

10 games to help build trust

Perfect Square

Have your team members stand in a circle while holding a rope. Blindfold them and tell them to drop the rope. Next, tell them to take a few steps away from where they were standing. Now, have them return to the rope and try to work together to lay it out in a perfect square.

Leading the blind

People work in pairs. One person is blindfolded, the other can see and is the guide. The person who can see stands behind the blindfolded person and puts their hands on the blindfolded person's shoulders. They slowly start to walk. By squeezing softly in the right or left shoulder, the person who walks behind can steer the blindfolded person and thus walk him/her around the room. Watch out: people shouldn't bump into each other or into objects! The person steering has to make sure the blindfolded person can move around safely.

Night Trail

Create an obstacle course. Put chairs, tables or other things all around when inside. Blindfold your team members and let them get into a line. Give them a rope and tell them to all hold on to it. Have the team try to navigate the obstacle course. They're allowed to talk — so leadership can be displayed and trust be developed.

Snakes

Have your team members form groups of about seven people and stand in a line in a relatively open room. Place objects around the room that can be easily picked up. The first six people in the line are blindfolded, but the last person can see. The sighted person will then direct the "snake" where to go to pick up the object by tapping the person in front of them on the shoulder, who will tap the person in front of them on the same shoulder, and so on. Once they've secured the object, the person in the front moves to the back and becomes the sighted person.

Willow in the wind

One person in the team is selected to be 'the willow' and stands in an upright and rigid position in the center of a very small circle. On your instruction, the person in the centre of the circle (the willow) is gently passed around the circle in any direction by the spotters. The willow must keep their feet absolutely still at all times and put their trust in the rest of the team.

Rushing through the corridor

Put people in two lines, facing each other. Let them stretch out their hands, fingertips should touch the person's fingertips in the opposite line. Now have participants run through the

corridor you have created: people quickly pull their arms away when the participant running approaches.

Sit in a circle

Stand in a circle, as close to each other as possible, bellies to backs. The participants must really 'stick' to each other. Your inner foot against the heel of the previous person. On a sign from the game supervisor, everyone sits down at the same time, so that the participants are sitting on the lap of the person behind them. Watch out: if someone falls or steps out of the circle, everyone has to follow to avoid accidents.

Eye contact

People work in pairs. Have them stand opposite each other, at arm's length. They have to look into each other's eyes for some time (e.g. 5 minutes), without ever looking away. There's no need to entertain each other, it is just simply looking at each other, in a friendly way. Sometimes emotions can show up. That is fine, as long as people are true to themselves and each other. Remind them to keep looking. Note: sometimes people start laughing. That is because they feel uncomfortable. Let it happen, even if it takes some time. Don't stop the exercise too early, it only starts getting interesting when they are past the laughing stage!

Mirror each other

People work in pairs. Have them stand opposite each other, at arm's length. They have to look into each other's eyes and whenever they feel ready start mirroring each other. There should not be any leader or follower. Whenever they make a movement or move together, it should feel like one person is the mirror of the other one. Encourage them to move slowly and to let it happen rather than to provoke it. Sometimes a real nice 'dance performance' can be created in this way.

Speak with one mouth

All players stand close to each other: this tight group is 'one person' that is going to be interviewed. People should speak slowly and clearly, and never lead but only follow the others. The purpose is to all speak together and sound as one voice, while improvising. Make sure players do this slowly and that they do not start leading the others. They have to try and feel each others vibes and produce sound at the same time. Possible questions you can ask the group:

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- Where are you from?
- What is your favourite pastime?
- What food do you like?

Keep it simple and clear.

Tips for debriefing

Always discuss how the participants felt (and why) after doing a game. The focus should be on how they felt during the exercise and whether they trusted the rest of the group to support them. You can ask questions like:

- How did you feel when you were initially briefed on the game?
- Why did you feel this way?
- Do you feel you were taken out of your comfort zone during the game?
- How important was it to support others in the team?
- Do you feel you were at risk during the activity?
- Why did we do this exercise?