

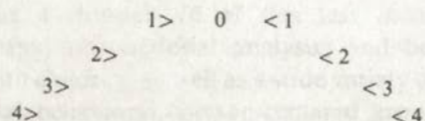
BRIEF REPORTS

TRAFFIC JAM

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Here is a good game to play with teenagers or adults during the initial phases of a group when you want the members to work together on a common task or when you are interested in leadership styles among group members. To set this initiative up, you will need an even number of group members (at least four on each side works best, seven per side is about maximum). On the floor or ground, mark off one more space than you have members in your group. Chalk, masking tape, sheets of paper, or anything which allows you to set up one foot squares works well. The squares should be placed an easy step apart. Arrange the squares in a semi-circle to allow for ease in communication among group members.

Divide the group in halves, arranging one group to the left of the middle square and the other to the right. Both groups should face the middle square.



The object of this initiative is for members on the left and right to trade places using the following moves:

1. A member may move into an empty space in front of him.
2. A member may move around another member who is on the opposite side.

Thus, in a situation where a right side member is facing a left side member with an empty space between (1> 0 <2), either member 1 or

member 2 can move into the empty space. In a situation where a right member faces a left member with an empty space behind them (1> <2 0 3>), member 1 may move around member 2 into the empty space. If the situation presents itself where two right side members are facing the same direction (1> 2> 0 <3), then member 1 could not move around member 2, but, either member 2 or 3 could move into the empty space. Other illegal moves are any move backwards, or any move involving two members moving at the same time.

This can be a difficult problem for many groups. To ensure effective group interaction, it is necessary for the group leader to set up the problem, inform the members of the object of the game and the legal and illegal moves, and then step back and observe. When the group reaches an impasse (and they will) or makes an illegal move, I usually have them begin again. As a group leader you might want to work this out on paper before attempting to introduce it to your group.

Once a solution is reached, you can ask one member to volunteer to serve as a director of the traffic jam and attempt to instruct the other members where to move. To add some excitement, have all members hold their breath as the leader directs them through the proper moves. If any member breathes before the last move is complete, the entire group usually explodes in laughter.

Traffic jam provides an excellent initiative for observing the emergence of leadership in a group. With several strong leaders, the interplay of leadership styles and willingness to cooperate with one another can provide fuel for the group process following the activity. This is an excellent game for class demonstrations of group cooperation and leadership styles or when you are doing a workshop with administrators. You have never seen such traffic jams as can happen with a group of administrators!

REFERENCE

- Rohnke, K. *Cowstails and cobras: A guide to ropes courses, initiative games, and other adventure activities*. Hamilton, Massachusetts: Project Adventure, 1977.