

Mountain Guide Certification

MGS 3 Pairs Walk – An Exercise in Trust

Trusting Your Teammate – This activity is adapted from “Pairs Walk” which can be found in the book *Quicksilver* by Karl Rohnke and Steve Butler.

The main object of this is for people to learn to put their trust in another person. It will involve splitting the team up in pairs. One of the persons will be blindfolded and the other will be responsible for guiding the blindfolded person through the course. This can be adapted to indoor or outdoor situations.

1. Indoors: Set up an obstacle course in a room of your choice. You could use tables and chairs to set up a maze. Design of course is not important.

2. Outdoors: If you have an area that has natural obstacles, such as rocks, trees, fences, etc, you could set up a walking course in this area and mark it with flags, natural landmarks, etc. Again, how the course is designed is not the issue, so use your creativity!

3. Safety: It is essential that safety be emphasized in this activity. The person leading the blindfolded partner is totally responsible for the blindfolded person’s safety. Setting up a challenging course makes this activity more interesting but it needs to be a course that is safe for the participants. If you are unsure about an obstacle, error on the side of caution and do not include it.

4. How it Works – To begin, start in an area where the group cannot see the course. Split groups into pairs. A suggestion, draw names for partners; this will split up any pairs that are always together. Next, choose who will be blindfolded first and who will be the leader first.

A. Tell them they are about to embark on a journey. One person will be blindfolded and one person will be sighted for the first half of the journey. They will switch roles for the second half.

B. The sighted person is totally responsible for guiding the blindfolded person through the course. They are also responsible for the blindfolded person’s safety. This is to be taken **seriously!**

C. This activity is to be conducted in silence. The exceptions:

- 1) If you come to an obstacle that poses a danger, you may break the silence to talk the blindfolded person past the obstacle.
- 2) If the blindfolded person begins to feel so uncomfortable they want to stop.

D. When you start, each pair may choose one of the following ways to go through the course:

- 1) Holding hands
- 2) Lead person in front, blindfolded person in back with hands extended forward to shoulders of leader

3) Arm in arm.

Explain to pairs this is not a race and they should take their time to safely negotiate the course. The object is to simply lead each other through the course safely.

E. Once the pairs reach the halfway point (designated in advance), the blindfolded person will remove the blindfold and give it to the sighted person, who will then become blindfolded. After this exchange, the journey continues.

F. The path should not be deviated from to avoid unplanned obstacles.

G. When the end of the course is reached, the blindfolds can come off. Everyone is to remain silent until all pairs have completed the course.

H. **NOTE TO ADVISORS:** You will need to be present during this activity. It is a good idea to walk along the course in silence, spot checking to make sure that everyone is doing okay and to watch out for potential problems such as guides not doing their job, making sure people stay on the course, watching out for unforeseen dangers.

5. Debriefing: After everyone had finished the course, take a few moments to discuss the following questions with the group:

- ✓ What did it feel like to be guided?
- ✓ What did it feel like to be the guide?
- ✓ What did your guides do to help make you comfortable?
- ✓ What communication took place between you and your partner?
- ✓ Was there any difference between the first half of the journey and the second half, other than who was blindfolded? Was it easier, harder, go smoother, etc?
- ✓ What was the most challenging part of this activity?
- ✓ What is the relationship between this and leading the chapter?

Note: You may have to give some examples here:

Think about being a first year FFA member, sometimes you feel blind to what is going on. How can you use this exercise to help them? - *Communicate in a way to make them feel comfortable.*

When being the guide, you knew the person you were leading was depending on you. Your fellow officers and FFA members are also depending on you.

You had to work together for both of you to get through the course. As a team, you will have to work together to accomplish the chapter goals.