Minefield

Navigate the minefield to retrieve as many of the items on the other side as possible

SUMMARY
Retrieve as many objects from the other side of the minefield as you can without touching any obstacles. This activity gives participants practice in how to coach and be coached.

SET UP
• This activity can get loud, so find somewhere to play where the group won’t disturb others.
• Using 70 feet of rope, create a rectangular boundary.
• Spread out 25-50 obstacles inside the boundary in such a way that there are no straight pathways through the minefield.
• Place 25-50 objects at one end of the rectangle for participants to retrieve. Designate the opposite side of the playing field as the starting line.
  
  **Facilitator Note:** To avoid confusion, the objects that participants are retrieving should be different than the objects that are used as obstacles.

INSTRUCTIONS
• Have participants start at the designated starting line.
• Explain that they will work in pairs to retrieve all of the objects from the far end of the minefield and bring them back to the starting line.
• Ask each participant to find a partner, or assign partners strategically.
• Explain the following rules:
  • When one partner is inside the minefield, the other must remain on the outside, though may travel anywhere outside the minefield to assist their partner.
  • Participants traveling through the minefield must be blindfolded.
  • The partner who is not blindfolded may not touch the partner who is blindfolded.
  • If anyone touches an obstacle inside the minefield or the rope perimeter, they must return to the starting area and switch roles with their partner. If they were carrying an object they must return it to the far end of the minefield.
  • Participants can only carry one object at a time. They cannot throw the objects or hand them to other participants.
  • Participants may not alter the playing area (boundary or obstacles) in any way.
  • The playing area may be changed or altered by the facilitator.
  • Violation of any rule may result in a penalty.
INSTRUCTIONS (continued)

- Tell participants to begin. Watch for any violations of the rules and add penalties when appropriate. Penalties can include moving objects or obstacles, limiting participants’ abilities, or anything that will make the activity more challenging.
  - Safety: Although participants will have a partner looking out for them, the facilitator should also keep an eye on the blindfolded participants to ensure they are safe from bumping into objects or other participants.

VARIATIONS

- Have the group write down personal or team goals on index cards and use them as the objects the group retrieves from the other end of the minefield. This variation can be used to start a conversation about how participants can work together to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.
  - Low Risk: To facilitate a lower risk version of this activity, have participants close their eyes instead of actually wearing blindfolds.
  - Large Group: To facilitate this activity for a large group, create a larger playing field and use more objects and obstacles.
  - Online: To facilitate this activity virtually, create a shared document with lines to represent the boundary and shapes to represent the obstacles. Add an object to represent each participant and place those objects in the designated starting area. In pairs, have one participant select the object that represents them and close their eyes. Then, have them move their object using the arrow keys while their partner gives them verbal directions. If they touch an obstacle, they must move their object back to the starting area and try again. Once they make it across to the other end, they will switch roles with their partner and help them navigate their object through the minefield. In this version, there are no objects to retrieve, participants just have to navigate to the end of the minefield.
  
[click here for video]

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
  - What was challenging about this activity?
  - What strategies helped you to be successful with this activity?

- So What:
  - Why is it important to listen to others when working collaboratively?
  - What can you do to help someone navigate a challenging situation?

- Now What:
  - What are some real challenges the obstacles in this activity could metaphorically represent?
  - How can you determine when it’s time to provide guidance to your group and when it’s time to follow someone else’s lead?

Facilitator Note: These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group’s experience and add or change questions as needed.