

## *Decision Making*

Objectives: Participants will be able to

- ❖ Identify why we make decisions
- ❖ Identify positive team work skills and goal setting
- ❖ Build trust within the group

Time: 50-60 minutes

Setting: A large area, either in or outside where students will be able to move around an obstacle course

Materials:

- ❖ Fuel Cells
  - Plastic cups filled with water
    - need approximately 15 to 25 of each color (red, blue, green, yellow)
- ❖ Motion Detectors
  - Approximately 40 tennis balls and cups
- ❖ Crash Site
  - A boundary marker (chalk, tape, rope)
  - Unrelated spaceship components (pool noodles, PVC pipes, etc.)
  - Broken and empty fuel cells (empty soda cans)
- ❖ Power Blocks
  - 10 larger containers that water from the fuel cells can be poured into (Can be cans and/or plastic containers)
    - Need 4 marked red
    - Need 3 marked green
    - Need 2 marked blue
    - Need 1 marked yellow
  - The power blocks can be of different sizes but all the power blocks of the same color need to be the same size
    - Since the goal is to build a power pack, the power blocks must be sized appropriately so that they can be stacked
    - Power blocks must have a fill line so the group will know when each power block is full
- ❖ Eye Protection –
  - Bandanas (up to 8 for a group of 12)
- ❖ Alien Power Supply
  - Additional large water container
- ❖ Fuel
  - Water (probably 4 gallons)

### Pre-lesson Preparation:

- ❖ Set up the “crash site”
  - Mark off an area for the crash site approximately 10 x 15 yards. Or it can be more circular, or triangular. Shape does not really matter but aim for a size that will preclude someone being able to walk across while listening to a stationary person. Ensure it is reasonably free of hazards.
  - Place debris throughout the crash site. Include some fuel cells that are broken or empty.
  - Place motion detectors throughout the crash site. To use the tennis balls and cups combination, turn each cup upside down and balance a tennis ball on it. Set mousetraps and distribute throughout (no cheese required – do not leave unattended as you may inadvertently capture a squirrel if you are outdoors).
  - Place power blocks upright throughout the crash site.
  - Locate alien power supply near the crash site. Label it so people know what it is.
  - Fill intact fuel cells with water and place them throughout the crash site.
  - To make sure there is enough water to fill the power blocks, you may want to fill the power blocks and then pour water from them into the appropriate cups. Fill as many extra cups as you would like – recognize that the more water they have available, the more careless they can be without experiencing any consequences.
    - Feel free to place some of the fuel cells in precarious positions. Right next to a motion detector or piece of debris is doable with good communication.

### Do:

- ❖ Give your group the following instructions:
  - Your spaceship has crashed on a distant planet and has been damaged beyond repair. Luckily, all your expedition team members are safe and you have been able to purchase a spaceship from the somewhat hostile aliens. Unfortunately, they have no appropriate fuel cells that you can purchase, borrow or otherwise obtain and use. Furthermore, the aliens have placed motion detectors all around the crash site. Your team’s only hope for a safe return to earth is to gather enough intact fuel cells from the crash site and assemble them into a power pack that will allow the team to get back to Earth in the recently purchased spaceship. Your team must complete these tasks during the 30 minute window of opportunity that exists when the alien guards go to lunch and the motion detection system is the only type of security present at the crash site. The expedition engineer has reminded you that:
    - The broken fuel cells give off an extremely bright light. People in the immediate vicinity of the crash site must wear eye protection (blindfolds). Those who do not will be blinded and forced to sit out for 3 minutes to allow their eyesight to recover.
    - Anytime a motion sensor is set off, it must be reset and one fuel cell must be used to tap into the aliens’ power supply and stabilize the motion detection system. This will ensure that they do not suspect that your team is at the crash site and return from lunch early.

- There are 4 types of fuel cells. To facilitate their use, each fuel cell must be delivered to its designated location and placed into an appropriate power block. Fuel cells that are delivered to the wrong location cannot be used.
- The power pack requires a base of 4 red power blocks, a secondary layer of 3 green power blocks, a third layer of 2 blue power blocks and a top section of 1 yellow power block. All the power blocks must be filled with fuel and the entire power pack must be stable in order for the fuel to reach the spaceship's engines.

For the facilitator only:

- ❖ You may wish to provide the group with some time to do a bit of deliberate planning before they rush into the activity. This is easily done by letting them know at what time the aliens go to lunch.
- ❖ Make sure people in the crash site have their bandanas on. If you catch someone violating this rule, sit him/her out and make sure he/she does not contribute to the group for 3 minutes. Since he/she has been blinded, he/she can not serve as a guide for anyone at this time.
- ❖ If a motion sensor is set off, reset it and ask for a fuel cell. If one is not forthcoming take whichever one is handy and pour it into the alien power supply. The group may or may not figure out that they might need to put some thought into which fuel cells are sacrificed or they may be unable to construct a functioning power pack.
- ❖ Other than the motion detectors, any item may be moved or leave the crash site. Do not volunteer this information unless you are asked. Let the group figure this out as well as the fact that sighted people may pour the fuel from the cells into the blocks and that they can assemble the power pack outside the crash site.
- ❖ People may switch roles at any time.
- ❖ Fuel cells may be passed hand to hand. As long as a sighted person has no point of contact in the crash site, he/she may handle any of the equipment. Sighted people may also touch blindfolded people in the crash site.
- ❖ People may walk around the entire crash site.
- ❖ Decide whether or not you will keep track of time for the group. Refusing to do so creates another role that must be filled. Once time is up communicate this clearly – a count down or warning is not necessary unless you are the time keeper.

Reflect:

- ❖ How did it feel to be blindfolded having to trust someone to guide you?
- ❖ How did you decide to follow their guidance or go with your gut and do something different?
- ❖ As a “guider” how do you make the choices you made to lead your person?
- ❖ How did it feel to be guiding someone around from outside the “site”?
- ❖ Was it harder to be the blindfolded or the guides? Why?
- ❖ Did you trust each other at the beginning of the activity?
  - Did that trust grow towards the end of the activity?
- ❖ If anybody changed roles, what was it like to go from one role to the other?

- ❖ Did the time limit make you try harder? Make you nervous? Change the way you made your decisions?
- ❖ Were you afraid to take on either role?

Apply:

- ❖ How is this activity like your own leadership situations?
  - Like staff meetings?
  - Organizations you're in?
- ❖ What can we do if we're "blindfolded" to make sure that we stay on the right path?
  - Should we ask questions?
  - Feel our way?
  - What else?
- ❖ How can we positively contribute to our tasks if we're "sighted"?
  - Give gentle guidance?
  - Assert ourselves?
  - What else?