



Exploring Leadership

TEAMWORK: COOPERATION

Cooperation in teams leads to better results. True cooperation happens when team members use their strengths to support one another. Everyone brings something important to the group. It's like a puzzle—each piece matters, and when they fit together, the picture becomes clear. Cooperation helps people feel valued, which makes the team stronger.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

Think about a time you worked with others on a goal, like a sports team or group project. Did you enjoy it, or do you prefer working solo? Why?

Some think cooperation means letting others do the work or taking over. But real cooperation means everyone takes responsibility, shares ideas, and works toward one goal. It's about being active, not stepping back or doing it all. Great teams need balance—everyone gives their best and supports each other.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Discover that team cooperation requires everyone to do their parts.
- Cooperate with a team in a simple activity.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- No supplies needed

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

This activity, Lean on Me, focuses on teamwork and trust. By working together to stay balanced, participants will see how collaboration leads to success.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Encourage participants to try switching roles in the activity, taking turns being a "one" or "two."
- Encourage team members to step out of their comfort zones and hold the position as long as they can.
- Ask everyone to form a circle and hold hands.
- Assign numbers around the circle: One, Two, One, Two, and so on.
- Tell the Ones to lean into the center of the circle and the Twos to lean outward, creating a balance where no one can stand upright alone.
- Explain they need to keep their feet planted and lean at a 45-degree angle. This ensures everyone relies on the group for support.
- Challenge the group to hold this position for 30 seconds. If they lose balance, ask them to brainstorm solutions, like adjusting positions or switching roles, to succeed.
- Once they achieve balance, highlight how this activity demonstrates the importance of teamwork, problem-solving, and trust.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important for all team members to participate, and how does it impact the team's success?
- Does cooperation mean everyone has the same responsibility? Why or why not?
- What adjustments did your group make to achieve balance?
- How did your individual contribution help your team succeed?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are the advantages of having every team member contribute to the task?
- What lesson about cooperation from this activity applies to real-life teams?



CONCLUSION:

Don't be the weakest link—step up and give your best. True cooperation happens when every team member contributes their strengths and effort. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and a team is only as strong as its least involved member. Working together is more powerful than working alone. Teams that cooperate learn more, communicate better, and reach goals faster. When you build trust and lift each other up, your team can accomplish more than you ever imagined.

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

- Co-operation: from soft skill to hard skill: <https://jarche.com/2009/12/co-operation-from-soft-skill-to-hard-skill/>
- What are the Advantages Of Team Cooperation: <https://www.marketing91.com/advantages-of-team-cooperation/>
- Ask IFAS <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>