

GAMES

**Important lessons to
learn from playing**

Pow Wow 2008

Time Begin	Time End	Section
1:00	1:05	Personal Introduction
1:05	1:15	Introduction of Games with a purpose
1:15	1:25	Ice breaker game
1:25	1:35	Communication Game
1:35	1:45	Ending Game
1:45	1:50	Discussion

1-105

Kevin O'Hara District Executive Long Trail District

Kevin.ohara@scouting.org 802-224-6683

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- Adventure wave
- Introduction,
 - Setting Rules boundaries and Expectations
- Engaging Action
 - Doing the actual activity
- Discussion
 - Discussing what was learned

15-25

- Icebreaker game
 - Intro
 - Activity
 - Discussion

25-35

- Communication / Trust Game
 - Intro
 - Activity
 - Discussion

35-45

- Ending Game
 - Intro
 - Activity
 - Discussion

45-50

- Ending thoughts and discussions

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Mine Field

Description of a Communication & Relationship-Building Activity

Wilderness
 Store
 gear, books,
 kits

Mine Field

- A popular and engaging game involving communication and trust. The task is very flexible, works for groups of various types and sizes, and can be adapted to youth, adults, corporate, etc.
- Select an appropriate area. Go outside, if possible. Can be done inside, even in rooms with fixed furniture (which can become objects to be avoided).
- Disturbances
 "minefield"
 e.g. balls
 or
 other
 objects
 such
 as
 bowling
 pins
 cones
 foam
 noodles, etc.
- Establish a concentrating and caring tone for this activity. Trust exercises require a serious atmosphere to help develop a genuine sense of trust and safety.
- Participants operate in pairs. Consider how the pairs are



Equipment

- Mine Field Kit with Activity Guide & facilitation notes
[View](#)
 - Markers or lengths of rope to indicate the boundaries (e.g., 50 yard rectangular field)
 - Bowling pins or many soft objects, such as larger balls and stuff - the more the better
 - Blind folds (can be optional)

Summary

- Objects are scattered in an indoor or outdoor place. In pairs, one person verbally guides his/her partner, whose eyes are closed or blindfolded, through the "minefield".

Time

- ~20 minutes to set up
- ~5-10 minutes to brief

formed - it's a chance to work on relationships. One person is blind-folded (or keeps eyes closed) and cannot talk (optional). The other person can see and talk, but cannot enter the field or touch the person.

- The challenge is for each blind-folded person to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the "mines", by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners.
- Allow participants a short period (e.g., 3 minutes) of planning time to decide on their communication commands, then begin the activity.
- Be wary of blindfolded people bumping into each other. The instructor(s) can float around the playing area to help prevent collisions.
- Decide on the penalty for hitting a "mine". It could be a restart (serious consequence) or time penalty or simply a count of hits, but without penalty.
- It can help participants if you suggest that they each develop a unique communication system. When participants swap roles, give participants some review and planning time to refine their communication method.
- Allow participants to swap over and even have several attempts, until a real, satisfied sense of skill and competence in being able to guide a partner through the "minefield" develops.
- The activity can be conducted one pair at a time (e.g., in a

- ~5 minutes planning/discussion
- ~15-30 minutes activity
- ~5-30 minutes debrief

Group Size

- 2 to 30 is possible; works well with larger groups e.g., 16 to 24.

Links to other descriptions of Mine Field

- Karl Rohnke is usually credited with this activity (p.24 [Silver Bullets](#)), although there are many adaptations, including [Midnight Crossing](#)).
- [Minefields](#) [useful detail and variations] (Rob Benson, First Steps Training & Development)
- [3D minefield teambuilding activity](#) [uses suspended rope indoors to represent "poisonous vines"] ([teambuildingUSA.com](#))
- [Working with substance abuse adolescents through Project Adventure](#) [Minefield is the last activity described before the conclusion] (Lee Gillis & Cindy Simpson, 1994)

therapeutic situation), or with all pairs at once (creates a more demanding exercise due to the extra noise/confusion).

- Can be conducted as a competitive task - e.g., which pair is the quickest or has the fewest hits?
- The facilitator plays an important role in creating an optimal level of challenge, e.g., consider introducing more items or removing items if it seems too easy or too hard. Also consider coaching participants with communication methods (e.g., for younger students, hint that they could benefit from coming up with clear commands for stop, forward, left, right, etc.).
- Be cautious about blind-folding people - it can provoke trust and care issues and trigger post-traumatic reactions. Minimize this risk by sequencing Mine Field within a longer program involving other get-to-know-you and trust building activities before Mine Field.

Variations

- **Minefield in a Circle:** Blindfolded people start on the outside of a large rope circle, go into middle, get an item ("treasure", e.g., a small ball or bean bag), then return to the outside; continue to see who can get the most objects within a time period.
- **Metaphorical Framing:** Some set ups for minefield get very elaborate and metaphor-rich, e.g., hanging objects which metaphorically reflect the

participants' background and/or issues. For example, items which represent drugs, peer pressure, talking with parents about the problem, etc. have been used in a family adventure therapy program (Gillis & Simpson, 1994).

- Participants can begin by trying to cross the field by themselves. In a second round, participants can then ask someone else to help them traverse the field by "talking" them through the field.
- To increase the difficulty, you can have other people calling out. The blindfolded person must concentrate on their partner's voice amidst all the other voices that could distract them from the task.
- Be aware that some participants may object to, or have previous traumatic experience around the metaphor of explosive mines which have caused and continue to cause much harm and suffering. It may be preferable to rename the activity, for example, as an "obstacle course" or "navigation course". Alternatively, the activity could be used to heighten awareness about the effect of land mines on the lives of people in countries such as Afghanistan and Nicaragua (see [UNICEF information on land mines](#)).

Processing Ideas

- How much did you trust your partner (out of 10) at the start?
- How much did you trust your partner (out of 10) at the end?

- What is the difference between going alone and being guided by another?
- What ingredients are needed when trusting and working with someone else?
- What did your partner do to help you feel safe and secure?
- What could your partner have done to help make you feel more safe/secure?
- What communication strategies worked best?
- For some more ideas, download [Minefield in a Circle - Debrief \(.doc\)](#)

Last updated:
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Good Spots to find examples of games!

<http://wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>

<http://www.netwoods.com/d-games.html>

<http://wtsmith.com/rt/games.html>