

Cross the Swamp

Activities to Get Groups Moving

ICEBREAKERS AND TEAM BUILDERS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

- To create a simulation of achieving a common goal
- To learn ways to support one another as a team

MATERIALS


- Three four-by-four-foot wooden boards
- Large room or flat surface
- Two blindfolds
- A three-foot-long rope
- Blue painter's tape

SETUP

- Using the painter's tape, create two lines across the room from each other that represent the banks of the swamp. The lines should be twenty feet apart.
- Designate an area on the sidelines to be the hospital by marking a box with painter's tape.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have all participants **go to one side of the room** behind the "starting line" of the swamp bank.
2. Let participants know that, as a group, they have **fifteen to twenty minutes** to get from one end of the swamp to the other. **The swamp is filled with poisonous snakes, crocodiles, alligators, and all kinds of bugs!**
3. The group must **figure out how to get all their team members across** the swamp **using only three four-by-four-foot wooden boards**.
4. The trick is the **boards MUST be on a ninety-degree angle** at all times and when placed into the swamp they **MUST** always be **touching**.
5. Explain to participants that **three of their group members underwent an unfortunate**

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Cross the Swamp continued

accident, and have some constraints.

Select people—**tie a blindfold** over one person's eyes, **bind the hands** of a second person using a second blindfold and loosely **tie the ankles** together with rope of a third person.

6. Once the activity starts, **if anyone falls off** the planks into the swamp, they will be sent to the hospital—the designated area on the sidelines.
7. The group can **choose to get the injured participant out of the hospital** (by crossing the swamp with the boards and picking them up) then resuming their goal to get to the finish line. **Or they can continue** on to reach their initial goal without them.
8. To create a sense of urgency, continue reminding the group that **time is running out**.

DEBRIEF

- **What did you learn about yourself while doing this activity?**
- **What worked well when doing this activity?**
- **What was challenging?**
- **How does this activity represent the work we do?**
- **What did the goal represent for you or the team?**
- **What was more important: getting to the goal or making sure all team members were on board for the journey?**
- **How did you decide to proceed when your team member fell off?**
- **What is something you would do differently if could do it again?**