

CUP STACK

This activity is a favorite around the country. Some groups complete the task very quickly while other groups must keep trying and trying to complete the task successfully. The hardest part is not giving up when things get tough or frustrating or more importantly not to cheat (I've seen plenty of that too)! Either way it's always a favorite and a fun activity.

Objective

To work together to accomplish a difficult task without quitting or giving up when someone gets frustrated.

Who

People who have difficulty working with others but who need the practice in order to improve their social skills. People who give up easily.

Group Size

3 or more (ideal to have groups of 6)

Materials

- Scissors

FOR EACH GROUP:

- 10 paper cups of equal size
- One rubber band (must fit around a cup)
- 6 pieces of string (two to three feet long each)

Description

(Prior to the activity cut six pieces of string, into two to three foot long pieces for each group.) Tie each piece to a rubber band as evenly spaced as possible so you finish with a rubber band with six pieces of string attached to it (it should look like a sunshine with six sun rays going out in all directions). Make one of these for every six people.

Divide your group into smaller groups of six (or as close to this as possible). Give each group a stack of ten paper cups and one of the rubberband/string implements that you have prepared. Place the paper cups on the table, spread out and upside down.

Challenge the group to build a pyramid out of the paper cups (four on the bottom, three on the next row, then two, and finally one on the top). Group members may not touch the cups with their hands, or any other part of their bodies for that matter, even if a cup falls on the floor. Each person should hold onto one of the strings that are attached to the rubber band and the group then uses this device to pick up the cups and place them on top of each other (by pulling the rubber band apart and then bringing it back together over the cups). If there are less than six people on any given team, some team members may have to hold more than one string (but this does make it a bit easier).

Discussion Prompts

1. Was anyone frustrated at all during this activity? If so how was it handled?
2. Why was teamwork so important for this activity?
3. Are you ever in a situation where you must use teamwork? Is this always easy for you? Why or why not?
4. What are some skills needed to be good at teamwork?
5. What is so hard about teamwork?
6. What did you do today to contribute to the teamwork on your team?

