

FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTABILITY

Strong leaders stay calm, think on their feet, and adapt when things don't go as planned. Flexibility is essential in leadership, teamwork, and service projects, where unexpected challenges are inevitable. This activity helps participants practice adjusting quickly, problem-solving under pressure, and staying focused on their goals, even when things don't go as expected.

Flexibility is staying open to change and adjusting your approach as needed. It's the attitude of remaining calm and going with the flow when plans shift.

Adaptability is about taking action—actively adjusting, problem-solving, and finding solutions when things don't go as planned.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Scenario cards (see appendix)
- Optional: Whiteboard, chart paper, or markers for brainstorming

Conversation Starter: Murphy's Law says, "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." Think of a time this happened to you—what went wrong, and how did you handle it?

HOW TO BE FLEXIBLE: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Instructions:

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Give each group a scenario card with an event goal, a plan, and an unexpected challenge. Midway through, introduce a second surprise challenge to test their adaptability.
- Encourage groups to assign roles and act out their solutions, bringing the scenario to life through role-playing.
- Groups brainstorm how to adapt while keeping the event's goals in mind.
- Each group presents their solution, and the class discusses the different approaches teams used to solve the challenge.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Develop problem-solving skills in response to unexpected challenges.
- Understand why adapting to change is an essential leadership skill.
- Practice adapting to challenges through role-playing and group discussions.

FACILITATION TIPS

Model flexibility in real time. If something doesn't go as planned during the lesson, point it out and adjust on the spot—this shows participants how to adapt under pressure.



REFLECTION

- How do you usually feel when things don't go as planned? Frustrated? Excited? Stressed? Why?
- What strategies help you adjust when things change unexpectedly?
- If you could choose one word to describe how you'll handle challenges differently moving forward, what would it be?

APPLICATION

- How could being flexible help you in a group project at school or youth council?
- As a group, let's create a 'Stay Calm Under Pressure' guide. What are the best strategies for handling unexpected challenges?
- How can we prepare for unexpected problems in leadership?
- Dive Deeper: What's more important—having a perfect plan or being able to adjust when things change? Why?

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

-Did participants see how flexibility and problem-solving make leaders more effective?

-Did participants relate this activity to real-life situations where adaptability helps overcome obstacles?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Great leaders stay calm, adapt, and find solutions when things go wrong. Flexibility and problem-solving turn obstacles into opportunities for success.



Community Fundraiser – Bake Sale Gone Wrong

Goal: Your youth group is hosting a bake sale to raise money for a community event.

Plan: It's a busy Saturday morning at the local farmers' market, and you've set up a table to sell baked goods. You've baked cookies, cupcakes, and brownies, all neatly arranged to attract buyers. The community members are excited, and you're ready to raise money for a great cause.

Challenge #1: A gust of wind knocks over the table, ruining half the baked goods. With fewer items to sell, how will you adjust your plan?

(Give this second challenge out halfway through their planning)

Challenge #2: The cash box is missing! Without a way to collect money or give change, how can you continue the fundraiser?

Community Talent Show - Tech Trouble

Goal: You're organizing a community talent show to showcase local performers of all ages.

Plan: It's a lively evening at the community center. The stage is set, the performers are backstage practicing, and everyone is excited about the show. Your team is responsible for ensuring that everything runs smoothly.

Challenge #1: Right as the first performance begins, the microphones stop working. Without them, the singers and speakers won't be heard. How do you fix this problem quickly?

(Give this second challenge out halfway through their planning)

Challenge #2: The key act cancels last-minute. How will you fill the time and keep the show flowing?

Community Park Cleanup – Nature Disaster

Goal: Your volunteer group is cleaning up a local park and planting flowers to make it more welcoming for the community.

Plan: It's a beautiful Saturday morning at the local park. Volunteers are ready with trash bags, gardening tools, and plants. You can already imagine how much nicer the park will look.

Challenge #1: Trash bags rip, spilling everything back onto the ground. Now it's messier than when you started. How will you stay motivated and get back on track?

(Give this second challenge out halfway through their planning)

Challenge #2: Just as you're wrapping up the trash cleanup, dark clouds roll in, and heavy rain starts. The ground is too wet to plant flowers. What's your backup plan?

Community Sports Tournament – Game Day Chaos

Goal: Your community is hosting a recreational soccer tournament. You're part of a team that's been practicing hard.

Plan: It's game day, and the field is buzzing with excitement. Teams are warming up, and the crowd is cheering. Everything is set.

Challenge #1: A star player doesn't show up. How do you adjust the lineup and strategy to make up for it?

(Give this second challenge out halfway through their planning)

Challenge #2: Mid-game, the referee leaves unexpectedly due to an emergency. Now there's no official to make calls. How will you handle disputes and keep the game fair?

Community Newsletter – Last-Minute Deadline

Goal: Your local youth group is in charge of putting together a community newsletter to share news, upcoming events and important updates.

Plan: The community center is busy with volunteers typing up articles and editing photos. The newsletter needs to be printed and distributed before the big weekend community event.

Challenge #1: The computer crashes, deleting one of the major stories. How will you recover the lost content and still meet the deadline?

(Give this second challenge out halfway through their planning)

Challenge #2: The printer breaks down, and now you can't print copies. With the community event approaching, how will you make sure the newsletter reaches the community?
