in a different light.

### **Your Boat!**

While the Head Facilitator can be a valuable resource, once you are in your boat with your team of paddlers, you are the facilitator of the Project GO experience. It is important that you monitor threats to both physical and emotional safety, work to maintain the principles of the Full Value Contract and Challenge by Choice, and continue to read the group as they progress toward their group goals. Once the environment created by the FVC and CBC is compromised, it can be nearly impossible to regain.

On the river, you will encounter many teachable moments, and some of them may occur early in the day. Events such as perching on a rock, flipping the raft, or even successfully navigating big water all present opportunities for learning and growth. For a sample scenario using the Five-Question Debrief Model to process a teachable moment, see Appendix A.

Additionally, playing small group games in your boat can foster a sense of team spirit, connectedness, and fun. While you will learn many fun games as you go, Appendix C includes three to get you started.



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## Appendix A

### A Sample Five-Question Debrief Scenario

The following is a sample conversation using the five-question debrief model to process a teachable moment. It is important to note that there are many different kinds of teachable moments with both positive and negative outcomes. This is merely one example. Additionally, when you pose the questions in the model, you will get a variety of responses. Again, this is just one example of how the conversation might unfold.

The Situation:

You are in a raft with five Project GO participants. The morning of paddling in the Class II section of the Gorge run of the South Fork of the American River was relatively uneventful. Your team has been paddling together successfully in the Class II rapids.

You have just enjoyed a relaxing lunch at BLM I, and now you are back in the boat and headed toward the Class III rapids. At Gorilla Pond, you all enjoy a dip in the river and then regroup to head downstream. Just before the Maidu Kitchen, you find yourself perched on a very large rock just below the surface of the water.

Once safety concerns have been addressed, you take a second or two to quickly process just how you ended up here. You saw the rock. You set an angle to avoid it. You called a forward. And yet, here you are. When you called the forward, two of your five paddlers were splashing another boat, one was watching the trees go by, and two were paying attention to you. These were the only two who paddled consistently as you tried to avoid the rock.

Since you are going to be here a while, and the other boats are aware that you are taking a moment to process, you begin to explore this teachable moment.

1) Did you notice that...?

You ask the group, "Did you notice that we are stuck on a very large rock?" Of course, they've noticed (hopefully), so their answer will be..."yeah".

2) Why did that happen?

You ask, "Why do YOU think we got stuck on the rock?"

When you ask the second question, you are likely to get a variety of responses, and you may need to reframe the question to steer the conversation in a productive direction.

You hear a variety of responses ranging from, "You aimed us right at it" (and maybe you did, sneaky you) to "She was splashing me!" to "We were the only two people who paddled!"

At this point, you can choose to address each response, or you can address the most appropriate one. You respond, "Right! Before lunch everybody was working really well together, and then suddenly nobody was paying attention. What happened?"

One person responds, "This part is boring!" Another says, "He splashed me first, so I had to splash him back!"

Sometimes you have to probe a little bit more to get them to understand the why. You reframe with, “So, when you feel safe or bored, it is easy to get distracted or lose focus and stop taking things seriously.”

### 3) Does that happen in life/on river?

You ask, “Does that happen in life? You get bored, stop paying attention, and end up in a bad place?” At least one of their responses will most likely be a “yes”. At this point you choose to ask for an example. A participant response, “Sometimes in school I don’t pay attention and I miss assignments.”

### 4) Why might that happen in life/on river?

You ask, “Why might you not pay attention in school?” The response you want to work toward is, “Because it’s boring!” “Right,” you say, “you get bored with school and stop paying attention, so you miss an important announcement or get a bad grade on a test.”

### 5) How can you use that?

As a guide/facilitator, it is your job to help the participants make connections between their experiences on river and other aspects of life. Knowing that, you ask, “So if you know that even when things seem boring, you still have to pay attention so you don’t end up stuck on a rock or getting a bad grade, what can you do about it?” In a perfect world, the final discussion will include a response that is similar to, “Even when things seem boring, you have to make yourself pay attention so you don’t end up in trouble.” You might even take it a step further by asking, “What is one way you can stay focused? Could you ask a classmate to nudge you when they see you doodling on your notebook instead of listening? What are other solutions?” It will most likely take some coaching to get them to respond to this. You may have to ask follow up questions, or provide some sample responses to get them to make the connection.

There will be multiple responses to all of these questions, particularly question number two. Remember not to artificially steer the conversation in the direction you want it to go; instead, let the group bring out what is important to them. However, if one of their responses steers you toward a conversation about one of their goals for the day, that would be a good path to follow.

## Appendix B

### Closing Activities

This section contains an overview of a few Closing Activities you can use with groups. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list of what's out there, nor is it intended to limit you or act as a step-by-step guide for leading the activities. These activities have been around in the world of facilitation and have evolved over many years and much experience. Project GO did not invent the activities described, but we have written and included them here to give you a place to start from. You are encouraged to adapt the activities to suit the needs of the particular group you are playing with and/or to select different activities.

As a point of reference, activities described in both Appendix B and Appendix C were drawn from the following sources and others like them:

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#### Activities:

Shuffle

Snapshot

Processing "Kit"

"No Kidding, There I was..."

## **Shuffle**

Materials: None

Group Size: Any

*Target Group: A group that prefers less communication and processing. Perhaps a group that has struggled all day and didn't feel the level of success we would hope.*

**How to play:**

*Participants stand in a circle. The facilitator is a part of the circle. Have participants join hands or link arms around each other. The facilitator explains how to do the "Shuffle".*

*Participants start by "shuffling" to the direction the facilitator chooses and the circle rotates. At any time, somebody can say, "Stop!" At this command, everybody stops and the person who called "Stop!" recalls a memorable moment, or a success s/he had today. If it's better for the group, you can focus on gratitude, group or individual goals, or any other theme you think would work for the group.*

*After the participant has said his/her piece, s/he says, "Shuffle left," or "Shuffle right". The group then begins shuffling in that direction.*

*The activity continues with individuals stopping and sharing as long as it is productive.*

*Focus: Focus on the positive: memorable events, gratitude, goals, etc.*

## **Snapshot**

Materials: None

Group Size: Smaller (up to 12 participants)

*Target Group: A group that likes to debrief and reflect. A visually-oriented group.*

**How to play:**

*The group stands in a circle. The facilitator asks each participant to think back to a memorable moment in the day. It could be a time of accomplishment, teamwork, hard work, etc. The participants will take turns describing their scene as if a photographer had taken a picture of that moment. What does the "snapshot" look like? What is happening in that moment? What does it mean?*

*Focus: Communication, sharing your story, individual and group experience*

## **Processing “Kit”**

Materials: None

Group Size: Any

Target Group: *A group that likes to process, debrief, and reflect.*

How to play:

*Have the group stand in a circle. The facilitator asks each person to think of an object they saw or used with Project GO that in some way represents him/herself today. Each participant will share what the object is and how it represents him/her. You may also want to ask participants how they could use that metaphor in other aspects of their life if it's appropriate. The facilitator may want to start by giving an example for the group. For instance, “This morning I used a pump to help inflate the boats. I felt like a pump this morning when the group first arrived and you seemed tired from your long drive. I wanted to fill you up with the enthusiasm I had for our day.” Or, “This afternoon we saw some huge rocks. Today I felt like a big rock when we went into Hospital Bar. My crew was so solid, I felt like we would come through strong and sure.”*

Focus: *Transference, personal growth*

## **“No Kidding, There I Was...”**

Materials: None

Group Size: *Smaller (Up to 12 participants). A group that is verbally oriented.*

Target Group: *A group that has had a day full of intrigue and memorable moments.*

How to play:

*The group stands in a circle. The facilitator asks each participant to think back to a memorable moment in the day. It could be a time of accomplishment, teamwork, hard work, etc. The participants will take turns telling their story as it begins with “No kidding, there I was...” The facilitator may want to start by giving an example for the group of his/her own “No kidding...” story from the day.*

Focus: *Communication, sharing your story, individual and group experience.*



## Appendix C

### Activity Descriptions

This section contains an overview of several games you can use with groups. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list of what's out there. Nor is it intended to limit you or serve as a step-by-step guide for leading the activities. Think of it as one tool you can use to set you on a path to playing with Project GO groups.

These activities have been around in the world of facilitation and have evolved over many years and much experience. Project GO did not invent them, but we have written and included them here to give you a place to start from. You are encouraged to adapt the activities to suit the needs of the particular group you are playing with and/or to select different activities.

#### Icebreakers

- Finger Catch
- Circle the Circle
- Pulse

#### Get-to-Know-Each-Other

- Have You Ever?
- Shake-n-Share/Stretch-n-Share
- 60 Second Interview

#### FVC/CBC Talk

- High Five
- Three Concentric Circles
- Air Contract

#### Problem-Solving Initiatives

- Birthday Lineup
- Warp Speed
- Jump Rope
- Pipe Line
- Tarp Flip (With Goals)
- Form a Square

#### Name Games

- Name Duel
- Group Juggle
- Bumpity Bump Bump Bump

#### Fillers

- Green Glass Door
- Count Off!
- Team Cheer
- Look Up; Look Down

#### FUNN Games

- Partner Tag/Pairs Squared
- Hypalon Highway Tag
- Evolution
- Quick Line-Up

## **Finger Catch**

*Icebreaker*

Materials: None

Group Size: 8-80

Objectives: *Loosen up, have fun, begin working with cross-brain coordination.*

How to play:

*Facilitator and participants stand in a circle about chicken-wing distance apart. The participants follow the facilitator as s/he says, "Oh!" and lifts the index finger of the right hand in the air. Make sure everybody has his or her right index finger pointing up. Then the participants follow the facilitator as s/he says, "So!" and slides his/her left hand, palm facing up in front of the person to his/her left. Finally, the participants follow the facilitator as s/he says, "Sweet," and lowers the first finger of the right hand onto the open palm of the left hand next to him/her.*

*Once you are set up this way, explain that each person has two goals in this game. One, you try and catch the finger of the person on your left. Two, you try to escape from being caught by the person on your right. The facilitator will count to three and you are supposed to go on three, not before. There are two safety rules - it is catch and release, not catch and detach. If you catch the finger of the person next to you, be gentle and make sure to let them go without removing their finger. Also, remember not to whack the person next to you in the face when you are trying to escape.*

*Reiterate the rule of going on 3, then count to three and see who catches, who escapes, etc. After the first round you can add extra challenges. For instance, you can count, "One, two," at regular speed, but then hesitate for three. Or you can count "One" in a regular tone of voice, and emphasize, "Two!" and see if people go early. Don't forget to follow with "Three!"*

*You can also change up the placement of arms. For an additional challenge you can have the second movement ("So...") slide the left hand across your belly towards the person on your right. Or, slide it behind your back. For fun, the final level can be to have the second movement be directly in front of you. The third movement is to place your right finger in your own right hand. This way everybody gets to succeed in some way.*

Variations:

*FVC/CBC Talk*

*After each round of finger catch, mention a different element of the Full Value Contract/ Challenge by Choice. For example, when you change your tone of voice to incite people to go early, talk about how our tone of voice can affect each other during initiatives.*

Target Skills: *Fun, coordination.*



## **Circle the Circle**

*Icebreaker*

**Materials:** *One or two hula hoops*

**Group Size:** *10 - 30*

**Objectives:** *Start working on coordination and cooperation.*

**How to play:**

*Have the participants form a circle. Place a hula hoop on your shoulder. Ask everybody to join hands. They must remain holding hands throughout the activity. The hoop must be sent around the circle in one direction until it is returned to its starting point. This requires each person to maneuver through the hoop. When the hoop passes over/around somebody, you may choose to have that person say his/her name and/or one thing they are looking forward to during the day. The hoop must be propelled without letting go of hands, but it is OK for participants to help move the hoop over/around each other.*

**Variations:**

*Two hoops moving in opposite directions. The most challenging part here is when the hoops arrive at the same person and one hoop must be moved through the other.*

**Target Skills:** *Coordination, collaboration, listening, asking for help, offering help.*

## **Pulse**

*Icebreaker*

Materials: None

Group Size: 10 - 30

Objectives: Concentration, participation, and cooperation.

How to play:

*Have the participants form a circle and hold hands. Explain that you will send a pulse around the circle by squeezing the hand of the person next to you. When they feel the pulse, they pass the pulse along by squeezing the hand of the person next to them. In this way the pulse passes along through the group and is returned to the facilitator.*

*Challenge the group to pass the pulse as fast as they can. After playing a couple rounds, you may want to set a goal for how fast they should be able to pass the pulse.*

Variations:

*You may want to set additional guidelines such as closing eyes or making a noise as they pass the pulse.*

Target Skills: Coordination, attention, participation, fun.

## **High Five**

*FVC/CBC Talk*

Materials: None

Group Size: Any

Objectives: *Introduce Challenge By Choice and the Full Value Contract and set ground rules for the day.*

How to play:

*Hold up your left hand and say that we are going to focus on five things today.*

- 1. Point to your pinky and explain that this finger is for safety. Look out for the little guy and the small details.*
- 2. Point to your ring finger and explain that this finger is for commitment - to the team, the challenge, the situation and the game.*
- 3. Point to your middle finger and explain that this finger is all about respect. Never show it alone. We respect others and ourselves.*
- 4. Point to your first finger and explain that this finger is about responsibility. Don't point fingers or blame others. Take responsibility for your contribution to the group.*
- 5. Point to your thumb and explain that this finger is about encouragement and enthusiasm. Focus on what is positive and celebrate victories.*

*Explain that this is a way we can help keep ourselves in check today. If we see somebody display exceptional commitment or enthusiasm, etc., give them a high five. Additionally, if somebody is not showing respect or taking responsibility we can give them a high five to remind them of the ground rules for the day.*

Target Skills: *Cooperation, understanding guidelines*

## **Three Concentric Circles**

*FVC/CBC Talk*

*Materials: A sandy place to stand. (You need to be able to draw three concentric circles on the ground around you.)*

*Group Size: Any*

*Objectives: Introduce Challenge by Choice*

*How to play:*

*Facilitator and participants stand in a circle, super-hero distance apart.*

*Draw a small circle around you on the ground and ask the participants to do the same. Explain that this small center circle represents the comfort zone - an area where you are completely at ease. This area feels comfortable, but does not provide any challenges for us to grow from. (Examples include watching TV or text messaging.)*

*Draw another circle around the first circle and ask the participants to do the same. This second circle represents the challenge/growth zone - an area where we may not feel at ease, but we are still being safe. This is where we take healthy risks, learn new things, and can feel good about accomplishing something new. (For example, playing a new sport or learning to play an instrument.)*

*Draw a third circle around both the first two and ask the participants to do the same. This outside circle represents the danger zone - an area where we are no longer safe and are taking risks that are not healthy. Not only are we uncomfortable, we are not even able to learn and grow. (Examples include jumping off a bridge or experimenting with drugs.)*

*Today we want to be in the challenge zone and to do that we have to trust each other to respect individual challenges and to support us as we leave our comfort zones. Note that some circles will intersect. This is an opportunity to talk about how the group can and should interact with each other: If your comfort area intersects your friend's danger zone, perhaps you can help move them to a safer place.*

*Target Skills: Group buy-in for CBC.*

## **Air Contract**

*FVC/CBC Talk*

Materials: None

Group Size: Any

Objectives: *Introduce Challenge By Choice and the Full Value Contract; Set guidelines for the day*

How to play:

*Hold up a “C” for contract and ask the group to do as well. Have the participants repeat after you:*

*“I promise to take care of myself. I promise to take care of everyone else. I promise to take care of all living things. I promise to make a commitment to the challenges we face today. I promise not to pressure anybody else today.”*

*Have them sign and date the contract in the air.*

*Invite the group to help remind each other of the contract by showing a “C” when they see somebody who isn’t taking care of the group.*

Target Skills: *Group and individual buy-in for CBC and the FVC.*

## **Name Duel**

*Name Game*

Materials: None

Group Size: 12 - 60

Objectives: *Get to know each other's name in a low-risk way.*

How to play:

*Have the participants stand in a circle. The facilitator stands in the middle to demonstrate and explain the game.*

*The person in the middle is the spinner. S/he will walk up to somebody in the circle and point to them. This is the easiest job, all you have to do is point. You don't even have to know anybody's name. Be sure to demonstrate a respectful and clear way to point.*

*The person who has been pointed to takes one step back. This is the second easiest job. Again, you don't have to know anybody's name, you just have to be paying attention and remember to take a step back.*

*The people on either side of the person who has stepped back turn to face each other and call out the other person's name. The first person to call out the other's name gets to stay in the circle. The last person to say the other person's name changes places with the spinner and becomes "it".*

*Be sure to demonstrate how this will work at least twice before beginning the game. You may also want to give the group a minute or two to exchange names.*

Variations:

*Put more than one person in the middle if it is too slow. Several spinners will create more chaos, laughter, and confusion.*

Target Skills: *Learn names, focus and concentration.*

## **Group Juggle**

### *Name Game*

**Materials:** *Several small balls*

**Group Size:** *8 - 15*

**Objectives:** *Learn each other's names, practice coordination in a group with many things going on.*

**How to play:**

*The participants and facilitator stand in a circle. The facilitator says the name of somebody in the circle and then tosses the ball to him/her. When that person catches the ball s/he says, "Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_," saying the name of the facilitator who tossed the ball. Then s/he says the name of somebody else in the circle and tosses the ball to him/her. The tossing continues in this manner so that everybody receives the ball only once and the last person receiving the ball is the facilitator.*

*After the first round, the activity is played again, keeping the same sequence and the same communication. Once this round is completed successfully, tell the group that their challenge is going to get harder and their job is to keep the ball moving in the correct way. After a few tosses, add in additional balls. Continue to add balls until things are sufficiently chaotic, then when you receive the balls, start to remove them from circulation.*

**Target Skills:** *Concentration, coordination, appropriate language, focus on group needs and your own needs.*

## **Bumpity, Bump, Bump, Bump**

Name Game

Materials: None

Group Size: 15-50

Objectives: *Get to know each other's names, have fun.*

How to play:

*Participants stand in a circle. The facilitator is in the center of the circle and will explain and demonstrate how the game is played.*

*The person in the center is the spinner and gets to challenge somebody in the circle. The way they do this is by walking up to somebody and pointing at them (demonstrate an appropriate way to point). When the spinner points at the person in the circle they also say, "left," "right," or "center." If the spinner says, "left", the person they pointed to must say the name of the person on their left before the spinner can say, "Bumpity, bump, bump, bump." If the spinner says, "right," the person who is pointed to needs to say the name of the person on his/her right. And if the spinner says, "center," then they need to say the name of the spinner.*

*Demonstrate how this will work at least three times using all the possible challenges (left, right, center). Be sure to say "Bumpity, bump, bump, bump!" once you say the direction.*

*If the person being challenged can say the correct name before the spinner can count say, "Bumpity, bump, bump, bump," then the spinner moves on and challenges somebody else. If, however, the spinner is faster, then they switch places and the person who was being challenged becomes the new spinner.*

Variations:

*Have several spinners if the group is large.*

Target Skills: *Learning names, following directions.*



## **Partner Tag/Pairs Squared**

*FUNN Game*

Materials: None

Group Size: Even number of participants between 16-30

Objectives: *Have fun*

How to play:

*Have the participants find and stand next to a partner. Explain the three main rules for the game.*

- 1. The only person you're concerned with is your partner. You will be trying to tag them or they will be trying to tag you.*
- 2. If you get tagged by your partner "it", you must spin around one time before going after them. Once you tag them, s/he must spin around one time before coming after you. (Demonstrate what a safe spin is.)*
- 3. This is a walking game. You may walk quickly, but you must walk.*

*Review the boundaries and the rules, then tell the group that the game starts when one person tags the other and says, "You're it!"*

*Stop the game after a few minutes or when it looks like everyone is getting tired.*

Variations:

**Pairs Squared**

*Ask everybody to find their partner and stand next to them. This time they'll need to link elbows with their partner and find another pair to stand in front of.*

*The same rules apply as for partner tag except that you and your partner are working as a team against the other partnership. The only way you are able to chase the other pair is if you are connected with your partner.*

*When a pair gets tagged, they must spin around one time before going after the other pair. They can do this either as one complete unit, or they can unlink, spin individually, and link back up. (Demonstrate these safe spins.)*

*Again, review the boundaries and rules, then tell the group that the game starts when one pair tags the other and says, "You're it!"*

*Stop the game after a few minutes or when it looks like everyone is getting tired.*

Target Skills: *Coordination, fun, physical proximity*

## **Hypalon Highway Tag**

### *FUNN Game*

Materials: *A rope long enough to create a circle to fit the group (a throwbag ought to work)*

Group Size: *10 - 30*

Objectives: *Have fun learning how to work in a crowded space.*

How to play:

*This is a fun follow-up to Partner tag.*

*Have the group stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder as close together as possible. Take the rope/throwbag and give the end of the rope to one person. Walk around the interior of the circle, putting rope into everyone's hand. Have everybody put the rope down at his or her feet and step **INSIDE** the rope circle. This is the boundary for the activity.*

*Each person must have a partner and this is the person they are trying to tag or avoid. As in partner tag, the object is only to try and tag their partner. In this version, though, you will be in very close quarters and you **MAY NOT TOUCH ANYONE BUT YOUR PARTNER**. If you accidentally touch somebody else, you need to stop, look at him or her and say, "I'm sorry for the bump. May I pass?" Their response should be, "How many boats in your pod?" Your response is, "Just me." Then you may continue with the tagging.*

*Review the boundaries and rules, then tell the group that the game starts when one person tags the other and says, "You're it!"*

*Stop the game after a few minutes or when it looks like everyone is getting tired.*

Target Skills: *Coordination, appropriate communication, fun, physical proximity*

## **Evolution**

### *FUNN Game*

Materials: None

Group Size: 16 - 40

Objectives: *Have fun, be a little silly, risk looking foolish*

#### How to play:

*This game has five levels of life forms. The goal of the game is for each person to evolve from the earlier levels up to the highest level. The first level is egg - crouching over and saying the words, "Crack, crack." The second level is chicken - flapping your bent arms and saying, "Bock, bock." The third level is monster - holding your hands over your head menacingly and growling. The fourth level is superhero - one fist over your head and puffing out your chest. The final level is Dr. Evil - holding your pinky to the side of your mouth and saying, "One million dollars."*

*Everybody starts out as an egg. To evolve from being an egg, you must find another egg and challenge him/her to a game of rock, scissors, paper. Whoever wins at rock, scissors, paper evolves to the next level of chicken. The other person stays at his current level of egg and must find another egg to challenge.*

*As each player evolves through the different stages, s/he will need to look for someone of the same evolutionary stage to challenge in order to evolve further. People will move through the evolutionary stages at different rates, which is OK. When you reach the Dr. Evil stage you are at the top evolutionary level. If you win at rock, scissors, paper, you collect another million dollars so you say, "Two million dollars", etc. If you lose at the Dr. Evil stage, you go all the way back to being an egg.*

*Continue playing as long as people are having fun.*

#### Variation:

*Substitute Supreme for Dr. Evil at the fifth level. In this variation, when you evolve from being a Super Hero, you become a Supreme. At the Supreme level, you no longer play rock, paper, scissors, since you cannot evolve any higher. Instead, you stand where you are and repeatedly sing, "Stop in the name of love before you break my heart! Think it over." You continue singing until other Supremes join you.*

*In this variation, not everybody gets a chance to evolve to the higher levels. Somebody may even remain an egg for the whole game if you don't give people an out. To avoid this you may want to allow people to "self-evolve" if they are all alone in their level or to "devolve" to play with somebody at a lower level.*

*Keep playing until everybody is a Supreme or it becomes clear that somebody isn't going to make it all the way to Supreme.*

Target Skills: *Risk-taking, having fun, following rules.*

## **Quick Line-Up**

*FUNN Game*

Materials: None

Group Size: 12 - 64

Objectives: *Have fun.*

How to play:

*Divide the group into four roughly equal groups and have each group line up should to shoulder facing YOU in the center. One line should be in front of you, one line should be behind you, one line to your right and one line to your left. When this is done, the group should be in roughly the shape of a square with you in the center.*

*Each line is now a “team” and they must remember their orientation to you. In a moment you are going to move to another place or another orientation to the group. When you say, “Line-up!” all four teams will need to re-line up, maintaining the same orientation to you. That means the team that was facing your right side will again have to line up facing your right side and so on. The people in each team, should also be in the same order as when they first stood facing you. When the team is in the correct position, they should all grab hands over their head and yell something silly like, “Yee Haw!”*

*Before you move and say, “Line-up!” be sure to remind the groups that it is a walking activity. There is probably going to be a lot of people moving towards each other and we want to avoid any high-speed collisions. You can move as far as you would like, but try moving just a little bit at first to make sure the group understands the challenge.*

Variations:

*Have the teams give themselves a name and they can yell their team name when they’re lined up.*

Target Skills: *Coordination, fun, safety.*

## **Have You Ever...**

*Get to Know Each Other Activity*

*Materials: Mats/placeholders to stand on - one per person.*

*Group Size: 10 to 20*

*Objectives: Learn names, get to know each other, begin trusting each other with information about ourselves.*

*How to play:*

*The participants stand in a circle on a mat. The facilitator takes his/her mat and places it in the center of the circle and stands on it. The person in the middle introduces him/herself. The people in the circle pat their legs twice, clap their hands twice, and yell, "\_\_\_\_\_ is in the middle!" The person in the middle then says something about him/herself that s/he is proud of. Finally, s/he asks the group a question that begins with, "Have you ever..." It has to be something that the person in the middle has done.*

*People switch to another place if they have done the activity, and they stay where they are if they have not. The last person out of the circle goes to the middle to start a new round.*

*Remind the group about appropriate topics of conversation (no over-sharing, keep it PG, Disney language, etc.). Also let people know that if they feel the question is too personal and they don't want to share they don't have to answer. They can stay where they are and give an over-share signal (two arms over the head making the shape of an O).*

*Continue with the game until everybody has had a chance to share or people are getting bored.*

*Variations:*

- 1. Everybody stands on one side of a line and crosses over to the other side if it is true for them so that nobody is in the middle. The facilitator chooses the "Have you ever..." questions in this variation. This is good for groups that aren't showing an ability to stay within the boundaries of appropriate conversation.*
- 2. At Lunch you can play "Have you ... today?" This is a good way to see what common experiences people are having, what stands out for individuals in their experience, and what attitudes people have about their experience so far. This could be a good opportunity for facilitators to find out what to focus on for the rest of their day on river with the participants.*

*Skills Targeted: Communication, Trust, Appropriate conversation/language*

## **Shake-n-Share/Stretch-n-Share**

### *Get to Know Each Other Activity*

Materials: None

Group Size: 10 - 30

Objectives: *Share a little bit about ourselves, be a little silly, warm up for the day.*

How to play:

*Participants begin in a circle. Explain that for this activity, there are several rounds. For each round, you will ask them to find a partner based on a certain criteria and it should be a different partner each time. With their partner, they will do a special handshake and then they will share something about themselves. For each round you will need to demonstrate the handshake and tell them what to share before you send them to find their partners.*

*Round 1: Find a partner who has about as many siblings as they have. Do the lumberjack shake. Share 3 facts about yourself.*

*Round 2: Find a partner who is about the same height as you. Do the salmon shake. Share a story from your life (something about you personally, not just somebody you know).*

*Round 3: Find a partner who has a birthday near yours. Do the milk shake. Share an opinion you have.*

*Round 4: Find a partner who has a similar favorite color as you. Do the cappuccino shake. Share about something that makes you angry.*

Variations:

*In Stretch-n-Share, instead of doing a silly handshake each time you find a new partner, you do a partner stretch.*

*1. Face each other; stand with your legs shoulder-width apart; hold each other's hands; lean back and bend your knees so you begin squatting down; while still holding hands, stand back up.*

*2. Stand facing each other, slightly offset; both of you hold your right arms out to your side at shoulder-height; place your hand on the other person's upper-arm; gently rotate away from them to feel the stretch in your chest. Repeat with the left arm.*

*3. Stand facing each other, feet shoulder-width apart; hold each other's hands and with feet stationary, rotate your arms around between your bodies, over your heads, and down to the ground. Reach back up, over your heads, and rotate to complete the movement on the other side.*

Target Skills: *Communication, risk-taking, trust*

## **60 Second Interview**

*Get to Know Each Other Activity*

Materials: *Watch*

Group Size: *6 - 60*

Objectives: *Build trust with each other through sharing things about ourselves.*

How to play:

*Split the participants into groups of three. Each triad will take turns interviewing one of the members of their group for only 60 seconds. The goal is to get as much information about the person as you can in that short time. The two people doing the interviewing ask questions rapid-fire of the interviewee and s/he answers them as best and quickly as s/he can.*

*It is wise to demonstrate this with a couple other volunteers before you set the groups on their own so that they understand the types of questions that are appropriate to ask and how to ask them. Each group will need to decide who is first, second, and third. Once that is decided, ask the groups to begin sharing and start your watch. After 60 seconds, stop the groups and ask them to switch interviewees. Give them a few seconds to transition and begin the second round.*

*Once you have finished all three rounds, you may ask the groups if they noticed any commonalities or anything interesting about their triad that they would like to share with the whole group.*

Variations:

*Instead of having the two other group members asking questions of the interviewee, you can have people decide for themselves what they are going to share about themselves. In this variation, the one person does all the talking for 60 seconds and the other two just listen and remember. In this variation, it is not acceptable for the listeners to interject or speak during the 60-second interview.*

Target Skills: *Sharing, Listening.*

## **Birthday Lineup**

*Problem-Solving Initiative*

Materials: None

Group Size: 8-20

Objectives: *Organize the group according to a specific criterion without full communication capabilities.*

How to play:

*Have the group stand in a line. Explain that their challenge is to reorganize themselves according to their birthday. The person with a birthday earliest in the year (January 1) will be on one end and the person with their birthday latest in the year (December 31) will be at the other. Everybody in between should be in chronological order to those. An additional challenge is that they are not allowed to speak.*

*Answer all group questions then have the group reorganize themselves. When they are all in a line, ask if they agree they are in the correct order. If the group is in consensus, ask each participant to state his/her birthday in order from the beginning to the end of the line.*

Variations:

*Height – Shortest to tallest – With eyes closed*

*Feet – Smallest to largest – Eyes closed, without talking*

*Middle initial – Alphabetically – Without talking*

*Number of letters in your full name – Shortest to longest – without talking*

*Phone number – By last digit of number – Hands in pockets, without talking*

Target Skills: *Communication, coordination, participation*



## **Warp Speed**

*Problem-Solving Initiative*

Materials: *One ball, watch*

Group Size: *8 - 15*

Objectives: *Encourage collaboration and goal-setting. Participants will begin to explore the dynamics of group communication and problem-solving within a set of given rules.*

How to play:

*The participants and facilitator stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Tell the group that a pattern will be established by tossing the ball from person to person across the circle. Each person should receive the ball only one time. The facilitator is the first to toss it and the last to receive it. The pattern established is the one that will be used in each round of the initiative.*

*Once the pattern is established, the facilitator times the group as they repeat the pattern, tossing the ball from person to person in exactly the same order. This is the group's baseline time. Tell the group what their time was and ask them to come to a consensus on a time they think they can reach. The challenge is to complete the pattern in as short a time as possible.*

*Rules: The ball has to exchange hands. The ball must be exchanged according to the pattern established.*

*After each round, determine whether or not they reached their goal. If so, challenge the group to a new goal of half, or less, that time. Allow brainstorming time and then try to reach the new goal.*

Target Skills: *Creative thinking, coordination, participation, collaboration, working with actual rules instead of assumed rules, brainstorming*

## **Jump Rope**

### *Problem-Solving Initiative*

Materials: *A rope at least 30 feet long. A throwbag works, but is not ideal.*

Group Size: *15 - 50*

Objectives: *Get all members of the group to participate, coordinate, think outside the box and solve a problem.*

How to play:

*Ask another guide/facilitator or a counselor to help you turn the rope. All the participants start on one side of the rope. You and your assistant turn the rope, rotating from the top towards the group. In order to be successful, the whole group must get to the other side of the rope by passing under the rope (no going around the turners). Tell the group that there may be specific requirements for how to pass to the other side of the rope, but that you will not tell them if or what they are. If they make a mistake, though, you will tell them "Scratch" at the exact moment they made the mistake. Then everybody needs to go back to the starting side of the rope and you will begin again.*

*There are several levels of the game. Before you start them going on the first level, tell them, "For this level, the clue is 'ones'." Then allow the group time to plan or you can begin turning the rope. The rule "ones" means they need to pass under the rope one at a time - or with one skip in the turns, or with one jump - or whatever you deem is appropriately difficult for the group's functioning. If they send two people through, or in some other way violate the rule of "ones", drop the rope, say scratch, and send everybody back to begin again.*

*The group will likely need several attempts at the task before they understand what the hidden rule is and even then may need several more tries to successfully complete the task. Once you have completed the first level, debrief the group and ask if they would like to try the next level. If they do, try one of the other more difficult variations below.*

Variations:

*1-2-3: They must pass through the rope with one person in the first turn, then two people in the second turn, then three people in the third turn, and so on.*

*2-20: Two people at a time to make a total of twenty people through. Or two people twenty times. If there aren't twenty people, somebody will need to go back at the end to complete the cycle.*

*One: Everybody needs to go at the same time (as one).*

Target Skills: *Coordination, communication, creative thinking, problem-solving.*

## **Pipe Line**

### *Problem-Solving Initiative*

**Materials:** *The pipeline kit (several lengths of “pipe”, a wiffle golf ball, and a cup)*

**Group Size:** *8-15*

**Objectives:** *The group needs to coordinate materials and people to achieve a difficult goal.*

#### **How to play:**

*The facilitator will set up the course for the pipeline with the cup as the finishing point, and designating a starting point. The course is easiest if it goes in a straight line and there are no obstacles (trees, benches) in the way. Additionally, if the course is about as long as the pipe lengths, then there is very little challenge.*

*When you begin the activity, each participant gets a length of “pipe”. There should be enough for each person to have his/her own length and it is up to you, the facilitator, to decide how to distribute the materials. The group’s goal is to get the ball, which the facilitator will start, from the starting point into the cup. Once the facilitator releases the ball, it can only touch the pipe sections - no fingertips, etc. - until it reaches the cup. It also must be continuously moving forward - no rolling backwards, or standing still - in the pipeline. If the ball is touched, dropped, or stops, the group returns to the start with the ball and tries again.*

*When the group is successful, debrief the activity. Then you may ask them if they want to try a harder level. If so, try one of the variations below.*

#### **Variations:**

*Set up the course differently so that the group has to navigate obstacles (go around a tree, make a turn in the path, etc.)*

*Prohibit the participants from moving while the ball is in their section of pipe.*

**Target Skills:** *Cooperation, communication, coordination, taking your turn*

## **Tarp Flip (With Goals)**

### *Problem-Solving Initiative*

**Materials:** *One tarp a little larger than would comfortably hold the whole group standing (about 1/4 of the tarp should be empty).*

*For the Goals variation: Markers or Sharpies to write on the tarp.*

**Group Size:** *8 - 15*

**Objectives:** *Everyone does his/her part when solving a problem.*

*For the Goals variation: Goal-setting and visualizing challenges to overcome.*

**How to play:**

*Spread the tarp on even ground. Have all group members stand on the tarp. Once the group is on top of the tarp, challenge them to completely flip it over so that everyone is standing on the other side of the tarp. At no time may anyone get off of the tarp or touch the ground during this activity.*

**Variation: Goals**

*Before spreading the tarp on the ground, ask each participant to think of a goal they have. Each participant writes that goal on one side of the tarp. After all the goals are written, each person reads their goal out loud to the group. Then flip the tarp over.*

*Ask each participant to think of an obstacle or challenge they might face in trying to accomplish their goal. In the same manner as for the goals, each participant writes that obstacle on this side of the tarp and they read what they wrote.*

*When doing the activity, spread the tarp out first with the challenge side up. Thus, when they complete the flip, their goals are showing and the obstacles are buried.*

**Target Skills:** *Coordination, Support, Communication*

## **Form a Square**

*Problem-Solving Initiative*

*Materials: A rope long enough for all participants to hold onto. Throwbags work great.*

*Group Size: 8-15*

*Objectives: Explore alternative forms of communication.*

*How to play:*

*Have the participants stand in a circle. Place the rope in the center of the circle. Each person must hold the rope with one hand at all times throughout the activity. Without speaking, the group must attempt to put the rope into the shape of a square. The participants must all agree that they have created a square. Once consensus is reached, have the participants put the rope down in front of them and debrief.*

*Variations:*

*Make a different shape - equilateral triangle is harder than you may think...*

*Everybody has eyes closed.*

*Half the group is sighted, half closes eyes - sighted people cannot speak, "blind" people can.*

*You cannot let go of the rope.*

*Target skills: Coordination, communication, cooperation, consensus.*

## **Green Glass Door**

*Filler*

Materials: None

Group Size: 4-8

Objectives: *The group needs to work together to figure out a hidden rule.*

How to play:

*Tell the group that there are certain things that are behind a green glass door and certain items that are not. The goal is to determine which objects are behind the door and why. In order to do that, you will tell them some things that are behind the green glass door and some that are not. Then they can ask you if certain things are behind the Green Glass Door.*

*The rule is that only items with a double-letter are behind the green glass door. Some suggestions for you to offer are listed here:*

<i>Behind the door</i>	<i>Not behind the door</i>
<i>coffee</i>	<i>tea</i>
<i>balloons</i>	<i>streamers</i>
<i>moon</i>	<i>sun</i>
<i>grass</i>	<i>lawn</i>
<i>kittens</i>	<i>cats</i>
<i>Mississippi</i>	<i>South Carolina</i>
<i>Satan's Cesspool</i>	<i>Hospital Bar</i>
<i>Scissors</i>	<i>Highway</i>
<i>Paddles</i>	<i>Oars</i>

*Once participants think they have figured out what the rule is, they are not to shout out the rule or tell others what the rule is. Instead, they can help by offering more examples of items that are or are not behind the green glass door.*

Target Skills: *Thinking outside the box, communication, listening*

## **Count Off!**

*Filler*

Materials: None

Group Size: 4+

Objectives: *The group needs to coordinate to achieve a goal.*

How to play:

*The challenge is for people to call out a number one at a time to count up to the number of people in the boat. Each person can only call out one number such that each person has his/her unique number.*

*Some guidelines:*

*Only one person can call out a number at any one time. If two or more people call out a number together, the group starts over counting from one.*

*No signaling of any sort is allowed during the game and participants may not make eye contact.*

*To further the challenge, do not allow discussion before you start playing.*

Variations:

*This may be too easy for a small group. Increase the challenge by asking them to count to a higher number. Or see how high they can count.*

Target Skills: *Cooperation, communication, coordination, taking your turn*

## **Team Cheer**

*Filler*

Materials: None

Group Size: 4-8

Objectives: *The group needs to work together to create a team cheer.*

How to play:

*Develop a cheer that you can use throughout the day when you experience moments of success. You may find it helpful to select a team name before creating a cheer. It's important that everybody in the boat buy-in to the name and cheer. If you don't have consensus, keep working and tweaking it until you come up with something people are happy with it.*

*When you have a great run at a rapid or find yourself paddling well together, have your team shout out their cheer. You can also do a cheer show-off at lunch or closing circle.*

Variations:

*Make a team song, slogan, or motto as it suits the group you are working with.*

Target Skills: *Camaraderie, consensus, FUNN*



## **Look Up; Look Down**

*Filler*

Materials: None

Group Size: 5 - 30

Objectives: *Loosen up, focus, have fun.*

How to play:

*Have the participants form a circle. Place an object on the ground in the middle of the circle. All participants start by looking down at the object. When the facilitator says, "Look up," all participants look up from the object and look at somebody else in the circle. Each person must look at somebody - as if they are trying to make eye contact with the other person.*

*If two people are looking at each other and eye contact is made, they are out. They both say, "D'oh!" and then leave the circle. People who are looking at somebody who is looking at somebody else remain in the circle. The facilitator then says, "Look down," and all participants look down at the object in the center of the circle again. Then the facilitator says "Look up" again, and the game continues until there are only one or two people left in the center of the circle.*

Variations:

*Set up two circles. When people get "out" of their circle, they join the other circle. In this way nobody is eliminated, and groups get mixed up.*

Target Skills: *Coordination, integrity, FUNN.*

