Track 2: Leadership and Teamwork

SESSION 4: TEAM CHALLENGE

Overview: Team Challenge is all about putting leadership and teamwork skills into action. In this session, youth face a series of physical and mental challenges that require collaboration, communication, and creative problem-solving. Each activity is designed to highlight different aspects of team dynamics — such as trust, role-sharing, and adaptability — while encouraging participants to reflect on how they contribute to group success. It's a high-energy, hands-on experience that builds confidence and strengthens bonds among peers.

Objectives

- Strengthen collaboration and group problem-solving skills.
- Practice leadership and role-sharing in team settings.
- Reflect on group dynamics and communication effectiveness.
- Apply teamwork strategies to complete physical and mental challenges.

Supplies

- Icebreaker materials (see handout)
- Challenge materials (see handout)
- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Markers
- Timer or stopwatch
- Optional: team scorecards, handouts

Advisor Notes

- This session is highly interactive. Encourage full participation and positive group dynamics.
- Assign rotating roles (leader, recorder, timekeeper) to give everyone a chance to lead.
- Debrief after each challenge to reinforce learning and teamwork insights.
- Use challenges that require both physical coordination and mental strategy.

SESSION OUTLINE

Welcome and Icebreaker Activity: Build the Bridge (10-15 min)

- Teams build a bridge using creativity and teamwork. See handout for supply list and instructions.
- Goal: Build energy and highlight quick thinking and coordination.

Safety Moment: Watch Out for Each Other

- In team activities, everyone should be aware of their surroundings and teammates' well-being.
- Encourage youth to speak up if they see someone struggling or acting unsafely.
- Ask: "What should you do if someone on your team looks uncomfortable or unsure?"
- Emphasize that teamwork includes making sure everyone feels safe and supported.

Challenge Prep (10-15 min)

- What makes a team successful? Discuss roles, communication, and trust.
- Assign roles within each team.

Team Challenge Rotation (30-40 min)

- Rotate through 2–3 challenge stations (for example, marble run engineering, silent strategy, balloon tower build, island escape). See handout for supply list and instructions for activities.
- Each station should require teamwork, planning, and execution.
- Advisors observe and take notes for feedback.

Group Reflection (15-20 min)

- Discuss what worked well and what was challenging.
- Share observations and feedback.

REFLECTION SECTION

Advisor note: These are sample questions. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions.

Focusing Questions

- What challenge did your team complete today?
- What role did you play in your team?
- How did your team communicate during the challenge?

Analysis Questions

- What helped your team work well together?
- What challenges did your team face?
- How did leadership and roles affect your success?

Generalization Questions

- How can you use teamwork skills in other areas of life?
- What's one thing you'll do differently next time you're in a team?
- Why is it important to understand different team roles?

Optional Extensions

- Invite a guest speaker (for example, coach, team leader) to discuss teamwork strategies.
- Plan a larger team challenge event or field day using today's activities.

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PRINTABLE HANDOUT: BUILD THE BRIDGE ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

Instructions: Use this activity to kick off Session 4 with creativity and teamwork.

Objective: Teams work together to build a small bridge using limited materials that can support a small object. This promotes collaboration, problem-solving, and quick thinking.

Materials Needed:
- Popsicle sticks
- String
- Tape/glue
- Paper
- Rubber bands
- Scissors
- Small object to test bridge strength (e.g., toy car, water bottle)

Setup Instructions:
- Divide youth into small teams (3–5 members).
- Provide each team with identical sets of materials.
- Set a time limit of 15–20 minutes.
- Designate a 'river' area (e.g., two chairs or tables spaced apart) that the bridge must span.

Rules:
- Teams must build a bridge that spans the gap and holds the test object for at least 5 seconds.
- No external supports or anchoring to the floor.
- Only provided materials may be used.
- Teams may not observe or copy other teams' designs.

Debrief Prompts:
- What was your team's strategy?
- How did you decide on your design?
- What role did each person play?
- What would you do differently next time?

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SESSION 4: TEAM CHALLENGE

PRINTABLE HANDOUT: TEAM CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

Marble Run Engineering

Objective
Build a working marble run using limited materials.

Materials
- Paper towel rolls
- Tape
- Cardboard pieces
- Marbles
- String
- Scissors

Setup
Teams are given a workspace and a set of materials. They must design and build a marble run that moves a marble from start to finish.

Rules
- Use only the provided materials.
- The marble must travel the full course without manual assistance.
- Time limit: 20–30 minutes.

Debrief Prompts
- What design choices worked best?
- How did your team collaborate?
- What would you change next time?

Silent Strategy

Objective
Complete a task using only non-verbal communication.

Materials
- Puzzle pieces
- Building blocks
- Sorting cards
- Paper and pencils (optional for written communication)

Setup
Teams are given a task (e.g., build a structure, solve a puzzle) and must complete it without speaking.

Rules
- No talking allowed.
- Use gestures, signals, or written notes.
- Time limit: 15–20 minutes.

Debrief Prompts
- What made communication difficult?
- What strategies helped your team succeed?
- How did you feel during the challenge?

Balloon Tower Build

Objective
Build the tallest free-standing tower using only balloons and tape.

Materials
- Balloons
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Measuring tape
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Setup
Provide each team with an equal number of balloons and a roll of tape. Set a time limit and designate a building area.

Rules
- Use only the provided materials.
- Tower must be free-standing.
- No external supports.
- Time limit: 20 minutes.

Debrief Prompts
- What strategies helped your team build a stable tower?
- How did your team handle setbacks or popped balloons?
- What would you do differently next time?

Island Escape

Objective
Work together to cross a simulated 'lava' field using limited stepping stones.

Materials
- Paper plates or foam squares (stepping stones)
- Cones or tape to mark boundaries
- Timer

Setup
Create a start and finish zone with a 'lava' field in between. Each team receives a limited number of stepping stones to cross the field.

Rules
- Only stepping stones can be used to cross.
- Stones must be in contact with a team member or they are 'lost'.
- No jumping or touching the ground.
- Time limit: 15–20 minutes.

Debrief Prompts
- How did your team plan the crossing?
- What communication strategies worked best?
- How did you adapt when things didn't go as planned?