

Session Four

Expectations: A Link Activity

Supplies Needed: One or two *Link and Learn Activity Set(s)*, or similar toy (multi-colored plastic links that are intended to fit together and pull apart)

Put a handful of links at each table.

Introduction to Activity: Inform participants that they will be to try to connect all the links at their table and then form a chain with the links from other tables so that the result is one continuous chain of colored links. The catch is that this task must be completed in 15 seconds. If you choose, offer a prize to participants if they achieve this goal.

The group is not likely to complete the task in the time allotted. At the end of 15 seconds, the facilitator(s) will ask them to evaluate their progress. Tell them that they can now have 25 seconds to complete the task. The group will decide if they want to try again.

If the group decides to try again, make sure all of the links are disconnected, give the group a signal to begin, and time them.

At the end of the second attempt (or the first, if the group decides not to attempt again), ask them some of the following questions:

- Did you understand what was expected of you?
- Why were you unable to complete the task?
- What would you have needed in order to complete the task successfully?

In some cases, the participants will differ in their understanding of what was expected. The facilitator(s) should ask how the expectation could have been more clearly expressed.

Common answers to the second question include: not enough time, links are hard to work with, the other work groups were not cooperating.

Common answers to the third question include: more time, and time to plan with the other groups.

Based on feedback from the group, work with them to provide the resources they request and set a time limit that they feel is realistic (most groups will decide to try and complete the task in under one minute).

When the new expectations are agreed upon, keep time as the group attempts to complete the task.

Review the following points with the group at the completion of the activity:

In order for goals to be reached and tasks accomplished, it is necessary for them to be realistic. It is also important that those being expected to complete a task are involved in the setting of the expectations for how it is to be completed. They will offer insight and information to all involved. If at first you don't succeed, step back, evaluate, adjust, and try again.