

NAME: BRIDGE BUILDING

SOURCE:

- Activity – Unknown
- Processing (DNA-V) -- Louise L Hayse & Joseph Ciarrochi; The Thriving Adolescent; New Harbinger: 2015

INTENTION: The activity offers many opportunities to discuss a variety of ACT related processes imbedded in an integrated collaborative task. It can be helpful to illustrate ACT processes or DNA-V concepts as they express themselves in occupational and social contexts.

MATERIALS:

- A span between 2 same height tables /flat surfaces of 20 inches (or about 1 ½ - 2 times the length of the paper you are using)
- Several pennies or similar item to test the weight a bridge can hold.

For each team (3-5 people per team)

- 3 pieces of paper
- 2 feet of tape (vary amount depending on the quality of your tape)

SCRIPT: Written instructions for group leader.

Using the materials, your team will have 15 minutes to construct a bridge that can span the distance between these two surfaces (show the surfaces). The bridge must be free standing and cannot be taped or held down to the surface in any way. Your goal is to create a bridge that can hold as many pennies as possible (show pennies). Please be sure that everyone in your team contributes something to this process.

- The leader can add some tension by announcing time left to solve the problem.

SOLUTION:

There is more than one way to effectively solve this problem. The point of the activity is not really solving the problem but what can be learned about psychological flexibility from the experience. However, leaders will encounter situations like groups that insist that there is no solution and the leader is intentionally setting up a failure experience. At these times it is helpful to be able to show one possible solution.

- Folding the paper back and forth (accordion fold) to create peaks and valleys and then taping the 3 pieces of paper together to span the length is one solution. The folds will substantially increase the holding capacity (compared to flat paper).

DISCUSSION: Possible questions or topic to address

There are endless possibilities about how to process this activity. What to focus on usually emerges in response to what you see happening in the group process and individual responses. I will frame some common themes using an ACT and DNA-V framework.

ADVISOR

- What messages did your advisor give you that helped you complete the exercise?
- What advisor messages made getting involved or being effective more difficult?
- Were you able to choose to act on some messages and simply coexist with others?

- Was it necessary to get rid of unhelpful messages, or could you simply act in opposition to them?
- Can you notice that even unhelpful messages from your advisor might have the function of keeping you safe or secure even if that meant being less involved or effective?
- Did you notice that your past experiences and ideas about bridges limited your ability to think outside of the box in solving this problem?
- How does this operate in other areas of your life?

NOTICER

- What role did your noticer play in helping you to be effective?
- Was there any situation where you failed to notice something (rules, bridge too short...). Where was your attention focused then (advisor)?
- Were there any contextual factors that pulled you out of the noticing function (time limits, distractions)?

DISCOVERER

- Was there any point where you were aware of being fully in the discoverer? What experiences emerged (curious, playful, interested)?
- How did trial and error learning help you improve your design?
- Did everyone run tests as a part of the design process (why or why not)?

VALUES

- What values were you acting on during this activity?
- Were these values personal (want to) or social (have to)?
- What is the difference (feeling / experience) between choosing to personally invest (want to) in something verses complying to expectations (have to)?
- How much of your life is “have to” verses “want to”. Can people make that choice to invest themselves even in activities that are not pleasurable?

WORKABILITY

- What worked / did not work?
- How did you know when an approach was working?
- Did the group get stuck in trying a strategy that was not working, why?
- Why might we get stuck in unworkable strategies (keep doing the same things expecting different results)?

OVERALL

- How could we apply this information to our lives?
- What role did you assume in this group – did you choose it or was it assigned to you by your advisor?
- Did people assume this was a competition (why)? When others are doing similar things do you find yourself automatically competing and comparing? How does this impact your experience?
- How did your performance impact others on your team?