

Team Building Exercises

NAME	PAGE	DURATION	PARTICIPANTS	MATERIAL
Get to Know Each Other				
Personal Crest	2	15 - 30 min.	4 - 12	paper, markers
Intimate Interviews	2	15 min.	2 - 10	none
Build Trust and Experience Physical Closeness				
Aeroplane	3	10 - 20 min.	teams of 5	none
Back to Back	3	5 - 10 min.	Pairs	none
Crossed Wires	3	5 min.	Unlimited	none
Human Knot	3	10 - 15 min.	teams of 6 -12	none
Trust Falls	4	5 - 20 min.	5 - 8	chair
Trust Falls 2 (Circle)	4	10 - 30 min.	teams of 7 -12	none
Trust Walks	4	10 - 30 min.	Pairs	scarves for blindfolding
Up & Fly	4	10 min.	teams of 5 - 7	none
Co-operate to Solve Group Task				
Perfect Squares Exercise	5	25 - 45 min.	teams of 5	prepared puzzle pieces

Get to know each other

Aim:

break down barriers and encourage an intimate "getting to know each other"

target group:

teams where people will have to co-operate closely for a substantial time period

means:

self disclosure/relationship building

Personal Crest: (Me-Chart)

Duration: 15 - 30 min.

Participants: 4 -12

Material: paper, markers

Members draw a personal crest (shield) in which they express important aspects about themselves through drawings (e.g. most important event in your life, primary goal for the next year, how you react when upset, what makes you happy)

Intimate Interviews:

Duration: 15 min.

Participants: 2 - 10

Material: none

Members pair off and interview one another for 5 minutes each. Then they introduce their partner to the group.

Important: Getting to know someone does not happen through repeating the resume - do not say what (s)he did but who (s)he is.

Build trust and experience physical closeness

Goal:

eliminate tensions and distance between people, makes them more relaxed and comfortable with one another

Means:

activities which can only be completed if participants trust one another

Notes of Caution:

- if someone is really afraid to participate he/she should not be pressured by the group*
- some people are afraid of touching others or of being touched, don't force the exercise on anybody by peer pressure*

Crossed Wires:

Duration: 5 min.

Participants: unlimited

Material: none

With your right hand grab your left ear, with your left hand grab your nose. Then quickly switch hands. (Just a get loose-exercise.)

Back 2 Back:

Duration: 5 - 10 min.

Participants: pairs

Material: none

Sit down back to back: get up, sit down again

Human Knot:

Duration: 10 - 15 min.

Participants: teams of 6 - 12

Material: none

Members stand in a circle, eyes closed, and extend their right hands into the middle and reach for the hands of another person. Repeat the process using the left hand. Then open eyes and untangle the knot without unclasping hands.

Aeroplane:

Duration: 10 - 20 min.

Participants: teams of 5

Material: none

Four persons take arms and legs of a volunteer and run down the yard with their "aeroplane". No real takeoff please (i.e. don't actually let loose or throw the person)!

Trust Walks:

Duration: 10 - 30 min.

Participants: pairs

Material: scarves for blindfolding

Members take turns being blindfolded and led by another on a short walk. Members should discuss experiences afterwards ("I discovered that ..., I felt ... ")

Trust Falls:

Duration: 5 - 20 min.

Participants: 5 - 8

Material: chair

Members stand on a raised platform (a chair will suffice) and fall backwards into the arms of the other members.

Usually the people standing behind the chair are more afraid than the person falling and grab her/him too early.

Trust Falls 2:

Duration: 10 - 30 min.

Participants: teams of 7 - 12

Material: none

Members stand in a circle around a volunteer who makes her/his body stiff and then falls to any side. The others catch the volunteer and push her/him gently back to the centre, so that (s)he falls in another direction...

The experience gets more intense if the eyes are closed.

Vary circle size according to length and body weight of volunteer.

Note: Group should be 7 people or larger.

Up & Fly:

Duration: 10 min.

Participants: teams of 5 - 7

Material: none

Members stand in circle, volunteer in centre hops up and down; the others help with their hands to reach altitude

Co-operate to Solve Group Tasks

Perfect Squares Exercise:

Duration: 25 - 45 min.

Participants: teams of 5

Material: prepared puzzle pieces

Hand out the envelopes with pieces of squares to groups of five. (If you have enough time and want to challenge the group: do the exercise with hexagons.)

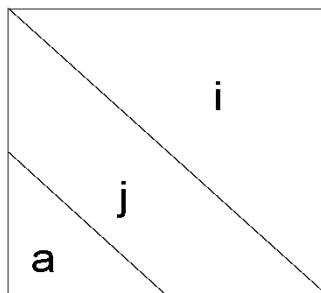
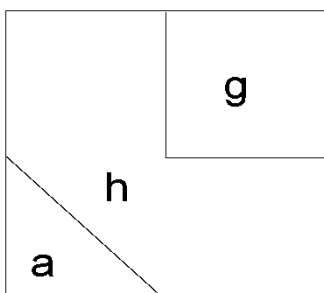
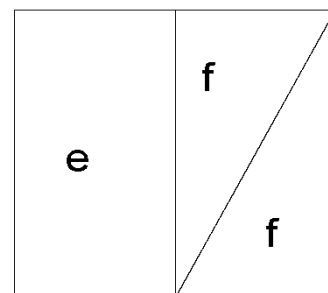
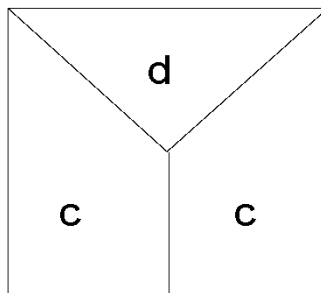
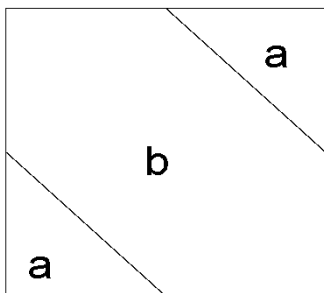
These are the instructions (to be read aloud):

Instructions:

In the large envelope on your table are five smaller envelopes. Each of these contains differently shaped pieces of carton. It is your group's task to form five squares equal in size. Again: the task is not completed until there is a complete square of a size equal to all the other squares on the table in front of every member of the group.

There are the following rules:

- Nobody is allowed to talk.
- Nobody may ask another person for a piece or signal in any other way that (s)he needs a specific piece from another person.
- Every member can, if (s)he wishes to, put pieces in the centre of the table or give pieces to any other member of the group.
- Nobody is allowed to interfere in any other person's figure.
- Everybody is allowed to take pieces from the centre of the table but nobody may piece together any parts that are in the middle of the table.



Envelopes:

A: e, i, h

B: a, a, a, c

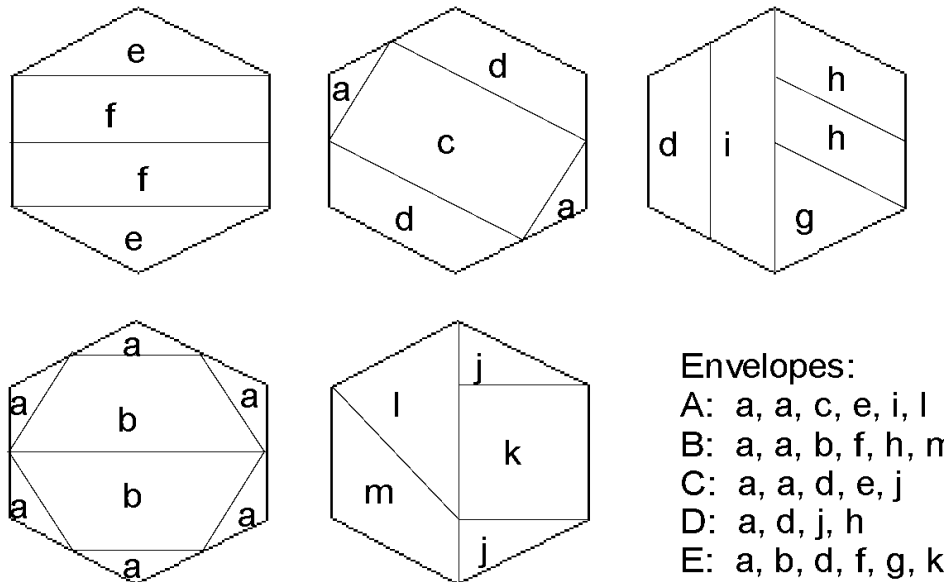
C: a, j

D: d, f

E: b, c, f, g

The prepared cardboard squares should be 10-15 cm in diameter. Please be very precise in cutting the pieces. They should be distributed to five envelopes (labelled A to E) according to the list shown.

If the number of participants cannot be divided by 5, the remainder should be asked to ensure compliance with the rules and to observe participants behaviour. (Show them the questions below)



The hexagons are obviously more challenging than the squares, with them the exercise typically lasts 30 rather than 15-20 minutes. Please allow some time for discussions as well. As always the analysis is the most important part of the exercise.

Typically some groups need much longer than others. If possible, do not stop them. Instead you should keep the other groups busy by discussing their experiences and/or observing the remaining group(s).

Hints On Playing The "Perfect Squares Exercise"

Observers and trainers should make sure that the rules are strictly enforced. There should be absolutely no communication - that includes non-verbal activities. Groups will try this anyway. - Watch out and point to these behaviours during the discussion. It is interesting to see who (and in which stage of the jigsaw puzzling) tries to influence/help others. The game often turns competitive, especially if there are several groups playing. You should refrain from declaring "winners". Instead you should comfort the "slower" participants, e.g. point out that the figures have different levels of difficulty (the 8 piece hexagon is usually the last one to be solved). If a group takes much longer than the others you might relax the rules at that point although this diminishes that group's feeling of achievement. For the hexagons rule no. 5 (no puzzling in centre) is typically not strictly enforced, as the exercise would take much longer if you did. Therefore you don't have to stop groups from comparing sizes of the hexagons. Piecing one figure together on top of another is not illegal but don't forget to ask group members how they felt when somebody took their puzzle pieces away and did their work.

Share your experiences:

- How did you feel when someone else had a piece you would have liked?
- How did you feel when someone else completed their figure and sat back complacently?
- How did (s)he feel?
- Did somebody finish their figure and then broke it apart to help others?
- What did you think about people who were "slow"? Did you want to interfere? Why?

Translate to situations in "real life": similarities to team work in AIESEC?

Hints For Discussion Of "Perfect Squares Exercise"

Let people talk about their experience and don't do the analysis yourself. Direct people with your questions instead, so that they learn about one each other and about the mistakes they made as a group.

Key to this game is that

- a group task always gets split in individual tasks. However, the group will fail unless all individual assignments are completed. You are never done until everybody is done.
- you have to look for possible contributions from others (these illegal communication attempts) and should try to help the others even if it seems to harm you (giving away your favourite jigsaw pieces)

There are four levels of group work in this game:

1. You share the junk. Giving away pieces which you don't need yourself.
2. You share the rest. Giving away pieces which you might need but don't see as the key to your puzzle
3. You share the icing. Giving away pieces that you would like to use yourself but that someone else seems to need more.
4. We share the cookies. Breaking apart even solved puzzles to help others.

This case has to be distinguished from the stop-sign-trap. With the hexagons it often happens that somebody finishes their figure (i. e. wrongly assumes that they got a correct sized hexagon), stops working and doesn't notice until much later that by this (s)he prevented the group from finishing.