Activity Description:

Workshop #1: Team Building Exercise – Giving Everyone a Voice

Objective: The group will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of hearing everyone’s opinion and ideas during group discussion.

Lesson Focus Question: How can we make sure that everyone in a group discussion is heard? Why is this important?

Number of Participants: Any number of people

As a starting point for the session for the day, discuss with the group the dynamics of how groups develop over time. Explain the forming, storming, norming/performing and transforming stages.

In order to better understand the storming stage and get everyone involved, conduct the following activity throughout the workshop/training session. Many times when leading a group workshop, it is difficult to get input from everyone in the room. Sometimes people are naturally shy or less than eager to share their ideas. This can also be used to place limits on dominant or overeager speakers.

Each person is given the same number of toothpicks (one to five toothpicks depending on time available.) Every time someone speaks s/he gives up a toothpick. When someone has used all their toothpicks they may not speak again until everyone else's toothpicks are gone too. (Decide beforehand whether people may give their toothpicks to other members of the group. If they do decide to give up a toothpick, they must tell the group why they are choosing not to speak and giving their voice away.)

If the workshop is not over, and discussion is continuing, the toothpicks can be re-distributed when all of them are used up.

The facilitator should guide the discussion and encourage full participation throughout the workshop, paying attention to people who still have toothpicks to help draw people out if they are being reluctant to contribute. The facilitator can also guide the discussion on how difficult it is for some people to sit and listen and for others to speak up.
A follow up activity would be for people to note what was easy for them and what was difficult within the group so they are more self-aware of dynamics within their groups. This information could then be useful when moving forward with group work or assigning people into groups in the future.

**Duration/Length:**

**Time Requirement:** Activity embedded in the lesson, so no specific time requirement

**Tools/Materials Needed:**

Toothpicks or matchsticks or popsicle sticks – anything that is easily accessible and inexpensive

**Partnerships Recommended:**

School counselor, career tech education teachers, homeroom teachers
Developmental Level (e.g. Preschool, Elementary, Middle, College, etc.):

| Age 10+ |

Suggestions for Scaling (ideas for use with students of other ages):

The Stages of Group Dynamics (Storming, Forming, Norming/Performing, Transforming) discussion could be scaled up or down, as deemed appropriate by age groups.

Standards Covered (NCDA Guidelines, WY C/VE Standards, ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors):

CV5.2.1 Students identify and practice compromise and conflict resolution skills.
CV8.2.1 Career-aware students effectively communicate using a variety of appropriate methods.
CV12.2.1 College and career-ready students communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason.