

Puzzle Activity: A Team Building Activity

Overview and purpose

This activity demonstrates the importance of having a shared vision and working as a team. Participants work as a team to build a puzzle and overcome various challenges completing the task.

Participants

Staff, students, parents, community partners on a school health team

Time needed

45 minutes

Materials

- Children's puzzles with approximately 50 pieces each – 1 puzzle for every 5 participants

Leader preparation before the activity

- Remove the lids from the puzzles and store in a place where they aren't visible to participants.

Notes/Adaptations

- To make the activity more challenging, mix a couple pieces from each puzzle and place them in different puzzle boxes. This will encourage team members to work within a variety of groups to complete the puzzles.

Instructions

A. Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Explain to the group that they are members of a school community (students, teachers, parents, community members) who want to build a healthy school community. The puzzle represents the healthy school community.
2. Each team member will play the part of a different type of school community member (student, teacher, parent or community member) and the goal is to build a healthy school community (puzzle) as quickly as possible.



B. Activity (25 minutes)

1. "Building the Team"
 - Divide the participants into groups of 4-5 people and assign each team a designated workspace.
 - Have each team member decide what type of school community member they will be (e.g., student, teacher, parent or community member).
 - Call out a random school community member (e.g., students) to be the "builder". Only one builder can begin the construction of the healthy school community (puzzle).
 - Tell the group that the builder is the only person who can start the construction of the puzzle. The team members are not allowed to communicate through words or actions with the builder. The builder may only communicate with the leader.
2. "Creating the Healthy School Community"
 - Ask each builder to select one puzzle box (without the lid) from the table and take it back to their workspace.
 - Inform the builders that they have 7 minutes to complete the puzzle.
 - Start the clock and allow the builders to begin construction of their healthy school community (puzzle).

- After 2 minutes have gone by, stop the clock and tell the builders to stop what they are doing.

3. “Using the Support”

- Inform the builders that it appears as though they need some support in order to complete the puzzle in the next 5 minutes, so they can ask for help from the rest of the school community (their teammates).
- Allow the team members to help create the puzzle.
- After 1 minute of the team working on the puzzle, present each team with the puzzle lid which shows a picture of the complete puzzle (the vision).

Note: If puzzle pieces have been mixed (see Notes/ Adaptations), encourage participants to “look outside their group for answers” (other pieces).

C. Group discussion (15 minutes)

1. Use the questions below to facilitate a large group discussion:
 - *What was your reaction when only one person on the team (the builder) was able to construct the puzzle?*
 - *What strategies did you use as you started to build the puzzle (did you look for edge pieces or group pieces by color)?*
 - *As teammates looking on, was it frustrating not to be able to assist with building the puzzle?*
 - *As a builder, you eventually had the help of your teammates. How did their help make the job easier? Did their help make it harder? If yes, how so?*
 - *How did the team react when they were given a picture of the complete puzzle?*
 - *If you could start the process of building a healthy school community (puzzle), what steps would you take to improve the process? (team, vision, tools (i.e. all puzzle pieces), begin building)*
 - *What actions can our school community members or school health team take to ensure that we work well together?*
2. Summarize the key points from the discussion and how your school community members or

school health team will use these findings in the future. These could be used to create ground rules for how your team will work together on a regular basis.