ENGAGE, PLAY, GROW!

ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING (ABC)

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Adventure Based Counseling - ABC

- Structured, non-competitive group interventions in which participants are essentially “learning by doing” (Gass, 1993)

- Action oriented with emphasis on cooperation, communication and problem solving

- Strengths-based perspective
Key Components

(Tucker, 2009)

- Interpersonal learning
- Social skills development
- Concrete and immediate consequences
- Problem solving
- Sequencing
What are the Benefits?

- Self-Esteem Building
- Communication
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Coping Skills
- Increase Trust in Others
- Assertive Leadership
- Challenge Perceptions
- Social Skills Building
- Teambuilding
- Positive Risk-Taking
- Personal Growth
Who Can Benefit?

- Children and Adolescents
- Families
- Professional groups
- Treatment and prevention groups
Aspects of ABC

- **RULES**
  - State the rules to the initiative
    - Be clear but vague (enough to allow discovery but clear enough to use the rules as they see fit)
  - Have the rules written out and posted for the group to refer to if needed
  - Make sure you know all the rules (a forgotten rule could turn a 30 minute initiative into a five minute activity.)
Aspects of ABC

- **FRAMING**
  - Setting the stage for the initiative
  - A broad framework of the activity including a story and use of metaphors
  - Adjust the level of difficulty based on the functional level of the group
Aspects of ABC

**ACTIVITY**
- Keep quiet!
  - The less said the better. Allow the group the opportunity and time to work through the initiative.
  - The group will try to solicit information from you. Give information sparingly. Direct them to the rules.
- Do not give suggestions or hints
  - Ask pointed questions instead of telling them what they could do (ex: “What is happening when you....”)
- Be playful and make it fun
Aspects of ABC

**DEBRIEFING/PROCESSING**
- Connecting the activity or experience to issues of participants daily lives
- Drawing the metaphorical associations to components of the activity
- Don’t lead the debrief, follow where the group leads the debrief
- Discuss ways to implement new strategies from what was learned in the activity
- Debriefing should be opening lines of discussion
  - Doesn’t have to be “so therapeutic” (ex: paperball fight)
Assess the possible risks or liabilities before engaging participants in ABC initiatives.
Let’s Play!
Can We Count to 10?

**RULES**

- The goal is to have the group count to 10.
- You must keep your eyes closed at all times.
- You cannot say anything except to say a number.
- A person may not say two numbers in a row.
- No one may talk at the same time.
- If more than one person talks at a time, the group must start over.
Helium Hoop

RULES

• You must maintain contact with only one finger on the hula hoop at all times.
• Only the back of your finger may touch the hula hoop.
• You must lower the hoop to the floor.
• If anyone breaks contact, your group must start over.
Tin Pan Bang Bang

**RULES**

- The object of the game is to always be in a group.
- If you are “left out” of a group, you must leave the game.
- The group size will be determined by the number of times the leader bangs on the instrument.
Onion Jousting

RULES

- You must balance the ball on the can and you may not hold it in place.
- When your ball falls off three times (whether it is knocked off or falls off by careless balancing) you are out of the game.
Hot Chocolate River

**RULES**

- The goal is to get your whole group from one side of the river to the other side.
- You may only cross the river using the marshmallows.
- The marshmallows only work when there is human contact with it at all times.
- If any group members falls in the river, the whole group must start over.
Group Juggling

RULES

- The person throwing the ball must call out the person's name he or she is throwing to.
- The group then tries to juggle as many balls as possible.
- The goal of this activity is to drop as few of the balls as possible.
The Swamp

**RULES**

- The goal is for the group to get from one end to the other end.
- There are alligators throughout the swamp.
- If any group member steps on an alligator the whole group must start over.
- Only one member may cross at a time.
- You can only step to a square that connects the one you are standing on.
Human Knot

**RULES**

- Using your left hand, hold hands with someone in the circle not directly next to you.
- Repeat with the right hand, and be sure to hold hands with a different person, who is not directly next to you.
- You can’t disconnect your hands.
Jumping Stars

RULES
• Everyone needs to have BOTH FEET inside a star.

QUESTIONS
• If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
• If you could have lunch with anyone in the world who would it be?
• If you could be an animal which would you be and why?
• Tell of an obstacle or challenge you faced this week.
• If you had one wish, what would you wish for?
Moon Ball

**RULES**

- The same person may not hit the ball twice in a row.
- The entire group must count out loud each time the ball is hit (i.e. "One! Two! Three! ...")
- The group begins counting over at zero if someone hits the ball twice in a row or if the ball makes contact with the ground.
Balloon Chaos

**RULES**

- You may only hit the balloons by hand (no holding, kicking, or throwing.)
- Without talking to each other, the group must separate the balloons into groups of like colors.
Guided River

RULES

• You may give verbal instructions to your blind folded partner to navigate them through the river.
• If you bump into the floating logs, you must start over.
• No touching... just verbal instructions.
Questions / Comments

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References

THANKS SO MUCH FOR ENGAGING, PLAYING, & GROWING WITH US!