Guide to Cooperative Games for Social Change,  
Second Edition

By Adam F.C. Fletcher and Kari Kunst with Alyssa Elwell

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Train-the-Trainer workshops on this publication are available. Inquiries should be sent to info@adamfletcher.net

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRO</td>
<td>WHY PLAY GAMES WHEN THERE’S WORK TO DO?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 1: TIPS FOR FACILITATORS</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 2: ICEBREAKERS</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker 1: Line Ups</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker 2: Find Your Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker 3: Toss-A-Name</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker 4: Common Ground</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker 5: The Name Game</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 3: INITIATIVE GAMES</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 1: The Candle</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 2: People2People</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 3: Human Knot</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 4: The Clock</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 5: Black Knight, White Knight</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 6: Blooop</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 7: Touch The Can (Because You Can-Can-Can!)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 8: Lava Pit</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 9: Impulse</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative 10: Pass The Toxic Waste Can</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 4: TRUSTBUILDERS</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 1: Line Up Game</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 2: Skin the Snake</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 3: Trust Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 4: Blinded Partner Walk</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 5: Cookie Machine</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 6: Caterpillar</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 7: Yurt Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 8: Duo-Sit/Group Sit</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustbuilder 9: Lap Sit</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 5: FUNNERS</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funner 1: Sardines</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funner 2: Please, Please Smile</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funner 3: Human Scissors, Paper, Rock................................................................. 17
Funner 4: Crows and Cranes.................................................................................. 18
Funner 5: Blob Tag............................................................................................... 18
Funner 6: Everybody's It...................................................................................... 18
Funner 7: Face-Off............................................................................................... 18
Your Notes........................................................................................................... 19

SECTION 6: CLOSERS ............................................................................................ 20
Closer 1: Rainmaker............................................................................................. 20
Closer 2: Spider’s Web........................................................................................ 20
Closer 3: Pick a Metaphor.................................................................................. 21
Closer 4: Leaves on the Tree.............................................................................. 21
Your Notes........................................................................................................... 21

About this Publication .......................................................................................... 22
About the Authors................................................................................................ 22
Cooperative games are not new. They’ve been used for hundreds and thousands of years to build teams, develop skills, share knowledge, and foster supportive environments for learning, teaching, leadership, and to have fun.

I created Cooperative Games for Social Change for the Freechild Institute for Youth Engagement. The goal of this publication is to introduce these awesome learning tools with facilitators everywhere who are interested in making the world a better place. Each game included here is written simply; facilitators are encouraged to interpret them and change them to meet their uses.

This publication is filled with games that aren’t new. I learned many of them from these classic books:

- New Games for the Whole Family by D. LeFevre (1988)

I am also greatly indebted to my co-author, Kari Kunst, for her contributions to this publication as well as the youth consultant who edited it, Alyssa Elwell.

I would love to hear your thoughts, ideas and uses of this publication! Please email info@adamfletcher.net

—Adam F.C. Fletcher
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INTRO: WHY PLAY GAMES WHEN THERE’S WORK TO DO?

“There are at least two kinds of games: One would be called finite, the other infinite. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, and an infinite game is played for the purpose of continuing to play. The rules of a finite game may not change; the rules of an infinite game must... The finite game player aims to win eternal life; the infinite player aims for eternal birth.”

—James P. Carse

There’s so much to do! Our communities are falling apart, young people, old people, brown people, black people, poor people, and lots of other people aren’t getting the respect or power they deserve. Why play games when there’s so much work to do? There are a lot of reasons to look at, but first let’s define what we’re talking about.

What Are Cooperative Games?

Cooperative games emphasize participation, challenge and fun rather then defeating someone. They are fun, cooperative, challenging games in which the group is confronted with a specific problem to solve.

Initiative games can be used for several reasons. The games can be used to demonstrate and teach leadership skills to people, which helps to promote the growth of trust and problem-solving skills in groups.

Games can demonstrate a process of thinking about experiences that helps people learn and practice responsibility. Cooperative games are not new. Some of the classic games we participated in as children are classic because of the play emphasis. There may be competition involved, but the outcome of the competition is not sitting out or losing. Instead, it may involve switching teams so that everyone ends up on the winning team.

Some people avoid calling these "games," instead choosing "activity," "challenge," or "problem" instead. Whatever a group chooses to call them, these games can boost our efforts to create powerful, lasting community change.

Why Play Games?

When a group of people are preparing to participate in social change, there needs to be some breaking down of inhibitions before they become group participants. "There is no 'I' in T-E-A-M" and all that. Before a group can build effective solutions to the problems facing their communities, they need to trust each other and communicate. Cooperative games also help set the tone of an action.

Social change work is often hard-driven and energy-consuming. Many groups find that cooperative games offer a brisk, friendly way to bring together passionate task-oriented goals with focused, group-driven teambuilding. In other words, fun and games can propel social change! Another purpose of games is to get people to think together, as a team, so that everyone in the group has input and shares ideas. When we have input, we have ownership, and when more people have ownership there is more success.
Aren't Games Distracting?

When facilitated well, games can accentuate the purpose of your day's work or your group's purpose. Through a technique called "framing," games become relevant and powerful tools to break down barriers, build up focus, and make your group's process more effective and inclusive of all involved.

In all settings games should be used to build a sense of purpose, passion, and opportunity. Without those pieces as goals, games become pacifiers for the grown, as their potential to stave off the appetite of a group that hungers for power is immense.

In classrooms where teachers use games as "fillers" the students mope lazily back to their desks, as they know the grueling normalcy might continue. However, in classrooms where teachers use the games in context of the lessons, students aim to learn with eagerness and a sense of purpose.

Which Games Should We Play?

Many people use games as an introduction or a closing to their activities. It’s a good idea to add them throughout your day, between or as a part of a larger event. Games are a great way to break up the monotony of a long day's learning, or a hard day's work. They are also a great way to keep small children busy, and big children happy.

You may want to play a game to reinforce teamwork after a bad day (because they happen) or play a game to relieve some group stress or build the scenario to work through a problem. Games are tools that a skilled facilitator has at their fingertips in a time of need.

Great! How do we get started?

The following booklet is full of easy-to-use games. Play them safe, play them purposefully, play fun and play hard! As you read, take notes at the end of each section about your favorite games, modifications you’d make, and other important points you want to remember.

So then, PLAY ON PLAYERS! And feel free to download this from www.adamfletcher.net and to print out this guide double-sided or on re-used paper, please... It’s our world, and we CAN change it!
SECTION 1: TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

This guide can assist you in facilitating the activities you group needs and to share them with other people. This isn’t an expert’s guide that is set in stone; each activity should be altered to meet your group’s needs and situation. When you use these games for social change work, the role of the facilitator is very important and must be intentional.

Tip 1: Be a Facilitator

Presenting games as important and meaningful is challenging for the most experienced facilitators. A facilitator’s job has three parts: lead the activities, guide the reflection, and be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious!

Keep debriefing and reflection simple and straightforward. Also, share personal experiences and remember that as a young person, a student, a community member, or an adult ally, you have a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw from. Often, the mood of the instructor will set the tone for the entire group. So above all be positive and have fun with the activity, with the session, and with the players.

Tip 2: Create Guidelines & Goals

Have participants create ground rules or guidelines before you begin the games. Brainstorm potential rules and write them down – but avoid too many rules. There are three essential guidelines:

- Safety first. Never compromise the safety of yourself or others.
- Challenge by choice. If someone wants to sit out, that’s cool.
- Have fun! If it isn’t fun, don’t do it.

Every group should have some specific goals that all players agree on. Some goals have included: Break down the barriers that may exist between young people such as race, sex, background, and social status; Build a sense of teamwork and purpose; Show that everyone has different strengths and abilities to offer the group and that no one is better than anyone else.

Tip 3: Think about Framing & Sequencing

The purpose of the games is often set during the introduction, or framing, of the activity. The activity may be introduced as a story, creating a magical place where dangerous things can happen without teamwork. For a more mature grow, games can be introduced as metaphors, alerting the participants to look for deeper meaning.

Another important consideration is the order in which you play games, or sequencing. If a group has never played together, it might be important to do icebreakers and to “soften” the personal space bubble. If they are more comfortable with each other, try “bursting” the bubble, and get deep in your activities. Try to put complex activities after less challenging ones, to build a sense of accomplishment.
Tip 4: Reflect, Reflect, Reflect

One way to highlight the role of games in social change is in the reflection after the activity. An easy way to see the relevance of reflection is to picture games as a circle: you start with an explanation of the activity, framing its purpose and goals to the group. The activity progresses, with the facilitator taking a more hands-on or less guiding approach as needed.

Finally, the group reflection helps participants see how they met the goal, and to envision the broader social change implications. Then the group has come full-circle. Be as concrete or as “spacey” as you want – during the activities it’s important to “lose ourselves” in what we’re doing, and to have a lot of fun. But remember to bring it all back to reality with the reflection. Reflecting on the activities is vital to bring the group back to the reason why they’re playing games.

The following types of questions can be useful in reflecting:

- **Open-ended questions** – prevents yes and no answers. “What was the purpose of the game?”
  “What did you learn about yourself?”
- **Feeling questions** – requires participants to reflect on how they feel about what they did. “How did it feel when you started to pull it together?”
- **Judgment questions** – asks participants to make decisions about things. “what was the best part?”
  “Was it a good idea?”
- **Guiding questions** – steers the participants toward the purpose of the activity and keep the discussion focused. “What got you all going in the right direction?”
- **Closing questions** – helps participants draw conclusions and end the discussion. “What did you learn?”
  “What would you do differently?”

Tip 5: Make Meaning With Players

At their best, the following activities can serve as bridges between social change work, learning, and community building, reinforcing the need for communication, co-learning, and collective decision-making. At worst, they can be tools of oppression and alienation, serving to support vertical education practices and isolate people from each other. In the words of educator Paulo Freire, “A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor without that trust.”

Remember...

Let the games take their own life, and they will! If it feels like a group just wants to play all day, just do that! If they want to get deep, do that. Let the group tell you where they want to go, and they will! When the people lead, the facilitator should follow.
SECTION 2: ICEBREAKERS

People have got to get to know each other in social change work. Sometimes we assume that just because we share a common interest, we’ll get to know each other, and that’s just not true! Projects will go on for months before people really get comfortable with each other. These games are great for introductions and getting to know people in new environments, or to remind us who we’re working with in established communities.

Icebreaker 1: Line Ups
Supplies: Blindfolds
Process:
1. There are many variations on the "Line Up By...." challenges. The basic idea is to have the group line up in a straight line according to some specific criteria and with some type of restriction on their actions. Here are some ideas that can be altered to meet your group's needs.
2. Give specific guidelines before beginning.
3. Make sure everyone agrees to specific safety rules such as no pushing, moving slowly, stopping when the instructor says stop, etc.
4. Challenge the group, without talking or making any vocal sounds, to line up according to birthday, January 1 at the front and December 31 at the back.

Icebreaker 2: Find Your Type
Supplies: Sets of 3x5 cards with matching animals, enough for each person to have a card
Process:
1. Get the group in a circle.
2. Tell everyone they may not speak.
3. Give each person a card with an animal on it.
4. Tell them to find their partners by doing something that animal would do, but without saying the name of the creature.
5. Start them all at the same time.

Icebreaker 3: Toss-A-Name
Supplies: Balls and other soft throwing items (rubber chickens, hacky-sacks)
Process:
1. With the group standing in a circle, have participants go around saying their names. Then show them a ball
2. Explain the activity this way: “First I will say my name, like ‘I am Adam.’ Then I will say, ‘and this is Nadem.’ Then I will through the ball to Nadem. Nadem will say, ‘That is Adam, I am Nadem, and this is Tannisha.’ And so on, until all the names in the circle are strung onto the list.”
3. The game goes until everyone has been called, without anyone being repeated.
4. If someone’s name is forgot, have the group spot them.
5. Variations include going around multiple times, attempting to beat the last speed (kept with a stopwatch). Another version is to have multiple balls flying at the same time, spaced apart by 2 or 3 people.
Icebreaker 4: Common Ground

Supplies: Enough chairs for all participants, minus one.

Process:
1. Group sits in a circle of chairs with one person standing in the middle (no empty chairs).
2. The person in the middle says “I seek common ground with... people who were born east of the Mississippi!”
3. Anyone who was, including the person asking the question, must get up and run across the circle to find a new seat.
4. You can’t take the seat of the person next to you! There will be one person left in the middle who must ask the next question.
5. Possibilities include: people who... wear glasses! Likes vanilla ice cream better than chocolate! You can also guide the questions a little deeper... “I seek common ground with people who’ve... worked with the homeless.”
6. The facilitator may choose to ask the first few questions to get the game going and set the tone.

Icebreaker 5: The Name Game

Supplies: None

Process:
1. Get the group in a circle.
2. Tell everyone to get an adjective starting with the first letter of their own first name and add it to the front of their first name [Adventurous Adam].
3. Then, introduce yourself, and tell the person next to you to introduce you then himself/herself.
4. Each person farther down the circle will then introduce everybody in front of them then finally, himself/herself.

Your Notes
SECTION 3: INITIATIVE GAMES

These activities challenge players to work together as a team, think critically, and get active in what’s going on. In a society where there is so much competition and separation, these games can draw people into engaging conversations and interactions. In facilitating the reflection players can draw out the analogies with social change work.

**Initiative 1: The Candle**
Supplies: None
Process:
1. Each participant balances on one foot, tucking the other up against the other thigh. Put palms together in front of the chest and, while keeping palms together, raise hands over the head.
2. Close eyes and hands pass eye level.
3. Maintain balance for ten to fifteen seconds. Switch legs and repeat.

**Initiative 2: People2People**
Supplies: None
Process:
1. Form pairs facing each other.
2. A single player at the end of the line is designated the “caller.”
3. As the caller yells “toe to toe,” “knee to knee,” “elbow to foot,” etc., the pairs perform the described connection.
4. On the call “people to people” the players switch partners.
5. The player without a new partner becomes the new caller.
6. You can’t have the same partner twice, unless it’s a small group. And try to think of a new combination every time!

**Initiative 3: Human Knot**
Supplies: None
Process:
1. Get the group in a tight circle.
2. Have the members of the group reach in with their tight hands and grasp one of the right hands available.
3. Repeat with left hands.
4. Then ask them to unravel the knot. People may not let go.
5. The circle of hands is to remain unbroken.
6. However, it may be necessary to change grips due to the angle of arms and bodies.
7. One variation is for the group to stay silent during the entire activity. You can easily use this activity as a metaphor for community activism that illustrates an opportunity for broad perspectives to work together towards a common goal.
Initiative 4: The Clock
Supplies: None
Process:
1. Define a large circle by having the group join hands.
2. Mark one spot inside the circle as “12 O’clock” and another as “6 O’clock.”
3. Have the group rotate in one direction, returning to the start position, in as little time as possible.
4. After discussing strategies, the group can try to improve its previous record.

Initiative 5: Black Knight, White Knight
Supplies: None
Process:
1. Define a playing field appropriate for the size group.
2. Tell everyone they are a knight.
3. Appoint one person to be “The Black Knight.”
4. Tell the knights that they can move like a knight in chess (define if necessary).
5. Allow the white knights to move the black.
6. If the black knight tags a white knight, the white knight becomes a black knight.
7. Note that at the end of the game everyone will be a black knight.

Initiative 6: Bloop
Supplies: Balloons (1 per group of 5)
Process:
1. Break out large group into small groups of 4-6 and give each a balloon to inflate.
2. In small group, join hands and form a circle.
3. The objective is to keep the balloon off the floor by batting it, without letting go of hands.
4. If the balloon touches the floor, the group losses its hands, meaning they can't let their hands touch the balloon; as balloon keeps hitting the floor, they lose elbows, shoulders, heads, thighs.
5. Facilitator may have groups “carry” balloon across an area, or just have them work in place for [X] amount of time.

Initiative 7: Touch The Can (Because You Can-Can-Can!)
Supplies: A tin can
Process:
1. Get the group around the can.
2. Tell the group they all must be touching the can at once, with their… (finger, toe, knee, elbow, shoulder…).
3. Depending on the size of the group, use larger AND smaller items, and gradually get the group to come closer and closer together physically.
4. Facilitator may have the group transport the object to a different area with a bizarre matching of body parts (imagine a group of 10 people carrying a plastic throwing disc across the room on their knees).
Initiative 8: Lava Pit
Supplies: 20 paper plates, scotch tape
Process:
1. Make up a story that the group is being chased and they need to get across a field of hot lava.
2. Give each group paper plates explaining that when they step on these plates they will not sink into the lava. (Give each team about 1/3 the number of plates as people.)
3. The group must figure out how to get the entire group from point A to point B (both marked by scotch tape on the floor), from one side of the Hot Lava Pit to the other.
4. Only one person can be on a plate at a time, and the plates may be picked up and moved.
5. The key to the game is that only part of the team will be able to cross the field at a time and one person will need to work their way back across the field to help the rest of the team across.
6. A time limit can also be placed on this game.

Initiative 9: Impulse
Supplies: None
Purpose: Touching, Communication and Team building
Process:
1. Have the group form a circle and hold hands
2. Ask them to send a pulse signal through the group.
3. Time it.
4. Challenge the group to do it faster. Note: If you allow them several opportunities to try this, make sure you have a timer that will display hundredths of a second.

Initiative 10: Pass The Toxic Waste Can
Supplies: A soda can
Process:
1. The group must form a circle, with each person spread about a foot apart.
2. The challenge is for the group to pass the can around the circle without using their hands or dropping the can.
3. The group will be more excited and engaged if there is imaginary "toxic" content in the can that will spill out if it is dropped.

Your Notes
SECTION 4: TRUSTBUILDERS

Many of our social institutions actively teach many people to not to trust each other – this person is too dangerous; those people are too cunning. These activities teach togetherness and interactivity, emphasizing success through cooperation. They are the pinnacle of cooperative games and must be facilitated carefully and considerately with ample thought and preparation for the reflections.

Trustbuilder 1: Line Up Game

Supplies: Blindfolds
Focus: Touching and Trust
Process:
1. Give everyone a blindfold and ask them to put them on.
2. Next, tell the group that everyone is mute.
3. Ask them to line up by age form youngest to oldest.
4. Add that if two or more people are the same age they must be in ascending birthdays.
5. You can line up by mother’s maiden name, birth month, birth year, first letter of middle name, height, weight...

Trustbuilder 2: Skin the Snake

Supplies: None
Focus: Bursting Personal Space Bubbles, Communication, Trust, Team Building
Process:
1. Have the group line up in a single file line facing forward.
2. Tell the group to put their right hands between their legs.
3. Next, tell them to take their left hands and grasp the right hand in front of them.
4. Tell them that they have formed a snake and they must skin it without letting go of any hands.
5. Tell them if they let go, they start over.
6. Once the snake is skinned, tell them that they need to put the skin back on.
7. There may be large people who need some assistance getting up. Let the group work it out before you, as a facilitator, get involved.

Trustbuilder 3: Trust Circle

Supplies: None
Focus: Trust and Team Building
Process:
1. Have the group form a circle.
2. Have each person stand in a spotting stance.
3. Ask for one person to get in the middle and be a faller.
4. Be sure to close in the circle once a faller has entered into the center.
5. Use the spotting commands.
6. Have the faller fall all directions so all spotters are utilized.
7. Allow everyone an opportunity to be a faller.
Trustbuilder 4: Blinded Partner Walk  
Supplies: Blindfolds (handkerchiefs or other non-see-through fabric) for half of the group.  
Focus: Trust, Communication, Teamwork  
Process:  
1. This can be done many ways. Either the whole group can be blindfolded with a seeing leader or half the group or only a few can be blindfolded.  
2. The group must rely on each other to make it through the obstacle course or along a walk.

Trustbuilder 5: Cookie Machine  
Supplies: None  
Focus: Trust, Teamwork, Communication  
Process:  
1. Have the group form two lines facing each other.  
2. Have the participants stand shoulder to shoulder in each line with their arms bent at the elbow and their palms up.  
3. The arms form each of the two lines should overlap.  
4. Place one person of the front of the cookie machine and have the group pass them back.  
5. Halfway through the machine the cookie should be flipped.

Trustbuilder 6: Caterpillar  
Supplies: None  
Focus: Fun, cooperation, bursting the personal space bubble  
Process:  
1. The players lie on their stomachs, side to side, with their arms straight out in front.  
2. The person on the end begins to roll over the top of the row of bodies until he or she gets to the end.  
3. This can be done as a race, with two teams competing to get to a determined point.

Trustbuilder 7: Yurt Circle  
Supplies: None  
Focus: Trust, teamwork, communication  
Process:  
1. Choose a clear, open area for this activity, as participants are likely to fall forward and backwards.  
2. Participants should stand in a circle, facing inward and holding hands.  
3. Then, step backwards until everyone is stretched out but still able to have a firm grip on the two people whose hands they are holding. Everyone needs to keep their feet planted and lean back as far as they can. They must use the group to maintain their balance.  
4. Once they have done this, number off the group into 1s and 2s, alternating around the circle.  
5. Then, have the 1s lean in and the 2s lean out at the same time.  
6. Each person should be able to lean in or out while being held up by their neighbors.
Trustbuilder 8: Duo-Sit/Group Sit

Supplies: None
Focus: Teambuilding, cooperation

Process:
1. For this challenge participants will work in pairs.
2. Each group must stand back-to-back and link arms. From this position, the pair will attempt to sit down and stand back up without unlocking arms.
3. When a pair succeeds, they should join with another pair and attempt the challenge with four people.
4. Eventually, the group should work towards being able to complete the challenge with the entire group.

Trustbuilder 9: Lap Sit

Supplies: None
Focus: Teamwork, Communication, Bursting the personal space bubble

Process:
1. Have everyone stand in one circle, arranging themselves so that someone about the same size as them is on either side of them.
2. Everyone turns to the right.
3. Step in closer to the center and put your hands on the waist of the person in front of you. “Concentrate on the person in front of you sitting comfortably on your knees, and trust that the person behind you will guide you, too.”
4. First do a trial run. On the count of three the group is going to bend down, touch bottoms to the knees and come right back up to make sure they are all standing closely enough together. “Ready? 1, 2, 3...”
5. Then ask them to readjust their positions if necessary. “Now we are going to sit down and then clap our hands... Again...” This activity usually amazes people by what they can do in solidarity.

Your Notes
SECTION 5: FUNNERS

It’s important to keep social change work vital and moving. These activities can do the same thing in a day of games. I call these games “Funners” because sometimes we find ourselves asking “Shouldn’t it be funner than this?” For more fun, more play, and more laughs, try any of these out.

### Funner 1: Sardines

**Supplies:** None  
**Focus:** Fun, teamwork  
**Process:**
1. This game can be played anywhere, indoors or out. The goal is similar to “Hide and Seek,” except that “it” hides first. Everyone else then tries to find “it.” When someone finds “it,” they hide with “it” in the same spot.  
2. The game ends when everyone finds the hiding spot of “it.”

### Funner 2: Please, Please Smile

**Supplies:** None  
**Focus:** Fun  
**Process:**
1. Everyone is seated in a circle with a volunteer standing in the middle.  
2. The volunteer leans down to the person of his or her choice, looks at them deep in the eye, and says “Honey, if you love me, would you please, please smile?”  
3. The recipient of this proposal simply replies “Honey, I love you, but I just can't smile.”  
4. That easy - except that the recipient CAN NOT SMILE, smirk, turn up the corners of their mouth, or snicker. And the volunteer in the middle can't touch the recipient in any way- but can do anything else.  
5. The volunteer continues until someone smiles, and then trades places with the person who finally smiles.

### Funner 3: Human Scissors, Paper, Rock

**Supplies:** None  
**Focus:** Fun, energy-building  
**Process:**
1. This is the human-size version of scissors/paper/rock. The end zones need to be clearly defined.  
2. To begin, each team huddles and decides on which symbol to be, either rock, paper or scissors. Teams that chose “rock” squat down; “scissors” use their whole arms to make a cutting gesture and; “paper” sticks their arms out wide and flat, like a piece of paper.  
3. Then the two teams meet on a line in the middle of the playing area with backs towards the other team.  
4. One the count of three each team spins around and shows their symbol.  
5. If your team’s symbol wins, you chase the other team back into its end zone, trying to tag the team members before they get there. If your team’s symbol loses, you must dash back to your own end zone before you’re caught. Those people who get caught change to the other team. The game ends when everyone is on the same team.
Funner 4: Crows and Cranes
Supplies: None
Focus: Fun, physical activity
Process:
1. Define a playing area similar to a volleyball court.
2. Divide the group into two teams, “crows” and “cranes.”
3. Line teams up to face each other across the center line.
4. When crows are called by the leader, they chase the cranes to the rear boundary area, and vice versa.
5. When tagged, players must stand still (or join the other team)
6. Play until all players are part of one team

Funner 5: Blob Tag
Supplies: None
Focus: Fun, teamwork
Process:
1. In this variation of “tag,” the people who are caught join hands with the “it” person to form a blob.
2. The more people are caught, the bigger the blob becomes.
3. It’s a good idea to limit the playing area so the blob doesn’t have to chase people through the neighborhood.

Funner 6: Everybody's It
Supplies: None
Focus: Fun
Process:
1. Everybody is it.
2. All participants can tag anyone.
3. If you are tagged, you must freeze in place.
4. Anyone can free a tagged person by ‘high-fiving’ them.
5. It is the participant’s choice to tag people, free people, or try a combination of both.
6. Play until everyone is frozen. The last person unfrozen wins!

Funner 7: Face-Off
Supplies: None
Focus: Fun
Process:
1. Have the group stand in a circle so everyone can see each other.
2. Start by doing face stretches, creating an air of goofiness and safe space for play. The facilitator starts by making a strange, distorted, crazy face.
3. When everybody sees it, the facilitator turns to their left.
4. The second person carefully copies the expression, and then both people turn to the middle.
5. The circle claps or cheers to indicate how successful the copy, or "Face-Off," is.
6. Then, the second person turns to their left and shares a new crazy expression with the person next to them. Go all the way around the circle.
Closure is important in social change games for two reasons: the first is that it can encourage players to see the bridge between fun and social change; the second is that it can support emphasis the solidarity among the players – and social change agents – engaged in work. These activities are great ways to end a long day’s work or play. They focus on closure and symbolism and offer participants a chance to reflect on their social change work.

### Closer 1: Rainmaker

**Supplies:** None  
**Focus:** Nonverbal communication, Closing activity  
**Process:**
1. Have the entire group sit in chairs, or on the floor, with their hands free from stuff and the feet firmly planted on the floor.  
2. Say something to the effect of “Sometimes we might feel like we want to achieve the impossible, and that our collective work will never finish. Right now, we have a chance to make a change; we’re gonna make a rainstorm.”  
3. Instruct the group to do the action you do, but only when you look at them to do it, and to keep doing that action until another comes.  
4. When it’s time, slowly look around the entire circle. The group should continue doing the movement until you look at them with a new one.  
5. Start by going “Shhhh…” like a windy day.  
6. Then rub your palms together, and slowly show that to the entire group. Do each motion for as long as it takes to get around the group.  
7. Then snap your fingers sporadically.  
8. Then clap your hands way out-of-rhythm.  
9. Then slap the tops of your legs.  
10. Then stomp your feet.  
11. And then do everything in reverse!  
12. I like to end with the statement “Now you know how to make a rainstorm. Let’s go and make positive change in the world!” and send the group off.

### Closer 2: Spider’s Web

**Supplies:** A ball of string  
**Focus:** Reflection, closing activity  
**Process:**
1. Participants form a circle, with the facilitator in the circle holding a ball of string.  
2. Start by tossing the ball to a participant, holding onto the end of the string as you throw it.  
3. State something you appreciate about that person participating in your shared work. The appreciation can be about something that recently happened or about the other person in general.  
4. The ball is then thrown across the circle. Each player should hold onto a piece of the string once the ball is tossed and say an appreciation about someone else.  
5. When everyone is holding onto the string and it is crisscrossed throughout the circle, the facilitator uses scissors to cut through the string, saying “As we cut the ties to the games we’ve
played (or activity we’ve finished), we leave each person a piece of string in their hand to
remind them of the renewed community and new connections they have made.”

6. You can give each participant a piece of the string to remember the activity and what was
appreciated about them.

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### Closer 3: Pick a Metaphor

**Supplies:** Small toys, pictures, postcards, knick knacks (toys from a dollar store and buy various items like play money, magnetic letters, figurines of different backgrounds)

**Focus:** Reflection, closing activity

**Process:**
1. One of my favorite closing exercises is to set up the middle of the room with small stuff.
2. Have everyone pick three items they think represent their experience with the group from the pile.
3. Everybody then shares with the group about one or all the items they picked.
4. All participants then get to choose one object to keep, to remind them of what they said.

### Closer 4: Leaves on the Tree

**Supplies:** One sheet of flipchart paper, markers, and construction paper

**Purpose:** Reflection, closing activity

**Process:**
1. Draw a picture of a tree on a flip chart including roots, trunk, branches, leaves and fruit – or however you want.
2. Give each participant a leaf cut from construction paper.
3. Ask them to write on the leaf something they are taking with them from the training.
4. Then have the group stand in a circle.
5. Ask each person to share what their leaf says and attaches it with tape to the tree.
6. People can put their leaf wherever they want on the picture of the tree depending on what they take with them, but I never state this in advance.
7. The facilitators go last and process the activity by noting the symbolism of what it means to be the roots, the trunk, the leaves and the fruit, or not on the tree at all.

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**Your Notes**
About this Publication

The Guide to Cooperative Games for Social Change is a free publication intended to be used with children, youth, and adult allies throughout our communities. The activities provide a basic exploration of trust, teambuilding, communication, and social change by actively involving all participants. Young people, community youth workers, classroom teachers, and others are encouraged to use this tool to promote youth engagement, community improvement, and active participation.

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