Exploring Leadership

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: NETWORKING

Networking is one of the best resources for career development and professional success. A good network can provide job leads, possibilities for advancement, and opportunities for personal improvement.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

"It's not *what* you know. It's *who* you know." What does that mean? Can you think of an example of it in your own life?

Networking allows you access to opportunities you might not be able to find on your own. Your network includes all the people you know and all the people *they* know. If you are looking for a career, your network can provide you with job leads, reference letters, job search advice, and insight into new fields. Most job openings are unadvertised; they go to people who have connections within the organization. That's networking. Let's try it on a small scale.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Illustrate how a network expands an individual's knowledge base and opportunities.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Two copies of the Appendix, one to cut up and one for reference during the activity, just in case.
- Cut out the squares in each grid and keep them in separate piles: cards & clues.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

- Hand out the paper squares that have the names and suits of cards on them, and have participants get into networks based on the card number: Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks, Tens, and Twos. (Joker is wild and can join any network.) While participants find their primary networks, lay out the clues face up on an open surface.
- Now that you know your primary network, come up and get your clue. (It tells you which one on your paper, e.g., Family 3, Trio 2, etc..) You are only to take your own clue and return to share it with your primary network.
- Each clue is only part of what is needed to solve the riddle. Listen carefully while each member of your primary network reads their clue aloud. [There will not be enough clues in any one network to solve a riddle yet.]

FACILITATION TIPS:

- This activity works best with groups of 16-25.
- If a group can't solve the riddle, answers are included in Appendix 2. If they think to network with the facilitator, you might reward their efforts by helping them.
- The Queen of Spades/Math 1 will have no third network because the riddle only has one clue. (Give a hint.)

- Armed with your clue and the knowledge of your primary network, you are now going to proceed to your secondary network based on the suit of the card you have been assigned: Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs (again, Joker's wild).
- Read your clue aloud again to your secondary network, and see if they can help you solve the riddle by remembering the clues from their previous networks. If not, can they tell you who has the same riddle in their primary network?
- Finally, move to your final network, made up of all the people with different clues to the same riddle: Word 1, Word 2, Word 3, etc. Read the clues in order and work together to solve the riddle if you can.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did networking help you solve the riddle?
- How was the experience in each of your 3 networks different? What did you notice?
- How does networking save time as well as provide clues?
- Queen of Spades/Math 1: Why was it so hard to solve your riddle?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What networks do you belong to in real life?
- Describe a time a network helped you complete a task or accomplish a goal.
- Who do you think will be important to network with in the future?

CONCLUSION:

Networking is a valuable tool for professional success. It's not just who you know; it's who they know. It can be uncomfortable to put yourself out there. However, there is much to be gained by networking. It pays to be connected to networks of people.

REFERENCES
- https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/networking-in-business
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