

**Activity: One Way****Overview**

Sometimes there is only one way to get things done. In this brainteaser turned group activity, participants are trying to switch positions in a 9 square line. It isn't as easy as it seems, and requires some thought. The challenge of the activity will keep them engaged in the process.

Set Up**Props**

9 Sheets of construction paper to build the line.

Set Up

Arrange the 9 pieces of construction paper, or whatever else you have handy, in a line on the floor. Leave about a foot between each piece. This activity can have 8 players at a time. For a larger group, designate teams of 8. While one team is working the other(s) are observing. Teams will swap frequently, so everyone gets plenty of time working on the problem.

Instructions

Teams of 4 must switch sides on the construction paper line. One at a time, players may move forward to any empty, adjacent square.

A player may also skip over another player to an empty square as long as the skipped player is moving in the opposite direction. No skipping your own team members. Players may never move backwards.

Encourage teams who are not actively working on the grid to use paper, pens, or whatever is available to figure out the problem.

Print the solution to this activity from the Team Building & Group Development software.

Sample Story Line

"Your group must work together to switch positions in this 9-square configuration. Doing so will correctly sequence a series of atoms to create a non-hazardous, renewable energy source. To make this work, the 4 people on each end must switch sides following strict safety guidelines. You may move forward if the square in front of you is not occupied. Or, you may skip over ONE player to an empty square, but only if the skipped person is moving in the opposite direction as you. Most importantly, no one may ever move backwards. Each time your group gets stuck, having run out of forward options or moves, you must switch teams and allow a new group of 8 to work on the solution. Good luck!"

Safety

If you use common sense, safety should not be an issue.

Variations

For a large group, use 2 or more grids and lay them side-by-side, in a triangle pattern, or even a square. This variation removes the observation component because everyone is working at once. You may add the requirement that every line must successfully make the switch to complete the challenge. Either way, a lot can be learned through participation, observation of other people's mistakes, and adoption of their successes.

Reflection

The following questions are useful for exploring issues related to this activity.

- Discover:** "What was this challenge like for you? Why? How did your group confront the challenge?"
Connect: "How was this group challenge similar to other challenges we have faced as a team?"
Create: "If there is one theme we could create that represents our team, what would it be, and why? Are there new themes on which we need to focus? If so, what would they be?"