



## Same Letter, Different Name

(from the Self-Esteem Chapter)

Ambitious, athletic, artistic and altruistic, - there are plenty more words that begin with “A” that create a positive description of people we know or even of ourselves. Thinking of new words from A to Z that are descriptive of the people we know is the purpose of this game, and with added competition it’s lots of fun. The best part, though, is getting to hear positive descriptive words about yourself at the end of this fast paced thinking game.

### Objective

For group members to increase self-esteem by recognizing the positive traits that exist in each other.

### Who

People who could benefit from hearing positive comments about themselves in order to improve their own self-esteem. Group members should be familiar with each other.

### Group Size

4 to 20 participants

### Materials

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- A timer or stopwatch
- An envelope filled with the letters of the alphabet (written on small slips of paper)

### Description

Divide the group into two even teams and ask each team to write down on one piece of paper all the names of the people on their team and on the other team. Once all the names are written down, select a letter of the alphabet from the envelope. Inform the teams what letter was chosen and give them two minutes to work as a team to think of a positive word, or words beginning with the chosen letter that describes each person. For example, if the letter H was chosen and the names John, Amy, and Craig were on the list my team may come up with:

John - Hard worker

Amy - Honest, Humble

Craig - Handsome

Once the time limit is up bring the two teams together and ask them to each read their list to the group. For added fun and competition you may give each team a point for every word on their list that isn’t on the other team’s list.

Play as many rounds of this game as you have time for. You may want to make specific rules for the activity (i.e. you must think of at least one word for each person on the list). The discussion may be held at the end of the game or hold a short discussion after each round.

### Discussion Prompts

1. How do you feel about the words that were chosen to describe you?
2. Were you surprised by any of the words used to describe you? If so why?

3. Did anyone give any ideas for the a word that you would use to describe yourself ?
4. Is it easy or hard to think of positive words to describe others? Yourself? Why?

### **Variations**

- Don't give a time limit; instead give bonus points to the team that thinks of a word to describe everyone on the list first.
- With a large group don't include your own team on your list, instead just think of words to describe the members of the other team, or break the group up into more than two teams.

# Creative Coloring

(From the Teamwork Chapter)

Sometimes in life we must accept help from others or rely on our friends and family for help if we are to be successful. If one person tries to build a house all alone, there is a lot of work to be done and it's a difficult task, but when a whole team of people pitch in and contribute, a complete house can be built in no time. Each person is a part of a puzzle and can offer different talents to use in the building of the complete house.

In this activity each person is a part of a team that can make a big project easy and each person contributes his/her own skills to create the big picture.

## Objective

To promote teamwork through a group project and for the group to work together as a team.

## Who

People who need to practice using teamwork by working closely with others to finish a group project.

## Group Size

4 to 12 participants

## Materials

- 12 different colored markers, crayons or colored pencils
- A large sheet of paper

## Description

Give each member of the group a different colored marker, crayon or pencil and inform them that this will be the only color they can use for this project. The group must now create a picture, using all of the colors. Each person may only use his/her color (no trading or sharing is allowed!).

For example if the picture contains a tree the person with the brown marker will draw the tree trunk and the person with the green will then draw the leaves.

## Discussion Prompts

1. Was this a difficult task for the group? Why or why not?
2. How did you work as group to complete the picture? Was teamwork needed or could everyone work on their own?
3. Is everyone in the group happy with the picture that was created? Why or why not?
4. Is it easier to do things by yourself or with others?
5. Why is it important to be able to work with others as a member of a team?

## Variations

- For smaller groups each person may have more than one color.
- For younger children or lower functioning groups it's a good idea to tell them what picture they should draw.
- Have the group color in a page from a coloring book, rather than creating their own picture.
- For added teamwork ask the group to decide how to determine which color each person will use.

# Crazy Comic

(From the Communication Chapter)

Creating a good concept can take a really long time, and lots of thought must be put into it. When there is a large group of people working on the idea, the task may suddenly become easier because there is more brainpower working on the project. However, if people can't communicate their ideas with each other and make group decisions, many problems may arise. This activity is a simple task, but a great deal of communication is needed if a group is to be successful when attempting to work together to create an original idea.

## Objective

To communicate ideas with others and make group decisions based upon discussion.

## Who

People who need to work on communicating ideas with other people and who need to learn how to make a group decision by compromising on the ideas given.

## Group Size

3 or more

## Materials

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Colored markers, crayons, or colored pencils

## Description

Divide the group into smaller groups of three to six members each. Supply each person in each group with a piece of paper and writing utensil. Instruct the groups that they are to create an original comic strip and each person in the group must draw one frame of the strip (if there are four people in a group, the comic strip will contain four frames). The group must decide what to draw, the story line and who will draw what (there is a lot of communication involved in this one)!

Once the discussion has taken place about the comic strip and the decisions have been made, each person draws the frame s/he is responsible for on his/her own piece of paper. Everyone should be drawing at the same time and not taking turns with their group members. If you want to make it really challenging, don't allow group members to see each others' papers when they are drawing.

After the comic strips are completed, allow time for sharing and give each group a chance to show their comic strip to the other groups.

## Discussion Prompts

1. What different communication skills were needed for this activity?
2. How important was communication during this activity?
3. What was the most difficult part of this activity for you?
4. Did your comic strip flow? Why or why not?
5. When involved in part of a group process, do you want things to always go your way or do you allow others to contribute ideas?
6. Why is it important to be able to make decisions with other people?
7. What things do you need to do when making decisions with others?
8. In your life, when is it important to be able to communicate clearly with others?

## Variation

- Give them some ideas about what characters or settings to use in the comic strips.

# Hidden Heart

(From the Anger Management Chapter)

The things that we keep hidden inside are our hurts, emotional pain, scars, and anger. Some people work extra hard to hide these feelings and eventually may physically hurt themselves or others if they don't share their feelings with others.

This activity gives people the opportunity to share their pain and the anger they have hidden inside. When people start to deal with these feelings of anger before becoming destructive they can experience happiness in their lives once again.

## Objective

For people to recognize and understand that the anger they keep on the inside affects how they live their lives. To help people recognize the good things that they have in their hearts and to encourage them to share this part of themselves with others.

## Who

People who are angry about their own lives and who show this anger easily to others. People who are angry on the inside and keep the anger buried deep down which leads them to have many negative feelings towards themselves or towards others.

## Group Size

1 or more

## Materials

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Scissors
- Thin pieces of ribbon
- One small, and one large balloon for each person (not inflated)
- Permanent colored markers

## Description

Give each person a small balloon, piece of ribbon, paper, scissors and a pen or pencil. Explain to them that this balloon represents their heart and all of the pain, hurt and anger that can be found inside of it. Instruct them to cut slips of paper that are small enough to fit into the balloon, to write down their hurts and anger on these, and to then put the papers into the balloon and tie the balloon closed with the ribbon (do not blow up the balloon). These papers do not have to be shown to anyone.

Give each person one of the larger balloons and ask each person to put their "heart" (the smaller balloon) into the larger balloon. Instruct each person to blow up the large balloon and tie it shut. Tell them that they are to write on the outside of the balloon how they present themselves to others on the outside so that nobody can see the things that are hidden on the inside. Some people use humor to hide the pain; others always act confident even though they feel insecure and lonely. These are the types of things people should write on the outside of their balloon.

Once all of the balloons are written on, gather the group together and discuss what is written on the outside of the balloons. Challenge the members of the group to each share at least one thing they have written down on the outside of their balloon. Then ask each person to state if it is a good thing to cover up what is on the inside or if they would like people to know more about what's going on in their life and if so to think of a way that this can happen. After this discussion, allow them to pop their balloons as a symbolic way of getting rid of all the walls and devices that they use to hide their pain.

After the balloons are popped, the hearts with the ribbons tied around them should remain. Challenge each person in the group to find someone in the next week's time whom they trust enough to give their heart to. They should explain to that person what the balloon represents and why they want to give it to them; they should then let that person untie the ribbon to see what is inside. If possible bring the group back together a week later for a follow up group to find out who was able to find someone to give their heart to. Or simply challenge the group to read what they had in their "heart" to the group.

### **Discussion Prompts**

1. How are you affected by the feelings and emotions that you keep inside of you?
2. What things inside of you makes you feel angry?
3. How can your life change if you get rid of the negative things and leave only the positive in your heart?
4. How can you get rid of the negative things in your life?
5. Do you trust anyone with your heart? Why or why not?
6. How can it help you to find someone to trust with your feelings and emotions?

### **Variation**

- Simply place a piece of paper with your name on it inside a balloon to represent you as a person and then write down the things that you do to keep people from getting to know the "real" you on the outside and share these with the group.

# Family Totem Pole

(From the Self-Discovery Chapter)

A totem pole is a tall woodcarving consisting of animal heads and/or bodies and is used to tell Native American stories or legends. A family totem pole can be created to tell the story of a family in a fun and unique way.

## Objective

For people to explore feelings, perceptions, and relationships that they have with their family members.

## Who

People who need to share about their family life with the group or with a counselor but who have a difficult time talking about family dynamics and family situations.

## Group Size

1 or more

## Materials

- Construction Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Tape
- Colored markers
- Optional: Cardboard tube (i.e. toilet paper roll, paper towel roll or wrapping paper tube)
- Optional: Google eyes, felt, fabric, puff balls, pipe cleaners, or anything else that can be used to create animal faces.

## Description

Ask the group if they know what a totem pole is and explain how each totem pole tells a unique story. Explain to the group that they are to create their own unique totem poles about their families. Each person chooses a different animal to represent each family member and places the animal on the pole wherever they think that family member should be in their own story. For example, one pole may have a lion for a brother who is good looking, athletic and everything seems to come easy for him, and who also happens to be known for being quite lazy. Each totem pole must include at least three people and each person must put him/herself on the totem pole s/he is creating. Emphasize that a family can be whoever they feel their family is at the time. For some it may be a foster family, grandparents, a special relative, or even a group home.

Give each person a cardboard tube or create one by rolling construction paper long ways into a tube and taping it. Supply the group with all the animal face creation supplies that you have gathered that can be used to create animal faces. Instruct them to create animals out of the materials and to glue them onto their totem pole. Allow quite a bit of time for this activity and people will do a really good job and be proud of their totem poles when they are finished with them. Allow for sharing time at the end so that each person may explain his/her special family totem pole to the group.

## Discussion Prompts

Discuss each totem pole after it has been explained to the group. You may allow group members to ask questions or use this time to discuss family relations that are occurring in each separate family.

## Variation

- Create the totem poles out of modeling clay or play dough.

# Leisure Brochure

(From the Coping Skills Chapter)

A brochure is a simple means of advertising that can get people excited about something new and fun. Many brochures are about recreational activities such as skiing, water slides, white water rafting, shopping, etc. The pictures and the words in the brochure are meant to spark your interest in the activity.

The leisure brochure activity is also an interest sparker. It is meant to get people interested in some of their old but forgotten activities and interest them in new things to fill their time.

## Objective

For each person in the group to explore his/her own leisure interest, activity participation, and personal leisure lifestyle. To discuss how activity involvement can be used as a coping skill.

## Who

People who spend their free time doing the same thing over and over again and who need to integrate a variety of activities, that can be used as coping mechanisms, into their lives.

## Group Size

1 or more

## Materials

Paper

Pens or pencils

Colored markers, crayons or pencils

Optional: Colored paper, scissors, glue, glitter, etc.

## Description

If you have any brochures lying around that advertise activities and events (i.e. white water rafting, skiing and vacations and that can be found at your local Chamber of Commerce, outdoor stores, AAA, or travel agencies) bring them for the group to see, then talk about what a brochure is. A brochure is something that is used to advertise an activity, product or event and is used to get people interested in participating in all the fun that is described in its pages.

Ask everyone to create their own "leisure brochures" that advertises all of the interesting things they have done for fun and leisure in their life. The brochure should state why these are things the author enjoys and what is so great about each activity. The job of each person is to create a brochure that others will be interested in and that will create interest in the activities listed.

After everyone completes their brochure, allow time for sharing. This is a great way to get people to think about all the fun things they used to do but don't do anymore, to think about the things they enjoy doing now and to get new ideas for coping activities from others.

## Discussion Prompts

1. Are there any activities that you thought of that you haven't done in a while but would like to do again? Why don't you?
2. How could any of the activities you listed help you to cope with your problems? Do you use these activities? If not, why?
3. Did you like any of the ideas someone else listed? If so, can you pursue any of these?