

THE SEVEN CHALLENGES® ACTIVITY BOOK



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with activities contributed by

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Trust / Safety / Ice-Breakers

This activity gets youth moving and helps them think about what they like in life – what they do for fun and pleasure. It also provides a more relaxed way to ask some personal questions.



Are You More Like...?

By Robert Schwebel

MATERIALS / PREPARATION

Masking tape

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADING THIS ACTIVITY

1. Introduction. “One of the reasons people use drugs is to have fun. So today we have an activity which is kind of a get acquainted activity, but also an opportunity to think about what sorts of things you like to do for fun in your leisure time. The activity is called ‘Are You More Like...?’ and you get to choose. For example, are you more like ‘a quiet evening at home’ or ‘a large party?’ You’ll see how it goes in a minute.”

2. Reading. From *The Seven Challenges*, p. 24, “Fun and Boredom.”

3. Rate yourself. “Rate yourself from one to ten on boredom: You’re a ten if you are bored a lot; and a one if you are hardly ever bored.” (After youth pick a number, have them talk about themselves a little bit in terms of when they get bored or why they are not bored more.)

- Do you tend to use drugs when you are bored – or did you in the past?
- Do drugs work in taking away your boredom?

4. Instructions. “Now we need to clear out the middle of the room so we can do this activity.”

(Counselor and group members move tables, chairs, desks, etc., – or else do this ahead of time).

“Now I’m going to make a straight line down the middle of the room with masking tape.”

(Counselor runs a line of tape down the middle of the cleared-out space.)

“I would like to ask all of you to please stand on the line of tape in the middle. This line is the fence between the two sides. Then I will ask, ‘Are you more like which of two things, and you will go to one side or the other of the line, depending on what you select. For example, the first one is:

‘Are you more like ‘A quiet evening with a friend or two’ or more like ‘a big party?’ If you are more like ‘a quiet evening with a friend or two,’ I will tell you to go to one side and if you are more like ‘a big party,’ you would go to the other side.”

“OK. Everyone please get in the middle and stand on the tape line.”

■ Trust / Safety / Ice-Breakers

“You are sitting on the fence right now. Ready? OK, if you are more like a quiet evening with a friend or two, go to this side (point toward one side). If you are more like “A big party” please go to this side (point to other side).

“Understand?” (Pause)” OK, go ahead. Remember, more like a quiet evening with a friend or two, go here.” (Point) “More like a big party, go here.” (Point)

“Notice who is with your group, and see who has similar interests. Now I’ll throw a ball (or a small stuffed animal) to one of you at a time, and when you catch it, I’ll ask some questions. Ready?”

(Leader tosses the ball to one youth.)

- Why did you put yourself on this side?
- How does it feel to be on this side (have a quiet evening with a friend or two)?
- Would you sometimes like to be on the other side?

(or)

- Do you ever want to be on the other side?
- How does it feel to be on the other side?

“Thank you.” Now the leader tosses the ball to someone on the other side of the fence and asks questions. This can be repeated as much as the counselor would like to pursue it, and as time allows.

Let clients know that they can switch sides after their initial selection. If they do switch sides, ask them why.

5. Choices. Here are some more combinations that can be used in this activity:

- Friends or family
- Dress shoes or tennis shoes
- Bicycle or motorcycle
- Marijuana or coke
- Volleyball or ping pong
- State park or resort area
- A dressy outfit or blue jeans
- Diet cola or a milk shake
- Daredevil excitement or safe excitement
- Go to the mall or go to the park
- Telephone or texting
- Cartoon or a soap opera
- Big group of friends or small group of friends
- BMW or VW
- Music event or sports event
- Birthday party or drug party
- Hyper or relaxed
- A risky thrill or something safe, but sure fire fun
- Running or walking
- Butterfly or eagle
- Outdoor fun or indoor fun
- Fall or spring
- Planned or spontaneous
- Hang out alone or be with friends

Counselors can allow youth to name combinations they would like to try.

6. Discussion: Questions / Issues

Do you see any patterns in your choices?

- Any types of things you generally like to do and ones you don't like to do?
- What did your family do for fun when you were young?
- How about now?
- When you were young, if you were bored and went to a parent and said, "I'm bored," how would he or she respond?

(Plan fun for me; Say, "leave me alone;" Tell me to watch TV; Buy me something; Help think about possible activities and choose one, etc. In this activity, help youth think about whether they got help in learning to plan their own recreation; whether their parents entertained them or made all the choices for them; whether parents promoted passive activities, such as TV and video games, or active ones, such as sports. Help youth think about whether recreation was valued in the family.)

"Describe yourself in terms of your idea of fun, recreation, and choosing what you like to do, such as: 'I am a _____ sort of person when it comes to fun, recreation and choosing what I like to do.' "

"Here's an example: I would say that I like playing sports and doing things with friends, but I also like a lot of time alone. I don't go for big parties, but I like hanging out with friends. I like active things to do in the outdoors."

"Can you see how this activity relates to your own drug use?"

NOTES

Seven Challenges connections

First, this is a team-building, getting acquainted sort of activity, related to Challenge One, and building trust.

This activity also deals with fun and recreation – clients' ideas about what is fun, exciting, and appealing to them. Many people use drugs because they are bored or not having as much enjoyment of life as they would like. To counteract boredom, they drink or do drugs. So, this is Challenge Two.

Youth with serious drug problems often find that their idea of fun or a good time began to constrict as they started to focus largely on drug use. This activity might enable youth to recognize the connection and comment about it.

Challenge Four includes consideration of the opportunities youth were given to learn how to create their own fun when they were young, and opportunities for recreation they were denied. Some of the discussion and questions about fun and recreation with family will open up these issues. Also, some youth may have begun to enjoy doing things that are exciting (such as stealing), but are harmful to others.

■ Trust / Safety / Ice-Breakers

Challenge Five is devoted to thinking about the future. Daredevil excitement could lead to injury or, if it involves criminal behavior, incarceration. Also, learning to have fun in safe, legal ways can help a young person stay clear of drugs and other high risk behavior. Thrill seekers can think of safer thrills.

In Challenge Six, youth begin to think about making changes in their lives. If they are going to quit using drugs, then they will probably have to find new ways of having fun, or return to ways they used to have fun before they began their drug use. So they need to review – and perhaps develop and expand – their recreational repertoire.

In Challenge Seven, youth who are overcoming drug problems need to make sure that they have ways to get the joy and excitement they want in life. Sometimes fun is spontaneous. However, often recreational activities need to be planned ahead of time. Youth will want to avoid boredom which could prompt a lapse or relapse.

Modification: On other occasions this activity can be modified from a “get-acquainted” emphasis to a more personal and probing experience by asking more personal questions, such as the following:

- Hold in feelings or let feelings out
- Hold in anger or let anger out
- Relaxed or nervous
- Argue and fight or let issue go
- Unhappy or happy

Another modification could be asking about drug choices: Marijuana or cocaine; alcohol or street drugs; stimulants or depressants.

(Special thanks to Chris Dunn, an expressive therapist, who told me about this very creative activity.)

The purpose of this exercise is to help group members “open up” and get to know each other. This is a good Challenge One activity.



Free Association

By John T. Beazoglou

MATERIALS / PREPARATION

None

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADING THIS ACTIVITY

- 1. Reading.** From *The Seven Challenges*, p. 10, “Opening Up.”
- 2. Introduction.** Begin with a discussion about the definition of free association. (Saying whatever comes to mind, no matter how embarrassing or irrelevant it may seem to be.)
- 3. Instructions.** Following the introduction and definition of free association, inform the group of the rules of the exercise.
 - The activity starts with the counselor saying a word.
 - The person to his left lets fly with the absolute first thing that comes to mind after hearing the previous word. There should be no pause to “find something funny” or to edit thoughts.
 - Then the next person to the left continues the process.
- 4. Caution.** This is not meant as a psychoanalytical activity, but an activity to have the youth start feeling free, to bring down barriers, and to “open up.” Don’t try to analyze what they are saying (although group members may question each other about their choice of words).

5. Suggested words to start the activity:

Honesty	Love	Hate	Family
Marijuana	Alcohol	Violence	Trust

6. Discussion: Questions / Issues

- Did anyone have difficulty with this activity?
- What happens when you are honest and open with your thoughts in this group?
- What would happen if you were open and honest at home?
- How does this activity relate to Challenge One? (Feeling safe enough to say what you really think and feel)

This activity is designed to increase awareness of the concepts of safety and trust. It involves a little art therapy, discussion, and some safe interaction. It is very much a Challenge One activity, though other challenges may enter the discussion.

Safety and Trust

By Robert Schwebel



MATERIALS / PREPARATION

Butcher paper, tape, markers, and a dry erase board.

Preparation: Tape one sheet per youth of butcher paper or construction paper to the wall.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADING THIS ACTIVITY

1. Reading. From *The Seven Challenges*, p. 11, “Trust.”

2. Introduction. Question/Discussion: What does safety mean to you? Protection from threats or harm. Secure, familiar and predictable environment)

Question/Discussion: What does trust mean to you? (Assumption about the reliability of a person, or people or groups; the degree to which we can depend on others to do what they say they will do. Not so much honesty, as predictability. Youth may confuse trust with confidentiality, which is a special type of trust.)

3. Instructions: Draw a picture. Give youth markers and tell them to go to a piece of butcher paper taped to the wall and draw a picture of a real or imagined safe place for themselves – a place where they would feel completely safe. (If they have trouble drawing, they can write a description.)

Talk about safe places. After youth have drawn, ask one to volunteer to describe and talk about his or her safe place and what makes it safe. Ask for others to talk about their safe places – does not have to be everyone, though the more the better.

Ask a volunteer to write notes on the board as the others speak about what makes a place safe.

Someone you trust. Question/Discussion: “Can someone tell us about someone you trust?”

After the name is listed, “Why do you trust this person? What is it about him (or her)?”

(Ask youth at the board to write the characteristics of the people that group members trust.)

Earning trust. Questions/Discussion: How is trust earned?

What does it mean to be trustworthy?

(Have youth write statements on dry erase board.)

Breaking trust. List ways that trust can be broken.

(Have youth write statements on the board.)

Your trust violated? (Optional Question/Discussion) How have people violated your trust?

Increasing trust. Discussion: Challenge One is about “opening up” and being honest. Why do you need to have trust in order to open up?

Ask the group: What do you personally need in order to open up and reveal things about yourself that the group may not know.

(Have youth write statements on board.)

What could we do in this group to increase the trust level?

(Have youth write statements on board.)

Challenge One. How would you put Challenge One in your own words?

Opening up in pairs. Get group in pairs. Ask them to open up a *little* to each other in the next couple of minutes – if they feel safe. “That is, tell a little about your life or about yourself that the other person probably does not know.” Emphasize the point that they should only tell as much as they feel safe telling. Have a group discussion of how it felt – and whether they could open up or not.

NOTES

Though designed to gently promote openness in a group, this activity can touch a nerve when youth talk about times when trust has been violated. It can bring up serious Challenge Four issues, such as abuse and abandonment.

In general, youth will open up with this activity, and that, too, can be emotional.

Counselors should use discretion in deciding whether some questions are too probing for a particular group at a particular time. In general, but not always, youth will self-regulate and only go as far as they are prepared to go in pushing their limits of openness.