

ACTIVITY 1.3

TEAMBUILDING: “The Mine Field”

Mine Field is a popular, engaging game involving communication and trust. It is a hands-on activity from which prospective and new cadets can gain leadership insights as they get to know one another. The activity is included during the prospective cadets’ first CAP meeting so that they are actively engaged right away in something that is fun and challenging.

Suggested Instructor

A cadet officer or NCO should lead the activity

Duration

30 min

Goal

This activity is primarily intended as an icebreaker

Equipment Needed

“Mines” such as chairs, hats, pylons, or something similar
Blindfolds (ie: bandanas or something similar)

LESSON OUTLINE

PART 1: INTRODUCTIONS

10 min

Pair a prospective or new cadet with a cadet who has been in CAP for more than a couple months.

Have the cadets interview one another. Suggested interview questions include:

- Name
- Age
- School
- What do you like about CAP? / Why are you interested in CAP?
- What’s unusual about you? Any special talents? Ever meet anyone famous?

Have the experienced cadets briefly introduce the newcomers, and vice versa, based on what they learned during the interview. (*The interview process is important because it allows a new person to immediately meet an established cadet – if new people were simply to introduce themselves, they would not have the benefit of getting to know another cadet.*)

PART 2: INTRODUCTION & SET-UP

Goal. The goal of the game is to traverse, with eyes closed or blindfolded, a designated area full of obstacles without touching any obstacle or any person.

Select a "playing field." Go outside, if possible. But can be done inside, even in rooms with fixed furniture (which can become objects to be avoided).

Distribute "mines" e.g., balls or other objects such as bowling pins, cones, foam noodles, chairs, hats, etc. - almost anything will work.

PART 3: GAME PLAY

Participants can begin by trying to cross the field by themselves. In a second round, participants can then ask someone else to help them traverse the field by "talking" them through the field.

One person is blind-folded (or keeps eyes closed) and (optional) cannot talk. The other person can see and talk, but cannot enter the field or touch the person.

The challenge is for each blind-folded person to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the mines, by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners.

Be wary of blindfolded people bumping into each other. The instructor(s) can float around the playing area to help prevent collisions.

Decide on the penalty for hitting a mine. It could be a restart (serious consequence) or time penalty or simply a count of hits, but without penalty.

Allow participants a short period (e.g., 2 minutes) of planning time to decide on their communication commands. It can help participants if you suggest that they each develop a unique communication system. When participants swap roles, give participants some review and planning time to refine their communication method.

Allow participants to swap over and even have several attempts, until a real, satisfied sense of skill and competence in being able to guide a partner through a minefield develops.

The activity can be conducted one pair at a time, or with all pairs at once (creates a more demanding exercise due to the extra noise / confusion).

The game can be played competitively - e.g., which pair is the quickest or has the fewest hits?

The facilitator plays an important role in creating an optimal level of challenge, e.g., consider introducing more items or removing items if it seems too easy or too hard. Also consider coaching participants with communication methods (e.g., for younger students, hint that they could benefit from coming up with clear commands for stop, forward, left, right, etc.).

Variations

Minefield in a Circle: Blindfolded people start on the outside of a large rope circle, go into middle, get an item ("treasure", e.g., a small ball or bean bag), then return to the outside; continue to see who can get the most objects within a time period.

Debriefing

Time permitting, discuss the leadership aspects of this activity with the new cadets. Suggested discussion questions are shown below.

- How much did you trust your partner (on a scale of 1 to 10) at the start?
- How much did you trust your partner at the end?
- What is the difference between going alone and being guided by another?
- What ingredients are needed when trusting and working with someone else?
- What did your partner do to help you feel safe and secure?
- What could your partner have done to help make you feel more safe/secure?
- What communication strategies worked best?

FINAL THOUGHT

Civil Air Patrol is a team. Whether we are flying, marching on the drill field, navigating around "mines," or whatever else we might be doing, we work together as a team.