



## Trust games

### Time

10-30 minutes

### Related tools

Arrange the Chairs

### Purpose

Trust is essential for effective groups. This is a selection of tried and tested group games to help build trust.

### Preparation

Use your judgement about which ones are suitable for a particular group. Thought and care are needed. Trust exercises are not usually suitable to start a workshop with participants who have never met before. *A group that is untrusting should not be asked to take part in these exercises.*

## Wind in the willows

Gather round in tight circles of about 8 to 10 or so. One person volunteers to go in the middle. The person closes their eyes and allows themselves to fall, keeping their body straight and bending only at the ankles, and the others catch and support them. (Supporters hold their hands up in front of them and stand with one leg slightly in front of the other with knees bent. This is the strongest possible position.) Initially the group should have their hands close to the middle so that the person need not feel they are falling far. As confidence grows, the people in the group can move away a little. Take turns and give everyone the opportunity to have a go. Take care that there are plenty of people able to hold someone up, especially if there is a heavier person in the middle. Ask each person for their reaction.

## Bumper cars

Get into pairs. One (the car) is blindfolded or closes their eyes - no peaking! The other (the driver) stands behind and, with their hands on the shoulders of their partner, "drives" their car around the room, avoiding the other cars and whatever obstacles there are in the room (including ones the facilitator might suddenly place in the way!) Reversing is allowed. Debrief and reverse roles.





### Trust Lift

Ask who would like to be lifted in the air by the group. It's amazing! The volunteer lays on the ground, and the group lifts them up above their heads and walks round the room with them.

Invite the volunteer to lie rigid on the ground, feet together and close their eyes. People each side lift the volunteer's shoulders, hips, middle, and knees, one person for the feet, and one very steady person for the head. Make sure the volunteer's head is relaxed and secure. Give a signal and lift all at once, keeping the body very level. Stop at waist level and rock gently; go to shoulder height and rock, turn the volunteer around (the whole group walks half-circle) and lower very slowly. Give as many people as possible a turn to be carried. Ask how the lifted person felt.

### Group SatNav

Ask for a volunteer to walk through a room of obstacles blindfolded. The idea is for the blindfolded person to walk from one end of the room to the other, successfully navigating the obstacles with the spoken guidance from the group.

Blindfold the volunteer and turn them round 3 times, whilst the group arranges chairs, tables, bags, etc all over the room as obstacles. The group will be their SatNav by calling out directions to guide them safely across the room to the other side.

### Debrief

How was that?

What happened for you?

How did you feel?

Each activity will draw out different experiences, but essentially what you are looking for is how safe people felt, how far they trusted the other, how much they wanted to be in control. You could light-heartedly ask how trusting a group they feel themselves to be.

These are good activities for participants to get a sense of themselves and each other in the group, and as diagnosis tools for you as facilitator about how trusting and bonded the group seems.

