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Brightwater Site

***Desert Survival***

**A Cooperative Group Challenge**

for students attending

**Brightwater Science & Environmental Centre**

**of SPSD**

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**Revised: April 2005**

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**Desert Survival – Brightwater Cooperative Group Challenge**

For other great resources, see (www.geocities.com/initiativetasks/)

**Facilitator Notes:**

This group challenge is a sequence of initiative tasks. Its purpose is to help students to develop cooperative teamwork skills through simulated situations of interdependence. The tasks encourage creative thinking, problem solving, and leadership.

The desert survival scenario ties the tasks together providing the group with a unifying purpose - to survive!

As a facilitator you must allow the group to solve each problem on their own without offering any assistance. Through negotiating, thinking, experimenting, and even failing together, without outside assistance, the group will learn important lessons. So when you have the natural urge to step in and help, stop yourself. Observe and enjoy!

You give them the parameters and make sure that they are staying within the rules of each task. If they fail, have the person that didn’t make it or the whole group start again, whichever seems appropriate for the task. Avoid being too punitive. As long as they are learning the group effectiveness skills, the tasks are working. If they get away with a slight rule infraction here and there, it is not a big deal.

You also monitor for safety. If they are getting too risky for your comfort, step in and say “Safety!” which will alert them to a problem. They must come up with the alternative. No hints or clues from the facilitator!

The 7 Group Challenges (they may not get to all 7)

1. Pass the Sunscreen

2. Escape From the Stalking Snakes

3. Mirage Oasis

4. Cross the Geyser

5. The Tree Tunnel

6. Swollen Eyes in the Clear-cut

7. Blind Emergency Signals

Have fun watching them learn how to work together.

At the end of the session, on the walk back to camp, have them think about what they learned. Ask them to think about and discuss the questions listed on the card entitled “Preparing for the Reporters”.

## Desert Survival – Brightwater Cooperative Group Challenge

Your group is an international research team that has discovered some amazing new information about global climate change by studying the desert environment.

But, some opponents to the research have stolen your vehicle, your equipment and all your supplies. They have left you to die in the harsh and treacherous sand hills of the Brightwater Desert to stop you from sharing your research with the world.

Your challenge is to get your *whole team* back to safety. (Each of the scientists in your research team must survive because they alone can explain their part of the discovery you have made). You must overcome seven challenges by using the strengths and abilities of all group members.

You face 7 Group Challenges (that everyone must survive)

1. Pass the Sunscreen
2. Escape from the Stalking Snakes
3. Mirage Oasis
4. Cross the Geyser
5. The Tree Tunnel
6. Swollen Eyes in the Clear-cut
7. Blind Emergency Signals

Because of your research, the health and safety of the whole world depends on your survival! Good Luck.

Challenge #1 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Pass the Sunscreen

* Begin at **Sully Field**, the baseball diamond in the field by the parking lot/ swimming pool building. Read the scenario to the students. Then walk a bit along the ski trail (mowed path with yellow markers). Watch for the grey wood signs with “Escape #” marked along the trail.
* Your group must **pass around a special hoop that will help protect you from UV rays from the sun.**
* You must all hold hands in a circle. The facilitator joins the circle with one hoop on each arm. Students need to pass the two different colored hoops in opposite directions around the circle. If you let go of hands, the special UV coating won’t work. You know that sunscreen is as important in the desert as it is in the arctic due to effects of climate change!
* Your group challenge is to figure out how to pass the two hoops back to the starting people as quickly as possible without letting go of each other’s hands. *[Basically, they crawl through the hoops not letting go of hands].*
* Good luck! Don’t forget to bring the hoops with you for the next activity (#2), Escape from the Stalking Snakes!

*[Facilitator: Take the hula hoops along with you, for extra sunscreen protection and because you will need them for next session, #2 Escape from the Stalking Porcupines].*

Challenge #2 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Escape from the Stalking Snakes

Facilitator: Look for the wooden sign “Escape # 2” in the prairie, adjacent to the ski trail (yellow markers).

**Set Up:** **Hands bonded together -** The intruders have left you bound together in this way:

* Form a **circle** (whole team)
* Reach across the circle and hold the hand of one person with your right hand and another person with your left (not the people right beside you) (This is like the game knots but don’t get untangled. You will just walk in a ‘knot’).
* You must **continue to hold** those same hands **throughout this challenge.** (By the end of the challenge, your hands will have melted apart)

**Challenge:** **Escape From the Stalking Snakes**

* Starting **from Sully Field**, your group must travel (with hands frozen together) across the field and **into the repellant (the hula hoops). [toss the hoops on the ground for group to step in]**
* The protection only lasts for **45 seconds**, after that, you could get bitten, and if you do, who knows what could happen then?!!? So it is very important that everyone must be inside the hula-hoop\*(everyone must have their legs inside the hoop). **Repeat** same sequence to the second and third hula-hoops with a new dose of Snake repellant. The snakes are actually rare. Sometimes these snakes can even adapt to very cold conditions, which is an area of study of one of your scientists. So your group of scientists does not want to harm them, just avoid them.

Facilitator: Walk along with the students, tossing the hula hoop down a distance along the trail, challenging the students to all get in the hoop. Then toss it along the trail one more time as you move along to the third activity down in the pit.

Challenge #3 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Mirage Oasis

Facilitator: Continue along the ski trail, past the bushes and take an immediate left into the large pit in the ground. Look for a bright blue tarp that covers the wood for this activity.

Your group must get across what you believe to be a water pit. In your fatigued state, you think that there might be very deep water in this pit. You are all aware of the psychological delusion that will result if you fall off into something other than water. But make sure you don’t sink to your death!!

Challenge: **Cross the deep water using Planks and Logs**

* Your group finds **4 planks** (that sink) and **5 logs** (that float) wrapped in a blue tarp.
* You must use these 9 pieces of wood to get across the water. If anyone should fall into the water, the group must start again. [Facilitator: use your discretion.]
* The group must go across all together because the water level is rising and no one can be safely left behind on the banks. Watch out for the very rare cactus at the right hand edge of the pit. The cactus is actually known as Prickly Pear Cactus (and is not really that rare!) and is a source of liquid for dehydrated beings lost in the desert. The spines (leaves) need to be removed first, a rather prickly operation. Please don’t try this right now.

Challenge #4 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Cross the Geyser

* Your group has discovered a natural geyser in the ground that blows up every now and then.
* Because the eruption causes a noxious sulfur fume, you must cross as soon as possible.

The Challenge:

* Each group member must balance on the wood (Two railway ties located to right of trail by aspen bluff).
* Falling off the log will harm your lungs due to the fumes.
* Each group member must also touch each end of the log (right hands must touch the right end, left hands touch the left end) to collect samples of the sulfur fumes for further research about medicinal uses of the gases…A tree that is fed with minute quantities of these fumes brings healing.
* Remember, everyone must stay on the log while each member moves to both end.
* *Facilitator: this game is also called ‘waltzing the log’ which might give the scientists a bit of a clue…*

Challenge #5 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

The Tree Tunnel

* Your group must **pass through the tree tunnel** by following the path that passes between the red markers, and then your entire group needs to pass through the openings in the branches to get out.

Part 1: The Deadly Branches

* Each person must get through the tunnel without contacting any of the branches.
* Any contact with whichever branch will awaken the trees from sleeping and trap your group inside. Be careful to step over branches on the ground as well!

Part 2: The Openings in the Branches

* Blocking the exit are two trees, laced between the two is a mutant poison ivy plant. There are small openings between the ivy leaves…. just big enough for you to crawl through.
* You cannot touch or disturb the ivy or else you will have a huge blistery rash. Only two people can go through the openings. Once the second person has gone through the opening, the ivy will cover up the hole making it impenetrable. (You may want to make it so only one person can go through each opening).

Challenge #6 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Swollen Eyes in the Clear-cut

* **Between your group and safety is a stump-filled clear-cut (area of the forest that has been completely cleared of trees). In the desert, these trees have become petrified so they have significant geological value.**
* Once group members step into the clear-cut area they have an allergic reaction and their eyes swell shut so they can’t see. (Must be blindfolded)
* **Still, each group member must make it through the field without contacting any of the stumps.**
* **One member of your team has been taking allergy medication, which protects their eyes from the swelling. (Choose wisely – read *Transition* below). The person with vision can help each member step through the petrified stumps. (An option is to give some allergy medicine to a few group members so that they can act as guides for partners).**

Transition – Blindfolded to the Final Challenge

* **After this challenge, your eyes remain swollen and blinded - unless you have the allergy medication. Your group must work together to get to the final challenge. One person who has vision can guide the group members in a long chain (hold hands like the game ‘red rover’, ask scientists to face forward so they can walk easily and walk along the trail to the next – and final – challenge).**

Challenge #7 “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Blind Emergency Signal

* **Now that your puffy-eyed group has reached this open rise near the settlement (with a number of military planes flying by in training sessions each day),** you must construct an emergency signal.
* **You have rope to work with but you are still unable to open your eyes due to the swelling. Even the allergy medication has failed the one person now; so all group members are unable to see. (All group members are blindfolded)**

Challenge:

**With everyone holding the rope, form a *perfect* triangle as an emergency signal. Once it is formed, hold it in place until you hear the sound of an aircraft, which indicates that** *you have survived!* **If you *do not* hear the aircraft sound, then your shape is not a perfect triangle. (The facilitator will make the sound of a rescue aircraft).**

**\*Once successful read “*Preparing for the Reporters”* while walking back.**

Challenge Debriefing “Desert Survival” Brightwater Group Challenge Series

Preparing for the Reporters

(Reflect on your experience)

**Now that you have survived and are walking back to civilization, a pack of reporters from around the world is waiting for you. Think and talk about how you will answer the following questions**:

* What allowed your group to be successful in your quest for survival?
* How will you use what you have learned during this ordeal in the rest of your life back in civilization?
* How did you feel about the way your group approached each challenge?
* What are some of your research discoveries about Climate Change?
* What can people do about the challenge of Climate Change?
* What was the most memorable highlight from your group’s performance?
* What is the funniest blooper from your group’s performance?
* If you could have been granted one wish during your ordeal, what would it have been? Why would you have made this wish?
* What are you going to do now that you are back in civilization?