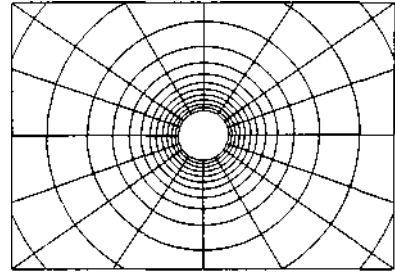


THE HUMAN SPIDER WEB

OBJECTIVES

- / To provide an opportunity for members to work as a team'
- / To explore the dimensions of teamwork



MATERIALS

Adequate space in which to work

PROCEDURE

- / Select (randomly) six to eight volunteers from the total group to participate in an exercise (for demonstration purposes). Have the group move to a location that allows them to stand in a small circle. Invite all other participants to position themselves where they can easily observe.
- / Instruct each member of the small group to extend his or her left hand across the circle and grasp the left hand of another member who is approximately opposite. Then have them extend their right hands across the circle and grasp the right hands of other individuals.
- / Inform them that their task is to unravel the spider web of interlocking arms *without letting go of anyone's hands*. They will also be timed (as a way to place pressure on them). The desired outcome is a circle of persons all holding the hands of the persons standing next to them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was your first thought when you heard the nature of the task? (Probably, "This will be impossible!")
2. What member behaviors contributed to the success of your group?
3. What member behaviors detracted (or could detract) from its success in achieving its goal?
4. What lessons does this exercise have for future team building among our members?

TIPS

- / Select only those wearing clothing that, when the wearers are bending or twisting to unravel themselves, either would not become soiled or would not result in personal embarrassment.
- / If you are nervous about the success of this task, start with a smaller group (e.g., five persons), since the "web" will be simpler in that context.
- / Some groups may be hesitant to start. If so, you might wish to provide one or two suggestions to initiate the action (e.g., "Tom, what if you were to step over the arms connecting Lionel and Raylene?")
- / Bring a camera to record the action. The group members may relish seeing photographic evidence of their "before" and "after" positions!

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME

- / You may wish to divide a larger set of members into several smaller groups of six to eight persons, each of which will be competing with other groups to see who finishes the task first. Then have them explore what helped (and hindered) each group in the performance of its task.
- / Alternatively, you might conduct the task, engage in a brief discussion to identify the important principles, and then ask the same group to repeat its task to see if they are now more capable of acting as a team.