



Arrange the chairs cooperation game

Time

20 minutes

Materials

Lots of small pieces of paper, marker pens

Purpose

A fun group challenge to learn about cooperation and solving a problem together.

Preparation

This activity assumes that the chairs in the room are easily able to be lifted and stacked. Take a look at the layout and features of the room. Write on separate pieces of paper four different instructions on how to arrange the chairs, one instruction for each piece of paper. For example:

- Stack all the chairs in front of the windows
- Arrange the chairs in rows facing the flipchart
- Stack the chairs in fours against the far wall
- Arrange the chairs in a circle.

In a group of 20, there will be 5 people with the same instruction and 4 groups of 5 with different instructions. Make sure the pieces of paper are folded.

Description

Announce to the group that we're going to play a game. Don't tell them the name of the game, or its purpose! Say that you have a folded slip of paper for each person that you will hand out. Ask people to read it silently, fold it back and make sure no one else sees what is written on it. Check that everyone has understood, then give out the slips of paper. When everyone is ready, invite them to do what it says on their paper.





The result will be chaos! Some will realise that others are trying to do the same thing as them and others are undoing it. Let it run for a while to see if there is any attempt at resolving the problem. Observe closely so you can feed back what you have seen.

When you feel it is the right time, call a halt and bring the group back together.

Debrief

Ask the participants:

- How was that? How do you feel?
- What happened there?
- What could you have done differently?
- Why do you think we asked you to do this activity?

Tip: don't skip the debrief!

The value of all exercises is in the debrief. Try to draw out emotions and what caused them. Reflect back things that show what participants learned about competition and co-operation.

