



Unit: Team Building
Skill 32: Building Trust
Activity A: Wind in the Willows

Activity Skills:

Communication, positive attitude, trust, support.

Leadership Skills:

Trust, support.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

15-20 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Large area, preferably with soft surface (outdoors on grass, etc).

Do Ahead:

N/A

Source:

Developed by:
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Based On:

James Neill's version of the common trust activity, "Willow in the Wind"

BACKGROUND:

This activity is a variation upon the classic trust fall. In this exercise, participants form a tight circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle closes his/her eyes and does a trust lean into the person behind him/her. Each participant takes turns being passed around the circle. The primary objective is to teach people the importance of caring for one another and to foster trust among the participants.

WHAT TO DO:

Begin by reminding the participants that in order to nurture a safe and comfortable atmosphere, everybody must do their part to demonstrate that they are ready to support their colleagues. Also, as with any physical game or activity, safety is a concern. Be sure to inform participants that if they feel uncomfortable at any point they may excuse themselves from the game.

Instruct the group to form a tight circle, the diameter of which should be no more than 3-4 feet (if the group is very large, split them up into smaller groups to get a correctly sized circle). Select someone to be the "willow." The willow will stand in the middle with their feet together, eyes closed and body straight and stiff.

Next lay some ground rules for safely passing members around:

- Be ready and alert
- Keep one foot in front of the other
- Keep your arms outstretched, with your elbows locked and your fingers loose.
- If you are in the center, never lean backward to be passed around the circle until you have first announced that you are ready to be passed around, and your group has responded that they are ready to pass you around.

The willow will announce, "I am ready to be passed around the circle" and the rest of the participants will respond, "We are ready to pass you, fall away!"

The participant will then lean back into the person behind them. The "Wind in the willow" can then be passed to the other participants in the circle, as all should be close enough to support the participant in the center without the participant having to move their feet. Give each participant the opportunity to be passed around the circle for a minute or two or until they have had enough.

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Skill 32: Becoming A Team
Activity A: Wind in the Willows

Notes:

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- How does it feel to put your trust in the hands others?
- How does it feel being responsible for somebody else?
- What is it like when everybody supports one another?
- What did you learn about yourself from this activity?

Apply:

- Why is it important to be able to trust your colleagues?
- How do you think this activity would have worked if your colleagues had not demonstrated concern for your comfort or safety? What does this tell us about trust?
- What characteristics or conditions make it easier for you to trust someone else?
- What are you going to do to help others to feel comfortable trusting you in the future?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Option 1: Create a collage of images that you think illustrate the concepts of caring and support. Write a short explanation of your work explaining why you chose to include the things you did.

Option 2: Ask participants to write about a time when they had to trust someone they didn't really know very well. What were the circumstances? Was the participant able to develop a trusting relationship with the other person? If not, what would have helped?

Resources and Web Links:

The Wilderdom Store, [Trust Activities](http://www.wilderdom.com/games/TrustActivities.html)
<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/TrustActivities.html>

The Wilderdom Store, [Group Activities, Games, Exercises and Initiatives](http://www.wilderdom.com/games/)
<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/>

Geocities, [Trust Activities](http://www.geocities.com/initiativetasks/Trust.htm)
<http://www.geocities.com/initiativetasks/Trust.htm>