

Tricky Rope

Activities for Collaborative Thinking

ICEBREAKERS AND TEAM BUILDERS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

- Practice problem-solving skills through cooperation
- Develop out-of-the-box thinking
- Analyze team dynamics including leading and following, cohesion, communication, and managing conflict

MATERIALS

- Rope

SETUP

- You will need a large space with room to turn a rope without interference.
- Choose one of the codes from the options below.
 - **CODE ONE:** The rope turns once, one person runs through. The rope turns twice, two people run through. The rope turns three times, three people run through. Start back at one.
 - **CODE TWO:** Each person says the name of the person who will follow them right before they run under the rope.
 - **CODE THREE:** Make up your own.
- Identify a volunteer to help turn the rope with you and teach them the code.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring your group members together **on one side of the rope** as if they were getting ready to “jump in.”
2. **Explain** that **in this challenge, the whole group is stuck on one side of a magical drawbridge and must work together to cross from one side of the room to the other side.**
The drawbridge is operated by two tricky trolls whose secret code people must know and use in order to cross.
3. As you explain this, **begin turning the rope** to build anticipation.
4. **Announce** to the group, **“I have a tricky rope. Anyone who wants to cross must unlock the secret to the turning of this rope. Only then can they cross to the other side. Each time you make a correct move, the rope will continue to turn. When you make a wrong move, the rope will drop [drop the rope to demonstrate].”** If the rope drops, anyone who **has already crossed must return** to the starting side and begin again.

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Tricky Rope continued

5. If participants ask questions, simply **repeat** the instructions.
6. Let the group know that at this point, **the activity has begun.** Explain that **you will stop turning the rope every time the group doesn't follow the code.**

For example, if you are using CODE ONE, turn the rope once and then drop it. Turn the rope once again and then drop it. Eventually the group will try to send one person through the rope after one turn. When this happens, allow the rope to turn twice, then drop it, and send the first person back to the starting line. This will send them the message that they have found one part of the code.

7. You should **provide no hints** for the first **fifteen minutes**, even allowing the group to fatigue. The facilitator may choose to give **hints at the twenty-minute mark** through facial cues, nods, and even silencing certain members for to encourage new ideas from others.
8. When the group completes the task, invite them to **celebrate.**

DEBRIEF

- How did your team do with solving this challenge?
- What was your strategy to contribute to the team's success?
- How did your team define success? Completing the challenge? Beating the clock? Effectiveness of communication? Participation from all?
- What did you observe during the activity that indicates the strength of your team? (For example, trust, mutual regard, values are evident, communication, etc.)
- How did members' approaches to problem solving and communication show up in this activity?
- If you were to play this game again, how would you define success?
- What skills would you want to work on through the activity?