

Exploring Leadership

TEAMWORK: COOPERATION

Cooperation in any organization improves overall employee performance and organizational productivity. The true spirit of Cooperation is when the strengths and weaknesses of team members can enhance and complement each other.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

- Think of a time you had to work with others to accomplish a goal. Maybe it was on a sports team or a group project. Do you enjoy cooperative work, or do you prefer to work solo? Why?

Some people believe that Cooperation just means letting someone else take charge and do most of the work. Others believe that it means doing all the work themselves. Neither is correct. Cooperation with a team requires an individual contribution from every team member.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Discover that team Cooperation requires different individual efforts.
- Cooperate with a team in a simple activity.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- No supplies are needed.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Lean on Me activity instructions to help enforce the importance of Cooperation amongst team members. Start of by stand participants in a circle. Ask all to join hands, and count off by twos.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Participants can add variations to this activity by taking turns being a "one" or "two."
- Encourage team members to push past their comfort level a bit for the sake of achieving the team goal of holding the position to whatever time they set.
- Ones lean into the center of the circle and Twos lean out of the circle. Their feet may not move. All participants should be leaning at a 45-degree angle (at least), so that they are not able to remain upright without the support of the rest of the circle.
- When the group has figured out a way to do this so that they can hold the position for at least 30 seconds, the task is complete. This may involve restructuring the order of those in the circle, switching numbers, or other adjustments to achieve team balance even though each individual is completely off balance.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important for all team members to participate?
- What was your contribution to the team's success?
- What adjustments did the group have to make in order to achieve balance?
- Did Cooperation mean that every person had exactly the same responsibility? Why or why not?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What lesson about Cooperation in this simple activity can be applied to real life teams?
- What are the advantages of having every team member contribute to the task?



CONCLUSION:

Working in Cooperation is better than working competitively. Teams who cooperate know more, communicate better, achieve goals faster, and are more productive, but true Cooperation requires individual contribution. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Don't be the weakest link. Cooperate.

Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution and is committed to a learning and working environment free from discrimination. For USU's non-discrimination notice, see equity.usu.edu/non-discrimination.

REFERENCES

- <https://jarche.com/2009/12/co-operation-from-soft-skill-to-hard-skill/>
- <https://www.marketing91.com/advantages-of-team-cooperation/>
- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>