

LEADERSHIP: GAMES FOR YOUTH

4-H TARGETING LIFE SKILLS MODEL

Life skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning at a high level in their everyday environments. Youth development professionals are concerned with helping youth become functioning members of society and be competent in the life skills area. Helping youth meet their basic needs and develop the competencies important to their immediate and future success is the role of the youth development professional. 4-H focuses on developing skills that are healthy and productive for both youth and their communities. Positive youth development programs identify the skills within the five targeted competency areas that are appropriate to the age of the youth in the program and offer experiences to teach these skills. 4-H uses a framework based upon the 4-H Pledge to organize the delivery of experiences that support the growth and development of youth. 4-H refers to this framework as a “Targeting Life Skills Model.” This model addresses the skills within the five competency areas that youth development traditionally addresses.

SKILLS FOR THIS ACTIVITY LESSON

4-H Focus	Competency Areas	Skill
Head	Thinking: using one’s mind to form ideas and make decisions; to imagine, to examine carefully in the mind, to consider	Problem solving Critical thinking
Head	Managing: using resources to accomplish a purpose	Planning/organizing
Heart	Relating: establishing a mutual or reciprocal connection between two people that is wholesome and meaningful to both	Cooperation Social Skills
Hands	Giving: providing, supplying, or causing to happen (social responsibility)	Leadership Contribution to group
Hands	Working: accomplishing something or earning pay to support oneself through physical or mental effort	Teamwork

BIG IDEAS

WHY ARE LEADERSHIP GAMES IMPORTANT?

- Groups exist for people to be in relationship with one another. Groups should work to create an environment where the members get along and respect each other. Interactive group methods provide the outlet to enable group members to explore the reasons they are doing their work and why it is important. Groups should be allowed to explore their purpose and role within the group on a regular basis. Leadership games should be integrated in to the afterschool setting as frequent as possible. They can be used as engaging starters or wrap-ups to group meetings. These games should have purpose, they should provide opportunities to take leadership roles, allows students to strategize and think critically, and give them ample opportunity to see the world from a teammates' perspective. Engaging students during out of school time is a grand way to foster leadership, problem solving, and cooperation skills.
- Below, you will find a multitude of leadership games that should serve groups of differing sizes, all with the purpose of making your out of school time group stronger.

OBJECTIVES

- Building relationships
- Bringing a group to life
- Increasing the group's understanding and investment
- Building strong agreement amongst group members
- Surfacing and resolving dysfunctional group dynamics
- Overall objective: to have FUN

LEADERSHIP GAMES

CUPS AND DOWNS

- **Need:** 20 or more cups
- **How to:**
 - Place cups in the middle of the room, half upside down and the other half right side up
 - Divide youth into two teams, one of them is "up" and the other is "down"
 - The "up" team has to turn the upside down cups UP and the "down" team has to turn the right side up cups DOWN
 - Give the group 1 minute (can extend or shorten the time if needed)
 - After allotted time is finished, count the cups to see which team wins

MAGIC CARPET

- **Need:** tarp or rug that allows all of the youth to stand on it, a king size sheet works well!
- **How to:**
 - Start with every youth standing on the tarp or rug
 - Tell the group that they must now work as a group to flip the tarp/rug over without having anyone step off
 - If a group member falls off the carpet, the team must start over

MAKE A SHAPE

- **Need:** large rope/string
- **How to:**
 - Have the youth stand in a large circle, each holding on to the rope/string with both hands
 - Ask the group to make a shape with the rope/string (star, diamond, heart, etc.)
 - The group is NOT allowed to speak or use hand gestures during this exercise

THE HUMAN KNOT DIRECTOR

- **Need:** noting
- **How to:**
 - Select someone or ask for a volunteer to be the Director
 - Ask the director to leave the room
 - Have the rest of the group form a human knot (put left hand in the circle, hold hands with someone not directly next to you, put right hand in and hold hand with someone new and not directly next to you)
 - Call director back in the room
 - The director tries to undo the knot by giving the members of the group directions – the group members are NOT allowed to talk or untangle themselves

THE {BLIND} HUMAN KNOT, SIGHTED LEADER

- **Need:** nothing
- **How to:**
 - Follow instructions (from Human Knot Director) to form a knot, then ask each group member to close their eyes – and KEEP them closed
 - Select one person (by calling their name or tapping them on the shoulder) to open their eyes and begin to untangle the knot; this person can speak to the group but the group cannot speak to them, must follow their directions
 - After 30 seconds (can be shorter or longer time) that leader closes their eyes and a new leader is chosen, they begin trying to untangle the knot
 - At any given time, only ONE person is allowed to have their eyes open
 - Continue selecting different leaders until the knot is untangled

CONNECT & EXTEND

Below are some questions that are good for debriefing after one of the leadership games, feel free to use all of them, pick and choose the ones that fit the leadership game played or adapt them for use with your group:

- Share something that you liked or disliked about the experience.
- How did this activity make you feel?
 - How did it make you feel about the others in your group?
- What problems occurred during this activity?
- What did you learn about yourself during this activity?
- What other life situations could you compare the activity to?
- What did you do when you didn't agree with the group?
- How would you teach this activity to others?

- If you were to play this game again, what would you change about it?
- Describe a time when you might need the skills you learned or used today.

EXTENSION

- If you have the time or resources, you can take this a step further and offer the youth the opportunity to teach the activity (or one similar) to get the feel of how they could apply it to their lives.

REFERENCES

Norman, M. and Jordan, J. (2016). Targeting life skills in 4-H. University of Florida IFAS Extension. Retrieved on July 9, 2018, from [https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/101.9 Targeting Life Skills.pdf](https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/101.9_Targeting_Life_Skills.pdf)

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