ADVANCED TREE CHALLENGE

Experiential education



N° of pax 8-20

outdoors

60-120 mins

group work | challenge

PURPOSE

TEAM BUILDING

- dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty
- communication
- trust

MATERIALS

- blindfolds equaling the number of participants
- ordinary ropes to mark the trees
- shoes/boots that are suitable for forest/uneven terrain
- long sleeves and trousers to avoid scratches.

PREPARATION

• Find a big forest area and mark with a rope 2 trees per group of 4-5 participants, the starting one and the finishing one with 100 -150 meters distance in between, and 15 - 20 meters away from the trees of the other groups. It is useful to use areas where the underbush is less intense, the trees are in continuity without many clearings and the terrain is more or less even. • Arrange to have one dedicated "Angel" (facilitator/assistant) per group, who follows and protects them in case of an emergency, like falling somewhere or hitting something hard. When a possible crash is about to happen, the "Angel" needs to slow the group down or gently move bigger/spiky branches away from the path of the group. The "Angels" are mute but can give to his/her group some extra help on the challenge, when needed. • If participants are very uncomfortable with the blindfold, ask them to simply close their eyes. Or, if this is also too much of a challenge, then that person can be with open eyes but mute, trying to find ways to support the group.

ADVANCED TREE CHALLENGE

STEPS

1. The starting instructions for the group are the following: divide yourselves into groups of 4 or 5 people, and find your dedicated tree. First, the facilitator shows the groups their starting and finishing trees,

2. (20-25 min) Planning time to investigate the possible path leading there, which they will need to be able to follow blindfolded after planning.



3. (40 min) The small groups have to hold hands or shoulders while they are walking blind. Extra help can be offered by their Angels (optional): 1 person can see for 10 seconds, a whistle (or any sound effect) is made from the direction of their tree 2 times.

4. The activity is over when all the groups find their tree.

5. The facilitator gathers the group in a circle to share and reflect on the experience.

REFLECTION

- How did you make decisions blindfolded?
- What worked well? What resources did you use?
- How did the outcomes of this activity strengthen your resilience? And how else?

COMMENTS

- Variation: each group has to find 3 trees, where the 2nd trees are dedicated to individual groups but the last tree is common to all groups, in this case it is best to choose the 3rd tree in a 90-degree angle from the first two trees to break the pattern.
- There is the possibility open in this activity for the sub-groups to give each other support while they are all blindly walking. Usually we do not mention this in advance. We are curious whether the groups find this resource for themselves. Subgroups work parallelly, but there is an opportunity (it is not a solution, just a resource) that they can support each other during their "journeys".