



Organizing a Counseling Department

Counseling Department Retreat Facilitator's Guide

The activities in this sample Kelly High School facilitator's guide allowed the team to reflect on the past school year, focus on team dynamics, and set the stage for next year's programming.

Counseling Department Retreat Facilitator's Guide

Sample from Kelly High School

Topic	Facilitator Notes/Materials & Prep
Part I – 8:30 to 9:00	
<p>Welcome and Overview (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continental Breakfast • Review Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Opening Moves ◦ Mission/Vision • Outcomes for the Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Participate in Team-building Activities ◦ Review Community Agreements ◦ Reflect on Our Work Conditions- Individually & Collectively ◦ Identify Next Steps as a Group <p>Group Juggle Protocol from School Reform Initiative (15 minutes)</p> <p>Purpose To provide a playful opportunity to reflect on group dynamics and collaborative skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding PowerPoint • Facilitator Agenda • Meeting Agenda • Poster of Agreements • Group Juggle Materials <p>Ask all participants to write down a student's name and to keep him or her in mind throughout the day.</p> <p>Counseling Department Chair will set the tone, which includes setting purpose for the retreat and intended outcomes. Essentially: Why are we here and what do we hope to achieve at the end of the day?</p> <p>Directions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a circle. • Create a pattern tossing the ball as a team. • One person throws the ball and calls out the name of the receiver. Remember: The thrower will toss the ball to the same person each time. • The group keeps going until everyone has thrown and received the ball once. • The group completes one practice round, throwing the ball in the same order and to the same people. • Ask the group to remember the pattern! • Now, the group completes the round again and the facilitator will continue to add an object each round (until each person has his/her own object to throw). • The goal is for everyone's object to enter all rounds. • When the facilitator counts out loud, "1, 2, 3, STOP," the group needs to stop and see how many objects they have in play. This may happen more than once.

- After 2 or 3 rounds, ask the group to set a goal of how many objects they can toss (what they believe they can accomplish) and invite them to try again!

Rules

- Establish a pattern. Each person must throw to the same person and receive from the same person throughout the activity.
- A toss has a low and high point. A toss is different than a pass or a hand off.
- Objects that fall can be left alone or brought back into play.

Debrief the Protocol

- How would you describe your feelings about the Group Juggle from the beginning, middle, and end?
- How would you describe the group’s effectiveness at the beginning, middle, and end?
- What did it take for us to be successful as a group?
- As we work to strengthen our learning community, what should we keep in mind?
- What might we do differently with our students as a result of this experiment? What problems were we trying to solve with this activity?
- How did we solve the problems we faced?
- Are there connections between group success in this activity and our work in our school?

Part II – 9:00 to 9:50

Compass Points from the School Reform Initiative (50 minutes)

Purpose:

Similar to the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, this exercise uses a set of preferences which relate not to the individual, but to group behaviors. This will help us understand how preferences affect our group work.

Process

- The room is set up with four signs on each wall — North, South, East, and West.
- After [reading the description of each direction](#), participants are invited to go to the direction of their choice. No one is only one direction, but everyone should choose one as their predominant one. (5 minutes)
- Each direction group answers the 5 questions on a sheet of newsprint. (10 minutes)
 1. What are the strengths of your style? (4 adjectives)
 2. What are the limitations of your style? (4 adjectives)
 3. What style do you find most difficult to work with and why?
 4. What do people from the other directions or styles need to know about you so you can work together effectively?
 5. What do you value about the other three styles?

- When complete, report back to the whole group. (20 minutes)
- Processing can include (10 minutes):
 - Note the distribution of participants among the directions: what might it mean?
 - What is the best combination for a group to have? Does it matter?
 - How can you avoid being frustrated by another direction?
 - How might you use this exercise with others? Students?

BREAK – 9:50 to 10:00

Part III – 10:00 to 10:20

Tarp Protocol (20 minutes)

Purpose:

As a team, participants must stand on the tarp and flip it over without touching the ground. The activity will promote team building and help participants think outside the box when solving issues. The activity will also give diverse voices the opportunity to lead and support the team.

Setup/Preparation

- The facilitator explains to participants that the goal of the activity is to identify challenges they are facing and, as a team, symbolically “flip” them over to solutions.
- The facilitator asks each participant to think of one to two challenges. The challenges must be words or phrases, not sentences. Participants will then write down the challenges on strips of masking tape with markers.
- The facilitator asks each participant to write possible solutions on separate pieces of masking tape. The solutions can be specific to the challenge or general problem-solving tactics.
- The facilitator labels one side of the tarp “challenge” and the other side “solution.”
- Participants will tape their strips to the appropriate side.
- The facilitator gives them the opportunity to collectively read both sides. Then, he/she asks them to stand on the challenge side.

	<p>Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They need to problem solve together to flip the tarp onto the “solution” side • They can use their hands. • Once they are on the tarp, no one can stand on the floor. Their feet must never leave the tarp. If someone touches the ground, the team starts over. • If you aren’t leading, you have to support and cheer your team on. • You can allocate an open window of time (5-15 minutes) or set the challenge by assigning a specific amount of time. <p>Debriefing</p> <p>This activity lends itself well to discussions on achieving success despite the obstacles in our lives. Lifelong success is rarely achieved through chance – instead, the successful make a plan, continually evaluate, then change the plan as needed. When everyone on the team is committed to the plan, success is much more likely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies did you apply here to experience success and are any of these strategies applicable to real life situations? • How is this activity just like real life? How is it unlike real life? • How did you like the activity? Would you use it again?
<p>Part IV – 10:20 to 11:50</p>	
<p>Team Assessment (90 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant completes The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: Team Assessment • Refer to Patrick Lencioni’s website • Facilitator tallies assessment results while group watches YouTube video of 5 Dysfunctions of a Team
<p>LUNCH – 11:50 to 12:20</p>	

Part V – 12:20 to 12:40

**Change Activity
(20 minutes)****Purpose:**

To build community among participants and provide context for a discussion about change.

- Invite participants to stand together in a circle.
- Once the circle is formed, invite them to divide into pairs around the circle.
- Partners turn to face and greet each other.
- Invite each pair to turn their bodies and stand back-to-back with one another. Partners then move 2-3 steps apart, remaining back-to-back. Ask partners to be sure that they cannot see one another.
- Once pairs are back-to-back and a few steps apart, say, “*Change 3 things about your appearance. No peeking.*” (Or something that lets the pairs know that they should not look at each other.)
- When everyone has made their three changes, invite pairs to turn back around to face each other so they can identify the 3 changes each partner made.
- Once each pair has done this (and the the giggling has stopped), begin a quick debrief.
- Debriefing questions might include:
 - How was that?
 - What did you notice?
 - How many changes could you identify?

Part VI – 12:40 to 1:25

**Norms Construction
(45 Minutes)****Purpose:**

Community agreements, or norms, are more than rules. They are the expectations that hold a team together and create the conditions for effective work.

This is a consensus-building process that uses a series of negotiations to construct norms for a learning community.

- Group reviews current Norms and Agreement:
 - Speak your truth as you know it
 - Stories stay/ practices leave (confidentiality)
 - Suspend judgement
 - Remain solution-focused
 - Everyone’s perspectives and contributions are valued
- Group engages in [Norms Construction Protocol](#)

BREAK – 1:25 to 1:35

Part VIII – 1:35 to 1:55

YouTube - Dear Young Man of Color: Spoken Word (20 minutes)

Purpose:

Increase awareness and consciousness of personal interactions with least-reached students. Increase awareness of the population that is being served at Kelly High School. How do we have high expectations for minority students?

After [watching the video](#), ask the group:

- What opportunities does the Counseling Department provide to young men of color to be heard?
- How does the video reflect the voice of the young men at Kelly High School?

Part IX – 1:55 to 2:10

Closing Moves (15 minutes)

- Closing Connections
- Action Items Review
- Evaluation/Reflection

Notes:

Counseling Department Mission Statement:

The mission of the Kelly High School Counseling Department is to foster positive school culture through guidance and student development initiatives that will create a positive learning environment for our learners. The Counseling Department supports all individuals through a comprehensive program that will enhance student development and engage each pupil through academic, career, and personal-social domains. Our program is implemented in collaboration with all faculty and staff while complementing the mission of Kelly High School in promoting student achievement.