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Training Experience Outline

Building Teamwork Through Improv Comedy Games

Length of Program: 65 Minutes (flexible from 45-90 minutes)

Qualifications for facilitating this session:

Daniel has been writing and performing comedy for over 10 years. His comedy career began with over 30 stand-up performances and has since expanded to include improvisational comedy. Daniel began his improv training through the Washington Improv Theater and then joined an independent troupe, The Carmichaels, with whom he practices and performs across the DC-Maryland circuit.

Timing Options for Program:

- Pre-camp Training
- In-summer Professional Development sessions

Intended Audiences:

- Camp Leadership/Professional Staff
- Staff Supervisors
- Staff Members
- Campers

The “Why” Behind the Program:

- Improv comedy is centered around being collaborative & listening to others
- All summer long, staff need to develop these skills to learn and grow together
- This program provides a fun, structured opportunity to practice team skills
- ***These games can be used with campers throughout the summer as well***

Evidence from Research:

- *Support is a key driver of staff engagement and retention
 - Creating a culture of collaboration and listening are key parts of support
 - Staff feeling listened to can drive their enthusiasm toward their work
- (*Data from 100 staff across numerous camps at multiple times during the summer)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify opportunities to partake in teamwork with peers
- Practice the skills of listening, mirroring, and collaborating on ideas
- Experience initiating and receiving support with team members
- Start the learning process and set up participants for further development
- **PLAN: Set goals to continue growing and maintaining teamwork skills**

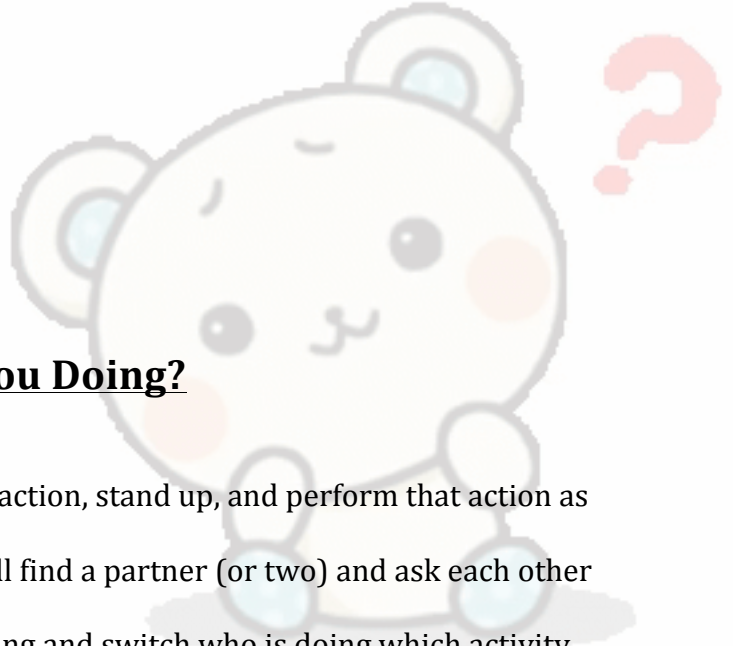
Structured Practice → Positive Habits → Elevated Staff Culture

*(*All programmatic elements are customizable
per your camp's preferences and priorities)*

Full Group Warm-up

:00 - :05 – Introduction to the Experience

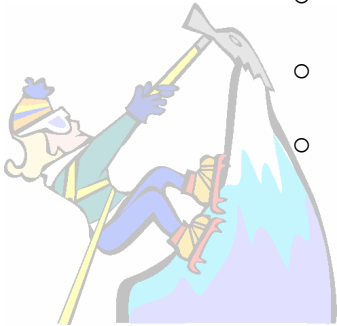
:05 - :15 – Game #1 (example game below)



What Are You Doing?

- **Instructions**

- Everyone will think of a physical action, stand up, and perform that action as they move around the room.
- When instructed, each person will find a partner (or two) and ask each other “What are you doing?”
- They will share what they are doing and switch who is doing which activity.
 - **EXAMPLE:** One person is “climbing a mountain” and another person is “shopping for groceries,” after they meet and ask each other “What are you doing?” the mountain climber will begin shopping for groceries and the grocery shopper will begin climbing a mountain.
- Then those people will find a new partner to switch activities with.
- Eventually, most people will have done other people’s activities.
- At the end, participants can find out who has done the activity that that participant started.



- **Learning Objectives**

- Participants’ feeling that their ideas are validated by their community.
- Hearing and utilizing other people’s ideas can be fun and rewarding.
- Paying attention to others can make your work easier!

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Small Group Warm-up

:15-:25 – Game #2 (example game below)

Mind Meld

- **Instructions**
 - Participants will partner up.
 - On the count of three, both partners in each group will say one word that comes to mind.
 - Then, they'll try to think of a word that ties those two together and, on the count of three, say their connecting words.
 - Then, they'll try again to think of a word that ties their two new words together and again, on the count of three, say their connecting words.
 - They'll continue to do this until they actually do say the same word OR until it has been six or seven tries 😊
- **Learning Objectives**
 - We are not always on the same page (mentally, emotionally, etc.), and to get there requires working together and respecting each other's choices.
 - Working well together takes time to build up to.
 - There is great satisfaction when you realize you are on the same page!

:25-:35 – Debrief the warm-up exercises

Facilitated Discussion

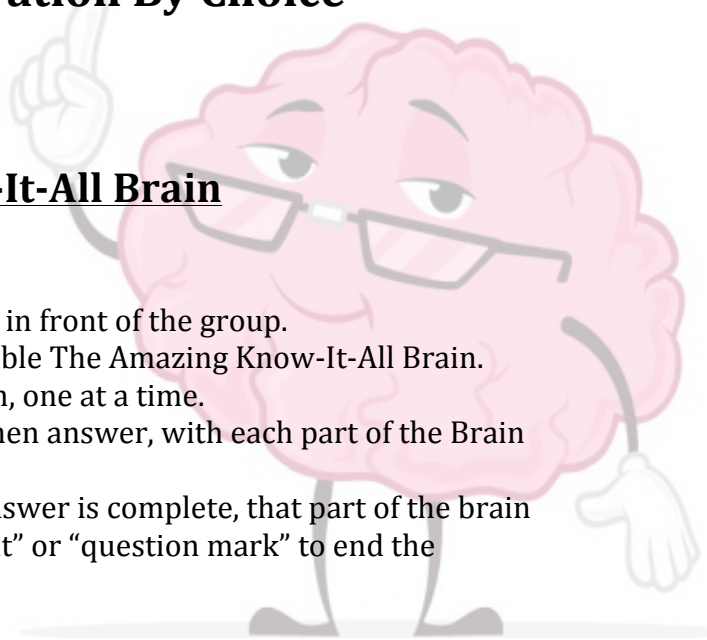
- How did you feel during the full group warm-up?
 - What did you enjoy about it?
 - What did you find challenging?
 - What value did you take away from the interactions you had?
- How did you feel during the small group warm-up?
 - What did you enjoy about it?
 - What did you find challenging?
 - What value did you take away from the interactions you had?

Participation or Observation By Choice

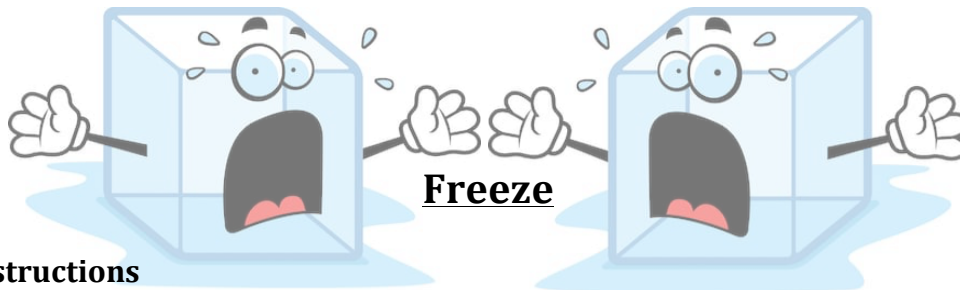
:35-:45 – Game #3 (example game below)

The Amazing Know-It-All Brain

- **Instructions**
 - 5 volunteer participants will stand up in front of the group.
 - They represent the VERY knowledgeable The Amazing Know-It-All Brain.
 - Audience members will ask a question, one at a time.
 - The Amazing Know-It-All Brain will then answer, with each part of the Brain giving one word at a time.
 - When a part of the brain thinks the answer is complete, that part of the brain will say “period” or “exclamation point” or “question mark” to end the response.
 - Next question!
- **Learning Objectives**
 - Listening to others helps you do your job better.
 - You do not get always make the decision.
 - You have to accept others’ decisions and make them work.
 - Sometimes we have to come up with a solution on the spot, under pressure!



:45-:55 – Game #4 (example game below)



- **Instructions**
 - 5 volunteer participants will stand up in front of the group.
 - The audience will suggest:
 - A location where the 5 people are
 - An activity those 5 people are doing at that location
 - The 5 people will begin acting out that activity and talking
 - Anyone from the audience, at any point, can say “FREEZE!”
 - All 5 people in the scene will freeze in whatever position they are in.
 - Then that audience member will come up, tap someone on stage to replace, and take over their spot *IN THE SAME PHYSICAL POSITION THE ORIGINAL PERSON WAS IN*.
 - Then the new person will restart the scene, using the position they took over to change the activity.
 - The other 4 people will join the new person in the new activity.
 - **EXAMPLE:** Someone is painting a house (*think painting up and down repeatedly*), an audience member yells freeze, replaces the painter, and restarts the scene pretending that they are now waving a magic wand and everyone else will be part of casting magic spells, too.
- **Learning Objectives**
 - Paying attention to others and thinking how you can jump into help.
 - There is always room for new ideas.
 - When new ideas are introduced, we can adapt and support those ideas.

:55-:65 – Debrief the participation and observation exercises

Facilitated Discussion

- **For those who participated:**
 - What did you enjoy about it?
 - What did you find challenging?
 - What value did you take away from the interactions you had?
- **For those who observed (and everyone did at some point):**
 - What did you see happening that went well?
 - What did you see happening that seemed challenging?

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- What value did you take away from the interactions you saw taking place?

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