



## Building Bridges

---

### Length of Time

60 minutes

### Size of Group

Unlimited

Grouping of 4-6 participants

### Materials Required

- lots of old newspapers
- 6-8 rolls of masking tape
- 1 liter plastic bottle  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  full of water
- 1 plastic dishpan type container
- **Building Bridges Rules Chart**

### Overview

A quick collaborative activity to help develop teamwork within groups

### Goals

- To develop teamwork
- To energize the group

### Directions for Activity

1. Tell participants they are going to be involved in a **Building Bridges Activity**.
2. Tell participants they are going to build a bridge using only the newspaper and masking tape. The bridge must be strong enough to hold this bottle (show the bottle and let participants check the feel of it for weight). The bridge must be tall enough for the dishpan to pass underneath it. The bridge must be free-standing; not attached to the wall, a piece of furniture, a person, or an article of clothing ... **FREESTANDING**.
3. Count off participants into groups of 5 people by counting 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Invite participants to get into their groups and appoint a Presenter, a Facilitator, a Recorder, an Encourager and a Timekeeper.
4. Display the **Building Bridges Rules** and clarify the understanding of the rules:



### Building Bridges Rules

---

1. Build a bridge that the dishpan can pass under.
2. Build a bridge that will hold the plastic liter bottle for 10 seconds.
3. Build a **FREESTANDING** bridge (masking tape cannot stick to a person/object).
4. 7 minutes to plan.
5. 8 minutes to build the bridge.

5. Tell participants they will have 10 minutes to plan and discuss.
6. Time the 10 minutes.
7. After 10 minutes, give each group a pile of newspapers and a roll of masking tape.
8. Inform the groups, they will now have 20 minutes to construct their bridge.
9. At the end of 18 minutes, allow the groups an additional 2 minutes to complete the bridge and prepare for presentation.
10. Call time. Invite one Presenter at a time to present their bridge. The Encourager from the group will pass the pan under the bridge. Then the Encourager will put the plastic bottle on top of the bridge. When the plastic bottle is put on top of the bridge, all participants from the group will count for 10 seconds. This will be done for each group.
11. Explain that Team Building Activities are stimulating problem-solving tasks designed to help group members develop their capacity to work effectively together. An important part of Team Building Activities is participants' reflection and discussion about the activity, how they approached the situation, and possible points of learning.
12. Provide the following discussion questions to the Facilitator from each group. Tell participants they will have 10 minutes for discussion.



### Discussion Questions

1. How did you work as a group?
2. Which part was the most difficult?
3. Did everyone participate in the same way?
4. What influenced the type of bridge built by each group?
5. Why were there no two bridges alike?
6. How did communication or lack of it affect the work of the group?
7. What characteristics of teamwork became evident during this activity?

13. Invite the Presenter from each group to take turns answering the questions.  
For example, Group One will answer question a; Group Two will answer question b, etc. When a group has an answer that is different, they should be encouraged to share.
14. Ask participants to suggest how the **Building Bridges Activity** applies to the workshop.  
**Possible Responses:** helps discussion, illustrates how working together to solve problems creates synergy, helps to view things from different points of view.
15. Thank participants for their participation.