



VI. TEAM WORK

Working in a team can be something especially difficult for people with mental illness as social skills use to be an issue for most of them. Patience, empathy and trust are some of the needed abilities that you must have when working with other people for a common goal. But the benefits of working in a team go beyond the execution of the task itself, you learn from other people and even from yourself. Chic and Craft peer mentors must be used to work in a team and also to facilitate the teambuilding, thus creating a warm working environment.

VI.1. SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

Abilities reinforced: Teamwork.

Materials: A well-known picture or cartoon of your choice cut in pieces in order to form pieces of puzzle (and another copy entire), sheets of paper, scissors, pencils and crayons.

Description: Give a piece of the “puzzle” to each participant and instruct them to draw an exact copy of their piece of the puzzle on paper which is five times bigger than its original size. They are posed with the problem of not knowing why or how their own work affects the larger picture. When all the participants have completed their enlargements, take out the original picture (in one piece) and ask them to assemble their pieces into a giant copy of the original.

Suggestions: Finalize this problem solving activity with a debate on good teamwork practices and on the meaning of a divided ‘departmental’ work where each person, though working on their own tasks, contributes to an overall group result.





VI.2. CAREFUL COUNTING

Abilities reinforced: Teamwork, listening, concentration.

Description: Participants in turn have to count sequentially from 1 to 10 and back down to 1. Anybody can say any number but if a number is said by more than one person, they have to start from the beginning.

Suggestions: The activity can be used as a warm up to focus minds, or as a cool down to end a session.





VI.3. OUR PERFECT TEAM MEMBER

Abilities reinforced: Discover attributes of a team, strengthen teamwork.

Materials: Flipchart/white board, coloured markers, sheets of paper, pens.

Description: Divide the members of the Chic&Craft team into 2 groups and instruct them to share with their group their individual strengths and the positive attributes they feel would contribute to the success of their group. They are to write these strengths and attributes down on a piece of paper. After their group's discussion, each team will be given one large sheet of paper, writing paper, markers and a pen. Instruct the groups to make the "ultimate team member" by combining each team member's strengths and positive attributes into one imaginary person. This "person" should also receive a name, have a picture drawn of it, and have their different attributes labelled. The group should also write a story about this person, highlighting all of the things their imaginary person can do with all of their amazing characteristics. At the end of the exercise, each group should share their person with the rest of groups- if there is just one group it could be shared just with the facilitator- and read the accompanying story. To finalize the exercise initiate a debate asking the participants if they feel any better prepared now to work as a team.

Suggestions: This exercise is highly recommended, as it gets the most creative side of the participants. It is a way to make them think about the values they appreciate in other people and thus become aware that they have to work hard to have those features. It will surprise you!



VI.4. SCAVERGER HUNT

Abilities reinforced: Teamwork, problem solving, creativity.

Materials: List of items to find printed.

Description: Divide your team into equal sized groups and send them out with a list of items to locate and bring back. Whether they remain in the building or are to leave the building is up to you. The ultimate goal is to get back first- in case there is more than one team- with the most items from the list. You may want to set a time limit so that all groups are back in a reasonable time, whether they found all items or not. A scavenger hunt can be thematic and might involve a variety of clues or other twists that force a team to get creative and work together.

A possible list of items to find could include: a button, a receipt, something older than you, something homemade, business card, clover, etc.

Suggestions: Instead of finding objects you could give the team a set of tasks to accomplish together.





VI.5. LEAN ON ME

Abilities reinforced: Trust, teamwork.

Description: Ask group members to stand facing each other in pairs. Their elbows should be bent, with their palms facing toward each other. Instruct them to join their palms together, and gradually start leaning toward each other, so that they eventually hold each other up. Then, instruct everyone to move their feet further and further back, so that they have to depend solely upon their partners to remain standing. Once the exercise is finished invite the group to debate on the difficulties of the exercise and its reasons- how it is scary to trust someone with your body's stability in fear of falling.

Suggestions: Leaning on another person with one's body will surely result difficult for most people at the beginning. That's why it is recommendable that you repeat this exercise in several sessions allowing the participants to build the trust gradually.





If the physical condition of the participants makes it difficult to implement this exercise, you can also try these options:

1) The participants have to stand facing each other in pairs. Then, they have to look into other's eyes slowly while one participant goes to the other. The participant should continue moving forward until they feel uncomfortable.

2) The participants have to stand facing each other in pairs. Their elbows should be bent, with their palms facing toward each other. Then, looking in partner's eyes and not talking begin to move hands. Later on, talk about who took the lead? Who just followed? Was it comfortable for both? Did the leading changed?





VI.6. KEEP IT UP!

Abilities reinforced: Team working, strategy thinking.

Description: The group's task is to keep a beach ball or balloon in the air for a specified number of hits without letting it hit the ground. Additionally, no one can touch the object twice in a row.

Set a goal with the group for the number of hits that the group can make following the rules. After your group meets its goal, it can increase the target number or go for a "world record" and see how many hits the group can accomplish.

This fun activity is much harder than it seems! If the group is struggling, give them an opportunity to review their strategy and create a plan for the next attempt.

Bear always in mind the health condition of the people you are working with, this exercise can be very demanding and the participants can get tired easily.



VI.7. FRIENDSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

Abilities reinforced: Leadership, team working and communication.

Description: Here the participants are asked to review the benefits and difficulties presented by friendship within a working environment. Questions such as: *Who thinks friendship is important in the workplace? And why? Who thinks friendship could pose a difficulty in a working environment, and why?* and general questions about friendship such as: *Who believes friendship requires invested effort? And what are the benefits of that? Who thinks friendship should not require effort? And why?* and also: *“What are signs of a good friendship? What are signs of a bad friendship?”* And discuss this in relation to the training.

This discussion will highlight possible fears or doubts the mentors have about working with friends, and also define the parameters to be put in place to ensure a positive working environment for all. It will set a foundation for productive team work and leadership styles, encourage awareness of communication styles and personal boundaries.





VI.8. THINGS IN COMMON

Abilities reinforced: Team working, empathy.

Description: Ask your group to find at least 10 things they have in common. These things cannot be related to the garments, their illness or their anatomy. The idea is that they know better the people they are working with, in a deeper way: what are their aims, likes, dislikes, etc.

Suggestions: It is a very simple dynamic but really useful to create strong bounds between the Chic & Craft mentors.

Implement this exercise once the members of the group know each other very well, by the end of the training course.

