

Hope Floats

Goal: Youth and adults work together as teams of two to complete a zany relay!

Intention: Youth and adults are asked to think about how they might work and communicate differently while attempting a tough but fun challenge together.

Supplies:

- Balloons
- Something to tie legs with

How to play:

- Begin by forming teams of two, if possible pairing adults to youth.
- Give each team one balloon.
- Give them five minutes or so to introduce themselves to each other, and to have a brief discussion on the theme of your choice. For example:
- Is there an adult in your life who's been a very positive influence or a good role model? How? What did they do? Are you a good role model to someone in your life right now? How? What are you doing? Are there people in your life right now that you could talk to if you were having a rough time? What is it about them that makes them good to talk to? Are there people in your life right now who talk to you if they're having a rough time?
- Have the teams blow up and tie their balloons.
- Give everyone a length of rope and have them tie their legs together for a three-legged race.
- Let them know that on "Go", they must race from one end of the room to the other, keeping their balloon with them by tapping it in the air.
- If the balloon hits the floor, they must turn in one full circle before they continue.
- Once they reach the other end of the room, they can untie their legs.
- They then must run back to their starting place, holding the balloon between their right shoulders. Note that this means that one of them will be running backwards!
- If they drop the balloon or touch it with their hands once they have started racing back, they must sing the chorus of "You Are My Sunshine" before they can continue.
- When everyone is finished, have them introduce their partner to everyone.

Tips for facilitators:

- This game is physically challenging. Make certain your participants are capable, or find other creative ways to make certain everyone is involved.
- There is a lot to remember in this game. We don't care very much for hard and fast rules in community engagement games. If partners find loopholes, we encourage it.
- Encourage, encourage, encourage. This is the way to keep from ever having "winners" and "losers." Avoid calling it a race. It's about accomplishing the goal not getting there the fastest.

- Have everyone sing the chorus of “You Are My Sunshine” once through together to make certain they know which part is the chorus. Here are the words:
 “You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.
 You make me happy when skies are grey.
 You’ll never know dear how much I love you.
 Please don’t take my sunshine away.”

ORID Debrief:

Objective: What did you have to do in order to successfully complete this activity? What are some examples of how you cooperated with your partner? What did your partner do that helped you? What did you do that helped your partner? What did you see happening around you?

Reflective: How did you feel when you first heard the directions? How did you feel when I said “Go”? Did you and your partner have to struggle during this activity? If so, how did that feel? How did you feel when you completed the activity?

Interpretive: How was this activity like communication between adults and youth? How was it like adults and youth working together? Were there differences in the way you worked together? Were there differences in the ways you communicated? What strengths and skills did your partner have that helped the two of you?

Decisional: Youth, did you discover anything new about working with adults? Adults, did you discover anything new about working with youth? Will this activity effect the way you interact with adults and youth in your community? Did you learn anything valuable through this exercise? What? Why was it valuable? What will you do with knowledge in the future?

Variations:

- You can make this completely crazy by adding as much as you think your participants can handle. Try requiring them to sing as they bounce their balloons. Or twirling like a ballerina while barking like a dog if their balloon hits the floor.
- At the very beginning of the game, rather than having a discussion on the questions above when the teams of two first form, have them each write their names and five things they like about themselves on their balloon and share that with their partner.
- After the activity but before the debrief, have them introduce their partner, sharing with everyone three positive things they learned about each other.