**Team Building at a Distance**

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3 current approaches to team development

* Remote/Virtual: Zoom has been the platform of choice for our programming
* Physical Distanced: Notice not “socially” distanced.
* Hybrid: In person with some remote participants.

Some factors that weigh in on programming decisions

* Depth of programming
  + Remote is great for building connections but more difficult to have challenging conversations needed to develop teams effectively
* Group Size
  + Capacity of facility to maintain physical space, capacity of zoom to handle activities to meet objectives.
* Time limits
  + Virtual programming limit seems to be around 2 hours before some aspect of ZOOM fatigue sets in.

**Virtual Team Development**

Our focus has been on **connections.** That is what our world really need now anyway and it is the depth of activity virtual engagement is most suited for. Not that you can’t do team development (building) but group size is a limiting factor for true engagement in development.

**A few fun connectors**

* Face Drawing (10min)
  + Have participants ‘pin’ someone’s video and draw their face without looking down at the drawing.
* Breakout room Question swap
  + There is benefits to combatting zoom fatigue but changing the screen occasionally. Breakout rooms do this.
  + Ask a question then send off to breakouts in pairs.
  + Bring back and then change framing (listen to understand instead of listening to “win”)… switching partners for second question.
* Intro Object
  + Everyone goes to find an object in the room they are in that represents them in some way. Can frame the reason for the object to fit goals… object that represents your strengths in a group… etc.
  + Again, there is a benefits of getting the group up and moving even if it is to find an object.

**Some Initiatives in “Zoomtown”**

Doing intiatives in zoom requires much more prep and I have found that it is nice to have a “DJ” to work with zoom and other technical aspects so the facilitator can focus on the group.

* Break the Code (Human Mastermind)
  + Activity Description below
  + Share a document like this either through screen share or with all participants
  + <https://docs.google.com/document/d/10debJ6mzia9uSmZTgU7rrIWJbQimAg0lJtMDaHlNKpQ/edit?usp=sharing>
  + Group members can edit the document live if it is shared with them or you can do the work they talk about if you are just screen sharing.
* Jamboard is a great tool for collaborative creativity
  + https://jamboard.google.com/
* Word Circle on Jamboard
  + Instructions:<http://www.fundoing.com/blog/word-circle-puzzles-january-2017>
  + <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1QR0xVZwFZxztMpBdrpwdB4-_loJou9MRz486eTC92uY/edit?usp=sharing>

**Physical Distance Team networking**

The biggest challenges are in space set up to allow for physical distance and space. Choosing outdoor spaces is best first option. If indoors is necessary, keep airflow and physical distance a priority. Use props like Hula Hoops or spot markers to help folks know where to stand. There is a balance between treating adults like adults but offering visual cues to help keep people at a distance when that is not necessarily our natural tendency. Spot markers allow the brain to relax about that aspect and focus on the group.

**Connection Activities**

* Maps of the world
  + Place a spot in the middle of play space to mark your location on the map. Orient group to where North is.
  + Ask a series of questions and invite the group to move on the map where this occurred for them
  + Examples: Where were you born, Where was the best meal you ever ate, where would you want to live for a year.
* Question swap activity but in concentric circles.
  + Create a circle of people 6’ apart with a partner in an outside circle also 6’ away
  + Ask questions for the group to discuss.
  + Rotate partners but having inside or outside circle move a number of people left or right.
* Movement… walk and talk
  + Ask a question and allow the pairs to go for a walk to discuss. Works well to get from one space to the next.

**Initiative in physical distancing**

Instead of saying “that won’t work” think about how your favorite initiative could be modified to allow physical space. You may come up with a great new initiative.

* Mastermind (see below)
  + Just make sure to remind participants about spacing.

**Thoughts on Hybrid.**

Having some participants in person and some remote can be challenging depending on the ratio. If you are incorporating just one or two remote participants, it can be easier than incorporating larger numbers. The challenge comes in making the remote participants a part of the group and not just spectators. Have a few participants in person log into the zoom as well so partnering and conversations are easier.

One or two remote participants:

* Have a someone “in-person” acting as a steward for each remote person.
* When speaking to the group you can have everyone in the main “zoom room” but then when it is time to participate, switch to breakout rooms with the ‘steward’ and remote participant paired.
* Large groups are challenging as the remote participants hear the cacophony of sound and not individual voices.

Several Remote participants:

* Utilize breakout rooms as much as possible to make dialogue more manageable. Have in person participants log in to loop remote participants into breakout rooms.
* If you are breaking into smaller groups for an activity… consider a remote team that works on a version of the exercise with another facilitators while in-person work together on same exercise.

**Breaking the Code (Human Mastermind)**

**Overview:** In this activity, the group will be challenged to decipher the code in as few guesses as possible. The code is created and held by the facilitator. While keeping track of previous information the group makes a series of educated guesses, each hopefully getting them close to breaking the code.

**Round 1 Instructions:**

* Place 4 spot markers on the floor in front of the group.
* Instructor writes down 4 group member names on a slip of paper that corresponds to the spot  markers on the floor.
* The group should establish a goal regarding the number of guesses they believe it would take to break the code.
* Once a goal is established, the group may make their first guess.
* After each guess the facilitator will tell the group how many people belong on the code and how many are also in the correct position on the code. The instructor never tells the group WHO is correct, just how many.
* The group continues to substitute people on and off the spots, collecting information.
* Resources are available to write down information but the group is not explicitly told to use them.
* Group continues until they break the code.
* Actual score is compared to the established goal.

**Reflection opportunity:**

* At this point, the group is given an opportunity to talk about strategies that worked and strategies that lead them astray.

**Possible Round 2 Instructions:**

* While the facilitator is writing down a new set of names, the group should establish a new goal based on the information they now have from this experience. They should also discuss any strategies for this second round based on their reflection on round 1.
* Once a new goal is established and the code is set by the facilitator, process repeats as in round 1.

**Reflection thoughts:**

* Did the group fall back into old habits, or did they change strategies for the better?
* Did the role you played during this activity match the role you typically have?
* How did the group make decisions? Was there a leader? Director? Consensus? Voting?