

Hands Up

Goal: From a seated position, participants are asked to take hands and stand together at the exact same time.

Intention: This activity focuses on problem solving, and especially on how as things become more challenging, solutions need to be adapted. It also provides an opportunity to break down barriers, as it asks for a lot of physical contact in a fun and safe environment.

Supplies: None

How to play:

- Participants need to break into pairs. If you have an odd number, one group of three works fine.
- Have each pair sit on the floor facing each other with their feet flat on the floor in front of them.
- Then ask them to reach across and connect with each other in some way. They can take hands or wrists or whatever feels safe and comfortable for them.
- Tell participants that their challenge is to stand up at the exact same time as their partner.
- Remind them to be careful of each other, and allow them to begin.
- Once everyone has accomplished this (which shouldn't take more than one or two tries), as every group of two to join with another group of two, creating groups of four.
- Their challenge is the same, but this time, all four of them must stand at the exact same time.
- Once everyone has accomplished this, ask every group of four to join with another forming groups of eight.
- Continue this until everyone is in one large group. Before you ask them to begin this time, ask everyone to give you a thumbs up if they think they can succeed all together, a thumbs down if they think it's impossible.

Tips for facilitators:

- This is not a safe activity for participants who have back trouble or injuries to their arms or legs.
- You may need to point out to them that as the groups get larger, their solutions need to change. What worked with two or four people, probably won't work with eight, and what worked with eight probably won't work with sixteen.

ORID Debrief:

Objective: What were some of the solutions you tried early on? What were some of the solutions you saw others trying? Did the same solutions work when the group sizes increased? What new solutions did people try?

Reflective: How did you feel when you first succeeded in your group of two? How did you feel when that solution no longer worked? How did you feel when you succeeded as an entire group? What was your favorite moment from this activity?

Interpretive: How was this activity like working together? What did you learn about solving problems? In your work/school/life does the same solution work in all similar situations? Do you have to change your approach depending on who you're working with?

Decisional: With regards to challenges, how could you use what you learned from this activity in your life? With regards to the way you work with other people, how could you use what you learned?

Possible Discussion: This activity can lead to a great discussion about the difficult but worthwhile challenges that we sometimes face in life. When you ask participants to indicate whether or not they think the final challenge (everyone standing up together) is impossible, you will most likely get several who signal that they think it's impossible. During the debrief, ask those who thought the task was impossible why they tried anyway. Ask others why they think people might try things even though they think they're impossible. At this point, we often talk about one of our personal missions here at Alaska ICE, which is that every child in Alaska has a minimum of five supportive adults in their lives. Often, people tell us this is impossible. Our response is "Maybe it is impossible. But does that mean we shouldn't try?" Sometimes we look at our lives and we think some of the challenges that face us as individuals or as a community are too great for us to accomplish. But if the challenge is something important to us, to our youth, or to our community, isn't it worth every effort we can make? As individuals, we may not be able to solve every single problem in the world, or even in our own community. But we can all do our part and make an effort to make things better for ourselves and those around us.