



# STICKS AND STONES: CONSTRUCTION FOR GROUP DEVELOPMENT

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Welcome to Sticks and Stones!

To start, my name is Henry and I hope the book is as helpful to you, as it has been for me. I created the book for my senior capstone as I thought it would challenge me in a myriad of ways. The idea for the book came as I was contemplating how to represent my knowledge of psychology and adventure education, push my self-efficacy as a facilitator, and learn a new skill. So here it is, my first book! My guiding mission for the content was to create original games and activities that require little to no extra resources.

I wanted entirely new content as a challenge of my skills and ability to be creative. When you are working with a group, you don't always have time to plan out the perfect activity to fill some empty time or meet some current struggle in the group. By designing my own games, I am proving to myself that I can think on my feet and that there is always more than one way to spin a game. With how many different books of games there are, I am sure some of my games closely resemble existing ones. That certainly is not my intent and these games are original to me. I don't believe any person's creativity should be stifled simply because someone had the a similar thought before you. Hence, why I've used a creative commons license. I want my games to embolden you to design your own.

The other driving goal for my games was that they would require no more materials than what you would normally carry. I am an avid hiker and canoer and sick of having to cram the books and binders in overflowing packs. Lastly, I included a section of how I might facilitate a game at the end of it's chapter. But, those are only my thoughts and ideas. I want the book to be a launch pad for the ideas and strategies you develop. For me, Sticks and Stones is a bridge from college to the professional world. I am excited to put all I've learned to the test and appreciate you giving the book a shot.

Wandering in the woods,

Henry

November 11th, 2020

# ANT-MAN

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## Group Size:

- Any size!

## Resources:

- A large space to create the big images.
- A few key objects to recreate to scale.
- A variety of other objects for measuring the key objects.
- Something for a grid to create scaled reference points.

## *Game Play*

Objective: To replicate the key object on a smaller scale.

Set Up:

- Place your key object(s) on the ground and draw out a grid for them to recreate the object in. Add a few reference points so they can figure out how to scale down the size of the object.
  - ? Reference points could be specific trees, a scale of length, general positioning of the object, etc.

Game:

- Tell the participants that you want them to replicate the object, to scale, on the small grid.
- Layout the materials they may use to measure the object or let them go collect their own.
- Set them to their task!

## Additions & Alternatives:

- Inverse the game, so they have to create a large version of the object drawn on the grid.
- Instead of a singular object, make it a hidden path they have to discover and mark the safe spaces on the grid to build a map.
  - By specifying what materials they may use, you can limit their resources or give them a hint on how you would solve the task. Materials could be a compass, pencil, sleeping pad, various lengths of string/ rope, or sticks.

## *Transfer of Learning*

This activity can be a great addition to learning how to read a map or used as a separate initiative. It focuses on the group's ability to communicate and listen to one another. It uses their problem solving, leadership, and visual-spatial skills. As with any teamwork activity, it has opportunity for many different messages and metaphors. An important one that this could convey well is judging the proportion of different events and their impact on your life. Although slightly complex to set up, I think the activity can push the abilities of the group and help frame conversations like talking about proportional reactions to different events.

# BIG STICK

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## Group Size:

- Individual

## Resources:

- A variety of sticks (participants can find/choose their own)
- A marked out playing area

### *Game Play*

Objective: For each person to find their stick and bring it back to the start.

- Each person memorizes and learns their stick.
- Then, collect them all and hide them within the playing area.
- They can be just dispersed, laying on the ground or hidden amongst other sticks/ things.
- Set each participant to find their stick.
  - ? This can be done individually or all at once.
  - ? You can time them to add a competitive edge.

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- The sticks can be any objects, as long as they aren't too unique or will stand out. Participants should have to search to find their object.
- Have participants carve or mark their sticks to make them more personal and easier to identify so everyone gets their own.
  - Especially if you are hiding objects that have special significance or meaning, you might join the group so they may hide you object and your searching with them.

### *Transfer of Learning*

This game could be a continuing next step if the participants have previously made something special to them like a totem or carving. The game could be framed so that eventually they will help one another find their stick as they search for their own. This could be an important message about being able to raise each other up and help themselves.

# BRAIDING DREAMS

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## Group Size:

- Individual activity.

## Resources:

- A large amount of things to braid.  
? Grass, thin, green branches, vines, rope, etc.
- Various different lengths of your braiding materials

### *Game Play*

Objective: Braid together various length pieces to bond them together into a singular piece.

Set Up:

- Layout all the different materials available by similarity in length.  
? This will require some time spent foraging and harvesting the different materials

Game:

- Gather the group and ask them to select a variety of lengths that matches your metaphor.
- Instruct them on how to braid all the pieces together.  
? I would start with a basic three-strand braid, and as you reach the end of one length pair it with a new piece to be incorporated in its place.
- Feel free to add accent/ color pieces as you go or after you've finished the main structure.
- To finish them you can braid them into a circle or leave it as a long piece of braided branches, etc.

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- Collect flowers, bright green shoots, pine needles, or anything else that can add color and pizzazz to your braid!
- As you build knowledge of braiding try more complex patterns.
  - You could also use weaving techniques with warp “threads” and create a two dimensional rectangle.

### *Transfer of Learning*

This activity can be fun and informative about the history of different patterns and the usage of weaving to build baskets. It also has good potential for a metaphor as each piece of material can represent something unique. For example, if you have three different length pieces then each length is a different size goal. So, lets say they choose 3 short, 2 medium, and 3 long pieces. The participant would assign a specific goal to each piece, matching the size of the goal with the length of the piece. they would then braided it into a circle creating their circle of goals. Each singular goal/ length piece is supporting it neighbors

and is in turn held together by the others. This is just one way you can add a metaphor to the activity. There are plenty of ways you can alter the activity to increase the depth of the group's discussion. Regardless of whether this is deep and meaningful or lighthearted and fun, the participants get to learn a new skill and practice existing ones.

# CIRCUIT BREAKER

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## Group Size:

- No limit
- Easier to communicate in groups of 6 or smaller

## Resources:

- Selection of objects to be the contact points (2-6)
- Anything that can be used to connect two contact points together (coats, rope, sticks, tarps, shoes, etc.)

### *Game Play*

Objective: Connect the contact points together.

Set up:

- Create the “game board” with however many contact points as you want.
- Either layout everything they may use to connect the contact points or let them gather the materials they think they will need.

Game:

- Task the group to complete the circuit by connecting the contact points.

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- Assign specific points to be directly connected.
- Assign a “flow of electricity” that must match. Thus, certain contact points must be connected before others.
  - Assign a type of connector that may be used. This could be specifically between two points or for the entire board. An example could be “The color orange must be continuous between the tree and the hiking pole.”
  - Limit how the group may communicate or work. Only certain participants may touch the connectors or you cannot speak.

### *Transfer of Learning*

This is another game that focuses on teamwork and communication skills. I anticipate the group having conflicting ideas about how to complete the task and how to best use the resources they collected or are given. This can be an energizer for completing a group puzzle or initiative about helping one another reach a common goal.

# COMMUNITY MAP

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## Group Size:

- Any size!  
? Ideally 4 or more

## Resources:

- Some sort of medium you can draw/ construct a picture on.
- Easiest with sheets of paper and writing utensils.

### *Game Play*

Objective: Create a map from everyone's pictures.

- Give a rough estimate for the length and width of the picture.
- Have everyone mark a road in the middle of each side of the picture.
- Assign general elements for the picture.  
? Ex: include your goals, things that remind you of home, favorite activities, etc.
- Give time and space for participants to create their picture.
- Once everyone is finished, bring all the pictures together to form the map.  
? Use the road on each side to align with the picture beside it. Participants can choose what happens to the road (dead-end, bridge, 4-way junction, 90 degree curve to another side, etc.)

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- This can be done with sticks, leaves, and dirt but the picture needs to be constructed on something transportable in order to combine all the pictures. Creating it on a pad or jacket that could slide to the map would potentially work.
- If there are common themes in different pictures, try rearranging the map to connect the similar themes.
  - Maybe participants can choose if it is a river or a roadway that connects to the next picture, then try to assemble the map so all the pictures fit together and rivers match up with rivers, and roads with roads.
  - If using paper, you can pre-label each sheet to correspond with a specific spot in the map. Then, let participants randomly choose their piece of paper. Afterwards, rebuild the map according to the labels and see what it has become.
  - Make it a living map that gets updated throughout the program.

### *Transfer of Learning*

I think this activity holds a lot of promise because it is so variable. The general concept can be applied to so many different topics. This could be a great icebreaker with each picture showing parts of the participants' lives. It could also be used to create the set of community guidelines/ norms. Or it can be a web of individual and group goals. There is a lot of freedom in how to frame the activity and I encourage you to think beyond my ideas and tailor it to your group!

# FIND THE SQUASH

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## Group Size:

- Any size!

## Resources:

- A large variety of items on hand
- Something to keep track of characteristics listed (this could be your brain!)

### *Game Play*

Objective: To create a your own squash.

- Gather the group and talk about what makes a squash a squash.
- Identify the key characteristics the constitute a squash.  
? ex: yellow, a hard outer shell, a stem, and soft, edible inside.
- Then, ask the group what else fits one of more of these characteristics.  
? ex: a banana, a cooking pot, grass, and oatmeal.
- Collect all the items that fulfill individual characteristics and build your squash!

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- This game would work for any common object.
- Split the group into teams and challenge them to use the fewest number of items.

### *Transfer of Learning*

I believe a lot of different discussions can arise from this activity, centrally focusing on the idea of the essence of a squash. Another way to think about it is to describe “what it is to be” a squash. When designing this activity, I was thinking about the idea that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” which is misquoted from Aristotle. This is an important concept when exploring the group identity and establishing your individual identity. The concept of self-worth and being more than your past is often an essential part of any therapeutic program and normal identity development. This game is also pretty silly and can be a funny energizer to bring a group together.

# LEPRECHAUN'S GOLD

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very similar to big stick, check metaphor ending based on what is written in the introduction.  
Changed Metaphor to transfer of learning

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## Group Size:

- 3 to 8 participants
- Split into multiple groups as needed

## Resources:

- One small item per participant to seek
  - A marked out playing area, preferably with varied terrain to block line of sight
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### *Game Play*

Objective: Work together to find the treasure as fast as possible.

- Decide how many participants you want searching in the first round (the seekers), and that will determine how many objects or treasures you will hide.
  - ? Move the group out of sight so they can't watch you hide the treasure.
- Establish a starting point.
- Bring the seekers to the starting point and tell them it is a race to find one of the treasures and bring it back.
- With each successive round, increase the challenge of finding their treasure.

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### Additions & Alternatives:

#### Challenges:

- Give each seeker a specific treasure to find.
  - Time how long it takes for the seekers to find their treasure, this can be as an individual or as a group.

#### Team Challenges:

- Pair off participants as a seeker and helper(s). With each round or pairing, decrease the amount of help the seeker can receive.
- To start, the helper can search with the seeker, but the seeker must be the one to pick up the treasure and return it to the start.
  - The helper can know the locations of the treasure and can give directions from the starting point.
    - In any version, increase difficulty by removing means of communication. Only allow the helper to say yes or no, or eliminate sound altogether and only allow gestures. Maybe you encode what the helper says, such as they say the opposite of where they want the seeker to go. If the ground is clear and safe, maybe blindfold the seeker and allow the helper to guide them by touch or by sound. Maybe the helper can call from where the treasure is or maybe they can only shout directions from the start. The seeker and helper could be given conflicting goals about being the fastest of collecting the most treasures.
    - You can also decrease the physical ability of the seeker and helper for additional challenges. Depending on the size and shape of the treasure, you may only use one hand or only your fists or elbows or knees. Perhaps you have to work together to pick up the treasure because you each only have one arm.
  - Anything that can make it harder for the pair to find the treasure will work, let your imagination run!
  - You can also give different seekers/ pairs different levels of difficulty each round.
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### *Transfer of Learning*

This game can be a lot of fun and an opportunity for some teamwork. I structured the game to focus around different forms of communication. I thought the game could be framed as an exercise in goal setting and how receiving help can make it easier to reach your goals. It could also be a chance to explore inequality with different seekers receiving different amounts of help. You could even give the helper and seeker different goals or restrictions to open a discussion about overcoming differences in communication styles or values. The game could just be an energizer and a chance to run around searching for treasure like a treat or extra privileges. It is up to you, the facilitator, to decide if the game is right for your group and at what depth should you frame it.

# PETROGLYPHS

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## Group Size:

- Individual activity.

## Resources:

- Something to draw/ create on (ground or paper).
- Something to draw/ create with (pencil, sticks, dirt, leaves, etc.)
- An abstract concept to illustrate.

### *Game Play*

Objective: Create physical images of abstract things.

- Make sure everyone has something to create their picture with.
- Assign a topic or idea that they should illustrate.
  - ? Try to choose something that is hard to see like friendship, trust, loyalty, pride, love, jealousy, etc.
- Once everyone has completed their picture, share with the group how you chose to represent the concept.

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- Challenge participants to not use any words and only draw what they mean.
- Collect everyone's drawings and display them as part of a community contract.
  - Assign participants different concepts, so each person illustrates how they visualize their concept.

### *Transfer of Learning*

I enjoy this activity because it is a chance to visualize things that are often hard to show or represent. It is a great addition to any conversation about a group contract or discussion on social-emotional behavior. It is a good way to help practice those skills and mentally review different scenarios when they might be needed. The beauty of the activity is that it will work with any age and at any level of group development. Because the activity can be so discussion heavy, it may be useful to set aside time for an extended debrief.

# POTTERY PONDS

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## Group Size:

- Any size!

## Resources:

- A variety of things available to use.
- A water source.

### *Game Play*

Objective: Build the best container for holding water!

- This activity can be done as teams or as individuals. Divide up the group accordingly.
- Outline the parameters of the activity.
  - ? Is the goal for the container to hold the most volume? Longest time? Most durable?
- Set a time limit for building.
- Once everyone is done building, test the different containers.

### **Additions & Alternatives:**

- Add bonuses for various features. Like most transportable, useful, coolest design, tallest, or any special additions like a spout, etc.
- Transform it into a collaborative exercise by sharing the best resources for building the container.

### *Transfer of Learning*

This activity is a simple energizer that works on problem solving and communication. The intent isn't to create winners and losers, rather give participants the opportunity to be proud of something they have built. It is a ridiculous premise and task but I hope they feel joy and accomplishment afterwards. The activity can also be used to convey a deeper message like problem solving and critical thinking. It could be spun to be about acquiring the proper tools for the job. This could then be applied to learning pro-social skills and how to increase your comfortability and range in social situations. I hope you see how even the most basic activities can hold important messages.