

Trait Tracing

It is easy to compare ourselves to others and to believe we aren't good enough if we don't measure up to the people we admire. Only when we recognize our own unique traits and value as a person and stop trying to be somebody else can we begin to build a good self-esteem and a strong sense of who we are.

Objective

To help people recognize how they are different from other people and to discover how this awareness can help them define their unique qualities and develop self-esteem.

Who

People who have difficulty realizing what their own unique traits are and who need to improve their own self-esteem.

Group Size

6 or more

Materials

- Paper
- Pens/pencils

Description

Challenge everyone in the group to find traits in each other that are different from their own. Ask everyone to take a piece of paper and pen or pencil and to make a list of their own unique traits.

Give the group a time limit (based on how many people are in the group) and ask them to go around and talk to each other. On the piece of paper each person must write down as many traits from other people in the group as s/he can find that are different from his/her own unique traits. The person with the longest list at the end of time limit wins.

Discussion Prompts:

1. Why is it important to find traits in each other that are different and unique?
2. What would life be like if we were all the same?
3. How can you use your unique traits to build on and improve your self-esteem?

Key game (Opposite hand ball toss)

Objective: To work together as a group to successfully create a passing pattern (not pass to person next to you) that allows everyone to touch the item before it gets back to the first person. To try to have as many objects in play at once and aiming for speed and working under pressure.

Rules:

- Must create a team pattern; can't pass to the person next to you
- Each person must touch the item before it reaches "home"
- No item can touch the floor at any time while attempting to pass
- Time and efficiency

Notes:

- Get through pattern twice to make sure they know it
- Set goals and time limits
- Ex: 5 objects in 20 seconds
- Countdown to add pressure

Debrief:

- What was your strategy going into this activity?
- Did your strategy change at any point during the activity? If so why?
- What does performing under pressure physically feel like?
- What did this do to your mindset?
- How would you rate your ability to manage pressure?
- How did you manage the stress (time restraints) or failed attempts?
- What happens to the group's functionality when stress is involved?
 - Communication, body tension, thoughts, focus, etc.?
- When we tense up or are under pressure (give up a few points and a team is gaining) how do we get out of this pattern?
 - Ex: vs Santa Monica in the second set when we went down 5 points unanswered to start
- What can we do to push through and finish a game or decrease the number of points given up in a row?

Breathing:

- **Why is controlling your breathing important?**
 - Can increase or decrease arousal levels.
 - Promote feelings of relaxation.
 - Lessen stress, tension, anxiety.
 - Warm the body up before a performance.
 - Quick breaths before a sprint.
 - Regulate breathing, oxygen, and blood flow during performance.
- **How can your breath benefit your performance?**
 - Promotes relaxation.
 - Releases tension.
 - Lessens anxiety, stress, over or under arousal levels.
 - Helps oxygen and blood flow during performance—muscles perform properly.

Cue: to help recognize and refocus our energy in the moment. It is something that builds awareness and reset

Example: **reset** = take a breath

Times to use it: rotation, serving, meet in the center, before you enter the game, practice receiving pass, serving, etc.

Purpose: help our mind refocus for the next play, physically relax so our form is not tight, elevate stress or tension, keep us aware and engaged mind/body link

Breathing Exercises:

- All breathing exercises based on **diaphragm breathing**
 - = slow deep breathing from the stomach.
- Breathing speed can increase as arousal increases.

Circle Breathing:

- Inhale at a comfortable rate
- Exhale completely
- Nice full breath

Rhythmic Breathing:

- Inhale your breath to a count of 4
- Hold the breath for a count of 4
- Exhale your breath for a count of 4.
- Pause for 4 then repeat the entire sequence.
- You can alter or change the breathing rhythm by changing the count.

Flag Race Activity

It is easy for us to get caught up of doing things on our own that we often forget to ask for help when we need it. The ability to work well with others and work as a team to finish a task, goal or assignment, will help to learn how to work together to accomplish goals.

Objective

The objective of this activity is to work as a team to keep the cup of water upright with the flag and make your way to the opposite cone and back.

Who

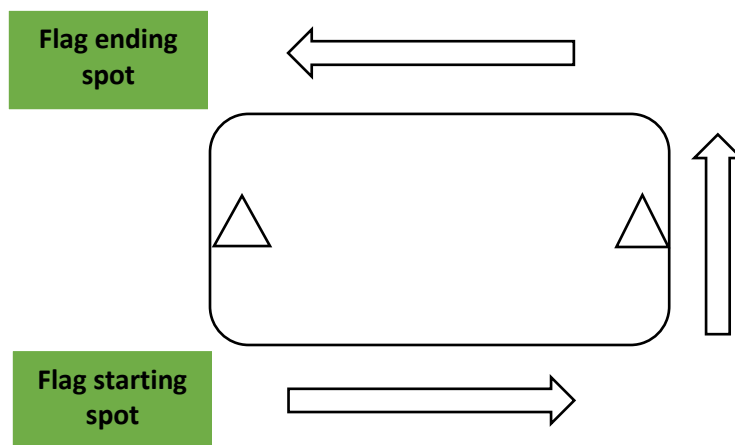
People who have a difficulty seeking the help from others and need to learn that working together with someone can help reduce stress to accomplish goals and tasks.

Group Size

- 6 individuals per flag
- 12 participants minimum

Materials

- 2 flags
- 4 cones
- 2 cups
- 1 bottle of water



Description

Two teams will work with their groups to keep the flags taut to move their cup of water from the starting cone and around the opposite cone and back. First group to get back to the starting cone without spilling water wins.

Discussion Prompts

After the teams pass the final cone, discuss:

1. Did you all work as a team to accomplish the goal, whether you won or lost?
2. What worked to keep the cup up?
3. What didn't work?
4. Did one person emerge as a leader to guide the individual groups?

Pencil Me In

Some people's lives are filled with constant activity, and they must keep a calendar just to keep track of their busy schedule, while others have lots of free time with nothing to do. People who are very busy may feel like they have no time for themselves and may become stressed and overwhelmed because they can't take time to relax. The person who has very little to do may become sad and depressed because they have limited change to be in a social environment with others. If how you spend your free time needs to change, it may be a long process because old habits are hard to break, but this activity may give you the start that you need.

Objective

To help individuals to think about how they are spending their free time and to guide them in deciding if they need to make changes in order to improve their current lifestyles.

Who

People who need to schedule less in their free time to reduce stress. People who need to schedule more of their free time to help them become more social, interactive, and less depressed or lonely.

Group Size

1 or more

Materials

- Three copies of a blank weekly page from a day planner for each person
- Pens/pencils

Description

Obtain a blank day planner or weekly calendar and make three copies of one week for each person in the group (if this is not possible due to copyright infringement, or there is not one available, you may create a blank weekly calendar yourself). Give each person one copy and ask them to write down everything that they do during each day from the time they get up until they go to bed for a typical week (from Sunday to Saturday). After this task is completed, ask them to think about the choices they make and if there are any changes, they wish they could make if they could plan a week filled with anything their hearts desired. Emphasized the importance of making healthy and positive choices during leisure time as a means of bettering one's own life and allow them to fill a second page with these new ideas.

After everyone has completed the second page discuss the difference found in what they usually do and what they would like to do. Now hand out the third sheet and ask each person to plan out the next week of his/her life. Ask them to fill the page with realistic ideas but challenge them to do something different and to engage in as many healthy and positive activities as they can think of. Ask everyone to share what their plans are and if possible, meet again at the end of the week to see if anyone has done anything different with their time as a result of this activity and what effect this had on their week and how they feel.

Discussion Prompts

After the first sheet

1. Do you feel like you are making healthy and positive choices with how you spend your free time?
2. What benefits could you gain in your life if you change how you spend your time?

After the second sheet

1. Are these activities realistic?
2. Which activities are you most likely to pursue?
3. Why don't you do this now?
4. What would it take for you to change how you spend your free time?
5. How would it help you in your own life to pursue new activities?

After the third sheet

1. Do you feel that you will follow through with your plan? Why or why not?

LIFE WITH THE WRIGHT FAMILY

Material Needed

- The Wright Family Story
- One playing card, penny, pen, paper clip, or some other small item for each person in the group

Activity Instructions

1. Have your entire group stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder
2. Give each person in the circle a playing card, penny or some other small item that can be passed easily from hand to hand
3. Tell the group that you are going to read them a story and every time they hear any word that sounds like right, they are to pass the object in their hand to the person on their right, and every time they hear the word left, they should pass the object to the left.
4. Start reading the story (see the next page) slowly so that they have a chance to catch on to what you want them to do. After a few passes stop the story and ask them how they are doing. Check to see that everyone has an object in his/her hand. If your group is typical, some will have two or three objects and others will not have any. Have them redistribute the objects so that everyone has one again.
5. Now continue to read the story, getting faster as you go. Stop the story a couple of more times to check on how they are doing.
6. After reading the story, ask the following questions:
 - I. How much of the story can you remember?**
 - II. What does this activity tell us about communication?**
 - III. What does this activity tell us about teamwork?**
 - IV. What does this activity tell us about listening skills?**
7. After the group has discussed the purpose of the activity, tell them that this activity required teamwork, much like the School Health Index does. Tell them that during this activity, the idea was to not get too distracted by the rights and lefts and stay focused on what was happening in the story. Similarly, in our everyday lives, we often have tasks that pull us in many directions, but we should always remember what is important, the health of young people. The school health index will help enable you to use a team approach to improve health of young people.

STORY: "Life with the Wright Family"

One day the **Wright** family decided to take a vacation. The first thing they had to decide was who would be **left** at home since there was not enough room in the **Wright** family car for all of them. Mr. **Wright** decided that Linda **Wright** would be the one **left** at home. Of course, this made Aunt Linda **Wright** so mad that she **left** the house immediately yelling "It will be a **right** cold day before I return".

The **Wright** family now bundled up the children, Tommy **Wright**, Susan **Wright**, Timmy **Wright** and Shelly **Wright** and got in the car and **left**. Unfortunately, as they turned out of the driveway someone had **left** a trashcan in the street, so they had turn **right** around and stop the car. They told Tommy **Wright** to get out of the car and move the trashcan so they could get going. Tommy took so long that they almost **left** him in the street. Once the **Wright** family got on the road, Mother **Wright** wondered if she had **left** the stove on. Father **Wright** told her not to worry he had checked the stove and she had not **left** it on. As they turned **right** at the corner, everyone started to think about other things that they might have **left** undone.

No need to worry now, they were off on a **right** fine vacation. When they arrived at the gas station, Father **Wright** put gas in the car and then discovered that he had **left** his wallet at home. So, Timmy **Wright** put gas in the car and then discovered that he had **left** his wallet at home. So, Timmy **Wright** ran home to get the money that was **left** behind. After Timmy had **left**, Susan **Wright** started to feel sick. She **left** the car saying that she had to throw up. This of course got Mother **Wright's** attention and she **left** the car in a hurry. Shelly **Wright** wanted to watch Susan get sick, so she **left** the car too. Father **Wright** was **left** with Tommy **Wright** who was playing a game in the backseat.

With all of this going on Father **Wright** decided that this was not the **right** time to take a vacation, so he gathered up all of the family and **left** the gas station as quickly as he could. When he arrived home, he turned **left** into the driveway and said, "I wish the **Wright** family had never **left** this the house today! **Right?**"