

Teamwork and Conflict Resolution Activities

The resources are meant to be downloaded and edited as necessary to meet the specific needs and/or experience level of your Participant group and/or be incorporated into other existing materials in use by your organization.

Activity 1. Improvisation Games

Improvisation “games” are a great way to build empathy and collaborative skills. The [Second City Guide to Improv in the Classroom Using Improvisation to Teach Skills and Boost Learning](#) by K. McKnight and M. Scruggs describes several that can be extremely useful, even for first time improvisors. In the book, the authors focus on the “Yes, and” mindset. This mindset accepts the contribution of others and builds upon it. Here are several variations that are based on activities from the book. All three address the Performance Indicators that are listed after the last activity.

Join In

Select a group of four or five learners. Ask one learner to begin acting out an activity that can include the participation of others. For example, the first person starts working in a garden. The other members of the group must figure out what the person is doing and join in with another appropriate action. Perhaps watering, harvesting, or planting. The other learners in the class should write down their guesses as to what each person is acting out. Continue until everyone in the class has had a chance to act in a group. It is most useful to have the activity based on total improv but if you want you can have a few topic cards available to get the first person started. The topics might include playing in a band, cooking a meal, working on a car, building a doghouse, walking on a beach, playing in the snow, working on an assembly line, attending a party, or creating an enormous Lego display.

Reflection Questions

1. How were you able to determine what activity was being performed?
2. What benefits do you see with an activity like this one?
3. How does this activity promote collaboration?
4. How does this experience relate to the workplace?

Lump of Clay

This activity works best in groups of six to eight. Learners stand in a circle. Hand one person an imaginary lump of clay. This can be large or small, but you will need to indicate that through your actions, not in words. The first person creates an item out of the clay and somehow demonstrates the imaginary item through actions. Then the first person hands the item to the next person. The second person must demonstrate that item in another manner, to show they understood the first person’s intentions. The second person then squishes the clay and forms a new object, demonstrates it, and passes it on. Repeat until everyone in the group has had a chance to handle the clay. Once an object has been used in the activity it cannot be duplicated. Audience members should make a list of each object as it is created. Continue until everyone has had a chance to participate in molding the lump of clay.

Reflection Questions

1. What skills did you need in order to participate successfully in this activity?
2. Did you make a plan ahead of your turn or improvise completely? Why?
3. How does this relate to the workplace?

Yes, And

The concept of “Yes, and” moves discussions forward and helps promote building ideas as a group. If a team member says, “Let’s make a spreadsheet” for that project and someone says, “We don’t need that”, it stops progress and shuts the other person down. Instead, by responding “Yes, and we can project that on the wall during our meetings,” it moves the discussion forward and honors the other person’s ideas. In this improvisation game, group members receive ideas from the audience and create a scene.

Select a group of four to five people. Have the audience call out a group of people such as pirates, construction workers, ballet dancers, or chefs. Then ask the audience to name a verb such as sneeze, rap, ride, jump, or swim. The improv group must create a scene that uses these prompts. They create the scene by giving ONE sentence at a time. After the first sentence, all others must begin with “Yes, and.” Each member of the group will give one sentence before anyone states a second sentence. Group members act out their portion of the scene

Example: Audience prompts are chefs and jump

The chef is walking through the farmer’s market.

Yes, and he approaches my seafood stall.

Yes, and the chef starts examining all the fish.

Yes, and most of the fish are laying very still.

Yes, and, all of a sudden, one fish begins to jump.

Yes, and the chef says, “That must be the freshest fish, so I will take that one!”

Repeat the activity until everyone has had a chance to participate in a group.

Reflection Questions

1. How does “Yes, and” keep the process moving?
2. What are other terms or phrases that can convey the same meaning?
3. What are words or phrases that have the opposite effect of “Yes, and”?
4. How does this apply to your work situation or career plan?
5. How else can you foster an environment of acceptance and positivity?

Activity 2. Everybody is Doing It

Divide the class into groups of three or four. State scenarios that include a problem to be solved. Indicate that each person must have an active and unique role in the solution. Ask learners to develop a set of procedures to accomplish the task. Groups will need to be able to explain what each person might need to do. Here are a few examples.

- a. Remove a rabbit from a vegetable garden.
- b. Hang a mobile from the ceiling.
- c. Organize supplies at a job site.
- d. Design and construct a cardboard pinball game.
- e. Capture a runaway dog
- f. Create a film about recycling.
- g. Teach a math concept to younger learners.
- h. Develop a poster about job safety.

Reflection Questions

1. What were the main challenges of this task?
2. How did you resolve these challenges?
3. What positive moments did you experience?
4. How does this apply to real life situations?
5. What would need to be changed to accommodate a much larger group of people?

Activity 3. Positive Posters

Have learners view some of the following videos or others that are relevant to them and their work environment. There are all kinds that focus on management of patients, customers, or team members.

Divide the learners into groups. Task the learners with creating a poster that promotes ways to de-escalate difficult situations. Have learners present their posters to various audiences, such as other classes or groups within the workplace.

- How To Talk To Someone Who is Really Angry
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErnGVaEuykc>
- Four Magic Phrases
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5RknemM8Hw>
- How to Calm an Angry Person
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9usYVyNrd0>
- Three Things to Say
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ9FbJoSjVo>
- Dealing with the Irate Customer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQtArj5U5I4>
- How To Deal With A Difficult Co-Worker
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiPatVDz_h0
- De-escalating an Argument
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eR8Zzp6E8sI&list=RDCMUceYUHG6o0YquM-g23htdsSw&start_radio=1&t=22

Reflection Questions

1. Did anyone become angry during the activity? How was it handled?
2. What experiences have you had with dealing with an angry person? How did you handle those situations?
3. Have you ever been angry and someone was able to calm you down? How did they do it?
4. Does all conflict manifest itself as anger? Explain.
5. What ideas do you have for helping to inform others about the ways to deescalate conflict?

Activity 4. Acting Out — *Conflict Cards for this Activity are available in the Corresponding Materials folder.*

This activity should be used after the Positive Posters activity.

Have learners review the various ways to diffuse a situation and handle conflict resolution. Brainstorm a list as a point of reference.

Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair one of the Conflict Cards. Ask learners to write a scenario that is inspired by the card. Learners are then to act out a way to peacefully resolve the conflict that is evident in the scenario.

Reflection Questions

1. Would you have handled any of the situations differently? How?
2. Can you explain any things that could have been done to prevent the conflict portrayed in one of the scenarios?
3. How does setting and circumstances affect the best way to handle a conflict?

Activity 5. Cardboard Pinball Machine — *Please see Design Cycle in the Corresponding Materials folder.*

Materials

- Various sizes of scrap cardboard, cutting tools (scissors or box cutters), masking/duct tape, push pins, thick rubber bands, plastic straws, cardboard tubes, and round head brad fasteners
- Marbles
- Paper and pencil
- A printed copy of the design cycle for each group.

Divide the class into small groups. Go over the steps of the Design Cycle. Task learners with creating a pinball machine using the materials supplied. Remind them to work through each of the steps of the Design Cycle. You may want to have learners submit a drawing of their preliminary design before they are able to gather supplies. Encourage groups to work through the Design Cycle several times in order to improve their machines. When the machines are complete, have students visit other groups to see and try out the various pinball machines.

Reflection Questions

1. What challenges did you experience?
2. How were conflicts or disagreements handled?
3. How did you divide up tasks?
4. How did you utilize the Design Cycle?
5. What positive interactions did you experience?
6. What changes would you make if you could participate in this activity again?

Crosswalk of Performance Indicators and Activities

Teamwork and Conflict Resolution

Performance Indicators	Activity 1 Improv Games	Activity 2 Everybody is Doing It	Activity 3 Positive Posters	Activity 4 Acting Out	Activity 5 Pinball Machine
Establishes a high degree of trust, confidentiality, and credibility with others to develop shared purpose	X				
Encourages others' contribution of ideas, opinions, and perspectives through thoughtful and positive interactions	X	X	X	X	X
Coordinates with others to achieve identified outcomes and objectives	X	X	X	X	X
De-escalates difficult situations constructively and positively			X	X	
Is committed to solving problems/finding resolutions			X	X	X

Other Competencies Addressed in Teamwork and Conflict Resolution Activities

Refer to Index for a full list of Performance Indicators in each activity

Competency	Activity 1 Improv Games	Activity 2 Everybody is Doing It	Activity 3 Positive Posters	Activity 4 Acting Out	Activity 5 Pinball Machine
Working with Others					
Adaptability and Flexibility	X	X	X		X
Cultural Competence	X	X			
Communication	X	X	X	X	
The Thought Process					
Problem Solving	X	X	X		X
Decision Making					
Critical Thinking	X				
Self- Regulation					
Initiative and Self-Drive					X
Reliability and Accountability					

Planning and Organizing
