

| Essential Standard   | Clarifying Objective  |
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| 6.ICR.1<br>Understand healthy and effective interpersonal communication and relationships. | 6.ICR.1.1<br>Classify behaviors as either productive or counterproductive to group functioning. |

## Materials Needed:

Timer or stopwatch

Flipchart paper

Several markers

Tape

5 different jigsaw puzzles with no more than 15-20 pieces per puzzle

Envelopes or Ziploc bags

## Focus:

The students will participate in the Human Knot.

1. Divide the class into groups of 10-12 students each.
2. Ask students to stand in a close circle with shoulders almost touching.
3. Everyone raise his or her right hand. With the right hand, hold hands with the person across the circle from them. (If there is an uneven number in the circle, one person won't be able to hold hands, but it will work out in the next set of directions.)
4. Everyone should raise his or her left hand. With the left hand, hold hands with someone else in the circle but it cannot be the person next to them or opposite them.
5. Students are to continue holding hands throughout this activity. (Don't let go.)
6. While still holding hands, students are to unravel themselves and return into a circle. Allow 10 minutes. (Some groups will be successful and others will not.)  
The teacher should monitor the activity, making sure no one gets hurt.
7. The teacher should listen to the dialogue and notice what's happening within the group. Did a leader emerge? Does everyone talk at once? Are they having fun? Is there a lot of arguing? Does everyone willingly follow one person?
8. Most groups will need about 10 minutes; however, you may choose to give the groups more or less time.

Follow-up discussion: (Students should be able to answer these questions even if they didn't succeed in the allotted time.)

- *What behaviors got in the way of the group achieving their goal?*
- *What behaviors helped the group meet their goal?*
- *Did an individual(s) emerge as the leader?*
- *Would it have helped if team members had agreed on group rules before beginning the activity? Why or why not?*
- *What are some group rules that may have been helpful in this activity?*

## Review:

Ask students the following questions:

- *Have you ever worked in a group before to accomplish a task or job?*
- *What are some behaviors that make it hard for the group to be successful at accomplishing the task?*
- *What are some behaviors that help the group be effective and accomplish the assigned task?*

Statement of Objectives:

*Today we're going to focus on skills and communication used within a group. By the end of today's lesson, you will be able to explain the difference between informal and formal groups and you will be able to list various rules and/or behaviors that would enhance a group's ability to function effectively.*

## Teacher Input:

Discuss or share the following ideas with the class. *You have had many experiences functioning in a group. Group association plays a major role in your selection of close friends, self-concept, popularity, dating, and types of activities in which they will be involved. Students belong to all types of groups – some formal or structured (like cooperative learning groups used in classes, school clubs or sport teams, a Little League team, youth group) and some informal or unstructured (like a party, some friends going bowling, a pick-up ball game).*

Tell students that the Human Knot activity that the class just completed was an activity that demonstrated the importance of working together within a group to achieve a specific goal.

Ask students:

- *What types of groups have you belonged to? (Write the names of the groups on the board.)*
- *Did this group have a task, job or a goal that required the group members to work together to be successful?*

*A well-functioning group will exhibit the following behaviors:*

- *Collaboration – combines the contributions of each member to create the end product. This improves the product and gives value to each member.*
- *Uses stated or commonly understood rules – the group members know what is expected of them.*
- *Cooperation and communication skills are practiced.*
- *Has common goals – everyone understands what the outcomes should be.*

*As most groups begin to function, a leader is either appointed or will emerge quite naturally.*

*To be successful, members of groups usually assume certain roles and responsibilities. Some of these responsibilities include generating ideas, the ability to compromise, and*

*the skill of recognizing possible consequences. Group members who do not assume these roles adequately or who assume disruptive or nonproductive roles usually create frustration for themselves and the rest of the group. Therefore, practicing the behaviors conducive to group functioning is one that will serve students well now and in the future.*

## Guided Practice:

Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students. Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper, a marker and tape for attaching the sheet to the wall.

Each group should choose a “reporter” (someone who will report the group’s work to the entire class) and a “recorder” (someone who will write down the group’s ideas). Assign each group one formal group and one informal group. Each group will develop and write on flip chart paper a list of rules that will help each group function smoothly and effectively. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to work on these lists. Some examples of formal groups include: athletic team, church youth group, school classes, school clubs (FCA, Student Council), debate team, Girl or Boy Scouts, 4-H Club, co-workers at a part-time job, cooperative learning groups within a classroom, and certain school classes such as band, chorus, strings, dance, and drama that would be responsible for performances. Examples of informal groups may include: groups of friends (getting along, participating in certain activities such as a paintball game, pick-up ballgame, going to the movie, ballgame, or the mall), members of a neighborhood, family (getting along and doing chores within the family), or all the members of your church.

Before sharing, instruct recorder to place an asterisk or star beside each rule that would be stated. After each group has completed the assignment, ask the reporter to post and read over the groups they were assigned and the rules for each group. Ask the class to compare and contrast the sets of rules from each group.

After all the groups have reported, ask the class:

- *Which rules appear on every list? Why are these rules on every list?*
- *Are there any rules that appear only occasionally? Why?*
- *What rules do we have in this class? Are those rules on any of the lists?*
- *Did you notice a difference between the rules for the formal groups and the rules for the informal groups? (In the discussion that follows this activity, be sure that the students recognize that for the informal groups, most rules will be understood, not written. However, for formal groups, the rules will be more structured and maybe even in written form and posted for all members of the group to see.)*

Tell the class that rules help to guide our behavior within a group and remind us which behaviors will enable the group to work more effectively and efficiently toward their goal.

## Independent Practice:

Tell the class now they will have an opportunity to practice the behaviors that will help the group function, as posted around the room on the flipchart paper.

Prepare in advance: For each puzzle, remove the puzzle pieces from the frame and place them in an envelope or Ziploc bag. Place the envelope of puzzle pieces on top of the empty frame. After all five puzzles are in envelopes, take 1-3 pieces out of each envelope and place them in a different puzzle's envelope. When you are finished, each envelope will have most of the pieces to its puzzle along with 1-3 pieces from another puzzle.

Divide the class into 5 groups, sitting together in one area. Distribute a puzzle frame and the corresponding envelope or puzzle pieces to each group. Tell the class they will have 5 minutes to put together their puzzle, working together as a group and practicing positive group behavior. It is further expected that the class, as a whole, will have all 5 puzzles put together within the 5 minutes.

Do **not** tell them about the switched pieces.

Start a timer so the students can hear it tick or look at the time passing.

While the groups work on their puzzles, the teacher should move around the room noting both positive and negative group behavior. If asked about the switched pieces, the teacher should acknowledge hearing the students, but don't add anything else.

It is hoped that students will behave effectively both within their own small group and within the entire class as well.

Option: You may have one student serve as an "Observer." The observer will watch how the students interact both within their groups and among the groups. He/she should write on paper each time the students use one of the rules listed on the wall and each time they break those rules. If an observer is used, he/she will share the observations before going on to Closure.

Ask students:

- *What are some positive behaviors the members of your group used to help the group achieve their goal?*
- *What are some positive behaviors that were used to help the entire class achieve their goal?*
- *Were there some behaviors exhibited that made it hard for your group to function effectively? (Share some of your observations and if you used an observer's, allow that student an opportunity to share his/her observations with the class.)*

Conclude this activity by reminding students that in this activity, just like in life, things don't go always as we planned and we are faced with roadblocks and stressors.

- *What roadblocks and stressors did you face in this activity?*

(Answers: clock ticking, didn't have all pieces, and didn't have all the rules)

Finally, remind students that they will work in many groups in their lives. Tell them to remember the rules that the class decided are important in all groups, both formal and informal, and to notice what behaviors you and your friends use to help the group succeed.

## Closure:

*Today you have demonstrated behaviors that help a group to function effectively and behaviors that hinder groups. We only looked at groups you may belong to now. In the future, you will belong to many different groups – like band, clubs, student council, debate team, youth group, work, fraternity or sorority, college. The rules we discussed today, both stated and understood, are important rules for individual group members to follow and apply to any group you may be a member of both today and in the future.*