



Fine-Tuning Team Dynamics

Tarp Protocol

An activity that acknowledges challenges and possible solutions to the team's collective work. The protocol promotes team building and helps participants think outside the box when solving issues by providing different approaches and pushing them out of their comfort zones.

Tarp Protocol

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.

Materials

- Large plastic tarp
- Masking or painter's tape
- Markers

Time

20-25 minutes

Preparation

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The facilitator labels one side of the tarp “challenge” and the other side “solution.”
5. Participants will tape their strips to the appropriate side.
6. The facilitator gives them the opportunity to collectively read both sides. Then, he/she asks them to stand on the challenge side.

Rules

1. They need to problem solve together to flip the tarp onto the “solution” side.
2. They can use their hands.
3. 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.
4. If you aren't leading, you have to support and cheer your team on.
5. You can allocate an open window of time (5-15 minutes) or set the challenge by assigning a specific amount of time.

Debriefing

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.

- 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?