



It's Your Life...It's Your Adventure!

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Experiential Activities from SCMHA 9/18/09 Presentation

- **PERSPECTIVE CIRCLE/CROSS ARMS:** Invite participants to “draw” a circle with their finger above their heads in a clockwise direction. Keeping this circle moving the same direction, lower it to about belly-button perspective. Now notice what direction the circle is moving (should be counter-clockwise). It is all a matter of perspective. Talk about where people are coming from, looking at things differently, changing perspectives, etc. Now invite participants to cross their arms. Note which one is on top. Now switch. Note the discomfort or awkwardness.
- **2 MINUTE HELLO:** Share the idea of names, the name a person prefers to be called, is how we honor and recognize that individual person in the room. Challenge the family to say hello to everyone in the family using his/her preferred name. (They might need to ask! I don't actually time this one...)
- **EACH ONE, TEACH ONE:** Invite participants to pair up and let each person take turns to teach and learn something for one minute each (encourage things that fit into time frame, e.g., how to roll your tongue, a phrase in a foreign language, a new song, a yoga move, etc.) Find another pair and repeat. Everyone brings student/teacher to the table, teaching style influenced by personality, selection of topics, no one is an expert, let's learn from each other, seeking feedback throughout exercise, etc.
- **SLOW MOTION TAG:** Invite participants to find a partner. Round One: Choose one person to be peanut butter and one to be jelly. One is “it” and one is being chased – in slow motion! When tagged, make a 360 turn and switch roles! Round Two: link arms and face another pair. Same idea! Notice strategies, different definitions of “slow motion”, differences between round one and round two.
- **WEATHER REPORT:** Provide your check-in with pairs giving your weather report, how it looked yesterday, right at the moment, and prediction for future. Invite participants to share the meaning behind the metaphor if they wish.
- **FULL VALUE CONTRACT:** Give each person a tiny slip of paper and invite them to write a characteristic or skill that they have that will contribute to the success of the family during activities. When they are finished, invite them to share their skill/characteristic, then roll up the paper and put it inside a deflated balloon (all of the papers go in the balloon). Invite someone to blow up the balloon to normal size and tie it off. Note that the individuals are still individual inside the balloon, but the balloon represents the family as a whole.

Now invite the family to write their Full Value Contract on the balloon. The Full Value Contract is the baseline of acceptable behavior by the family, and a freely made commitment by all

members to uphold them. They are an essential foundation for building trust within a family. Ideally, members should generate this contract themselves. However, it should include in some form the following: be here, be honest, let go and move on, be safe, care for self and others, and commit to goals. Everyone must agree, freely and publicly, to the Ground Rules to successfully use them. Implicit in this process is that the rules will be broken. This is okay. The important thing is to address the breakdown, learn whatever can be learned, and re-commit to this baseline of personal integrity. You may want to clarify some of their definitions, e.g., what does it mean in this family to respect each other?

Now the challenge is to keep the ball in the air counting through the alphabet. A participant cannot hit the balloon twice in a row and everyone must hit it at least once. Round two is without hands. Round three with only feet. Round four is with half of the family with their eyes closed. Stop the rounds by time or appropriate challenge level or level of fun! Discuss goal setting, family support, frustration tolerance, keeping things “in the air”, following the FVC.

- **BLIND POLYGON:** Invite the family to form the designated geometric shape using fun noodles with eyes closed. Discuss communication, limitations, expectations, problem-solving, etc.
- **CHAOS:** Put hula hoop in middle of circle with lots of throwable objects, place other hula hoops around, invite the family (or individuals) to one object at a time, get the most resources as possible. Talk about cooperation, competition, assumed limits, cheating, fairness, resources, making sense of chaos.
- **FOAM FOILING:** Give your participant and yourself a midsize “swim noodle” or “fun noodle” foam and a small slice of a foam noodle (slice 1 ½ inch piece with a bread knife from a larger foam noodle). Invite the participant client to see if s/he can knock a small foam piece off the back of your hand with a midsize foam piece held like you are jousting. S/he, of course, has a foam noodle slice on the back of one of his/her hands and a jousting noodle in the other, just like you! Talk about making decisions: How did you decide when to start the game? What strategies did you use to knock off the foam noodle slice? Were you more aggressive or defensive? How did this change with your opponent’s response?
- **MOUSE TRAP PASS:** Demonstrate how to safely handle a mouse trap (on the sides or flat on the palm). Pass the set mouse trap around a circle safely. Add a second one the opposite direction. Phew! Talk about safety and support: What was it like to hold a set mouse trap? How did others support you? How did you ask for support? How did practice/experience change your emotional responses?
- **MOUSE TRAP SLAP:** Demonstrate how to safely set a mouse trap. Using a set mouse trap and invite the participant to slap their hand down quickly upon the trap, holding it firmly to the ground, then quickly release the trap. Phew! Talk about commitment: What was it like to make a commitment? What happened if you hesitate? What kinds of decisions do you have in your life where you need to make a commitment? And support/trust: What was it like to slap the trap without looking? How did the other person support you? How did you ask for support?
- **GEM CLOSING:** Hand out “gems” and invite participants to share his/her “gem” or take away from the experience. Use this as a transitional object for people to take with them.