

ENGAGE, PLAY, GROW!



ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING (ABC)

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Adventure Based Counseling - ABC



- **Structured, non-competitive group interventions in which participants are essentially “learning by doing”** (*Gass, 1993*)
- **Action oriented with emphasis on cooperation, communication and problem solving**
- **Strengths-based perspective**

Key Components

(Tucker, 2009)



- **Interpersonal learning**
- **Social skills development**
- **Concrete and immediate consequences**
- **Problem solving**
- **Sequencing**

What are the Benefits?



- **Self-Esteem Building**
- **Communication**
- **Problem-Solving Skills**
- **Coping Skills**
- **Increase Trust in Others**
- **Assertive Leadership**
- **Challenge Perceptions**
- **Social Skills Building**
- **Teambuilding**
- **Positive Risk-Taking**
- **Personal Growth**

Who Can Benefit?



- **Children and Adolescents**
- **Families**
- **Professional groups**
- **Treatment and prevention groups**

Aspects of ABC



- **RULES**

- State the rules to the initiative
 - ✦ Be clear but vague (enough to allow discovery but clear enough to use the rules as they see fit)
- Have the rules written out and posted for the group to refer to if needed
- Make sure you know all the rules (a forgotten rule could turn a 30 minute initiative into a five minute activity.)

Aspects of ABC



- **FRAMING**

- Setting the stage for the initiative
- A broad framework of the activity including a story and use of metaphors
- Adjust the level of difficulty based on the functional level of the group

Aspects of ABC



- **ACTIVITY**

- Keep quiet!

- ✦ The less said the better. Allow the group the opportunity and time to work through the initiative.

- ✦ The group will try to solicit information from you. Give information sparingly. Direct them to the rules.

- Do not give suggestions or hints

- ✦ Ask pointed questions instead of telling them what they could do (ex: “What is happening when you....”)

- Be playful and make it fun

Aspects of ABC



- **DEBRIEFING/PROCESSING**

- Connecting the activity or experience to issues of participants daily lives
- Drawing the metaphorical associations to components of the activity
- Don't lead the debrief, follow where the group leads the debrief
- Discuss ways to implement new strategies from what was learned in the activity
- Debriefing should be opening lines of discussion
 - ✦ Doesn't have to be "so therapeutic" (ex: paperball fight)

Disclaimer



- **Assess the possible risks or liabilities before engaging participants in ABC initiatives.**



Let's Play!

Can We Count to 10?



RULES

- The goal is to have the group count to 10.
- You must keep your eyes closed at all times.
- You cannot say anything except to say a number.
- A person may not say two numbers in a row.
- No one may talk at the same time.
- If more than one person talks at a time, the group must start over.

Helium Hoop



RULES

- You must maintain contact with only one finger on the hula hoop at all times.
- Only the back of your finger may touch the hula hoop.
- You must lower the hoop to the floor.
- If anyone breaks contact, your group must start over.

Tin Pan Bang Bang



RULES

- The object of the game is to always be in a group.
- If you are “left out” of a group, you must leave the game.
- The group size will be determined by the number of times the leader bangs on the instrument.

Onion Jousting



RULES

- You must balance the ball on the can and you may not hold it in place.
- When your ball falls off three times (whether it is knocked off or falls off by careless balancing) you are out of the game.

Hot Chocolate River



RULES

- The goal is to get your whole group from one side of the river to the other side.
- You may only cross the river using the marshmallows.
- The marshmallows only work when there is human contact with it at all times.
- If any group members falls in the river, the whole group must start over.

Group Juggling



RULES

- The person throwing the ball must call out the person's name he or she is throwing to.
- The group then tries to juggle as many balls as possible.
- The goal of this activity is to drop as few of the balls as possible.

The Swamp



RULES

- The goal is for the group to get from one end to the other end.
- There are alligators throughout the swamp.
- If any group member steps on an alligator the whole group must start over.
- Only one member may cross at a time.
- You can only step to a square that connects the one you are standing on.

Human Knot



RULES

- Using your left hand, hold hands with someone in the circle not directly next to you.
- Repeat with the right hand, and be sure to hold hands with a different person, who is not directly next to you.
- You can't disconnect your hands.

Jumping Stars



RULES

- Everyone needs to have **BOTH FEET** inside a star.

QUESTIONS

- *If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?*
- *If you could have lunch with anyone in the world who would it be?*
- *If you could be an animal which would you be and why?*
- *Tell of an obstacle or challenge you faced this week.*
- *If you had one wish, what would you wish for?*

Moon Ball



RULES

- The same person may not hit the ball twice in a row.
- The entire group must count out loud each time the ball is hit (i.e. "One! Two! Three! ...")
- The group begins counting over at zero if someone hits the ball twice in a row or if the ball makes contact with the ground.

Balloon Chaos



RULES

- You may only hit the balloons by hand (no holding, kicking, or throwing.)
- Without talking to each other, the group must separate the balloons into groups of like colors.

Guided River



RULES

- You may give verbal instructions to your blind folded partner to navigate them through the river.
- If you bump into the floating logs, you must start over.
- No touching...just verbal instructions.

Questions / Comments



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**THANKS SO MUCH FOR
ENGAGING, PLAYING, &
GROWING WITH US!**