

Paper Airplane Activity

Divide the Room into Groups:

- A. Secretly tell a couple of people in the room that the next activity involves making a paper airplane.
- B. Ask people to select a piece of paper out of the box. A couple of people are asked to go into the hallway.
- C. Everyone in the room is told they are making paper airplanes and asked not to tell the people in the hallway what they are expected to do. Additionally, provide the following instructions:
 - One person is told they can't use their hands.
 - One person is blindfolded.
 - One person gets oven mitts.
 - One person gets instructions.

The people in the hallway are asked to come back in. A two-minute timer starts.

Halfway through the exercise, one or two people lose their planes due to unsupportive family members and need to start over (with lesser materials). One or two people can select better materials halfway through because they have engaged in the recovery community.

Everyone throws their paper airplane from a line in the front of the room to see which one flies the furthest.

Discussion

What was challenging about this activity?

- Didn't know what to do
- Didn't pick the right materials to start
- Couldn't see/use my hands
- Didn't have enough time

Did anyone feel like they wanted to quit? Did anyone quit? Did anyone feel like asking for help?

How does this relate to participants in our programs?

- They all don't start with the same materials
- They also don't know what to do
- Even if you know what to do, you can't do it with the limitations that you have
- We're asking them to do something they have never done

I assumed that everyone in the room knew how to build a paper airplane, but what if I had asked you to fold something more complicated, like a paper crane? How many of you would have not even attempted the activity? What if I threatened to dock your paycheck if you didn't fold a crane? What if I offered you \$100? Would you have at least tried? How about \$1M? How would your response change if I gave you a step-by-step instruction guide on folding a paper crane? How about if I threatened to send you to jail? How many of you would have cheated at that point?

Keep all of these things in mind as we talk about proximal goals and the imposition of incentives/sanctions.