

Leaning Pairs

Focus: Trust, working together, communication, support

Sequence: Trust Activity

Materials: None

Sources: Laurie Frank Learned this activity from Tom Smith.

Suggested Procedure

1. Have students get into pairs. Although not necessary, this activity is a little easier if the pairs are about the same height.
2. Ask people to stand back-to-back.
3. The object of the activity is to lean on each other's shoulders. As they get more comfortable, they can move their feet further apart and lean more. In this way, they will be holding each other up.

Sample Processing Questions

- How did you know that your partner was ready and willing to hold you up – what signals were they sending you that they were there for you? How did you know they were trustworthy?
- How did you know that you were ready and willing to hold your partner up-- what was going on in your mind and body to tell you that you were committed to being there for your partner? How did you show you were trustworthy?
- What did you do to protect and take care of yourself in this process?
- What is the difference between doing something and being committed to doing something? How do people behave differently when they are going through the motions and really believe in doing something?

Facilitation Notes

Walk around and monitor each pair to make sure they are working well together, and making choices that work for them. Sometimes young people will try to go too far back to the point that they are not tall enough to reach each other's hands. Sometimes one person wants to lean more than their partner. You can help people clarify what is in their own best interests rather than getting talked into something they are not ready or able to do.

When doing this with younger students, you may want to agree on a way to communicate before moving farther apart. For example, they may both agree that they are ready by asking first before moving their feet.