

Hunger Obstacle Course

(Adapted from Kerpelman & Crosswhite, "Stay Connected,"
www.aces.edu/teens/stayconnected)

Overview

The Hunger Obstacle Course has participants engage in creative problem solving through a time-limited process of generating solutions to different hunger-related problems. Small groups of students circulate around the room and write down solutions to each of the hunger obstacles. Each group uses a unique colored pencil or marker. One catch, they cannot write down a solution for a specific obstacle that a previous group has already provided. When all groups have had a chance to respond to each obstacle, the number of total responses that each group has generated is tallied. The group with the most solutions is acknowledged. The quality of solutions also is reviewed. Then, the full group discusses which solutions stand out as most creative or helpful and acknowledge the groups who contributed these solutions. Finally, it is noted that the full set of solutions generated across the entire group demonstrates the many ways that people can make a difference in addressing world and domestic hunger. A "Solutions Deck" is provided to offer additional ideas for the group to consider.

Goals

- To increase youth awareness of hunger-related problems
- To help youth generate multiple solutions for addressing hunger-related problems
- To facilitate a team effort for generating effective solutions
- To encourage youth to think about solutions to both global and domestic hunger

Materials

- Giant Post Its
- Hunger Obstacle Cards
- Hunger Solutions Deck
- Magic Markers
- Whistle or Bell
- Definition of food insecurity:

Food Insecurity: uncertain/limited access to enough food

Instructions

1. For this activity there are up to 8 obstacles that can be addressed. Place giant post-it sheets* around the room and tape to the top of each post-it one of the Hunger Obstacle Cards. It works best to have as many obstacles as you have groups (e.g., if you have 5 groups, select 5 obstacles for this activity).
2. Divide the participants into groups of 4-6 people each.
3. Give each group a different color magic marker.
4. Have each group stand in front of one of the obstacle cards.
5. Tell each group they have 2 minutes to think of as many solutions as they can for dealing with the obstacle. They are to write their solutions below the obstacle on the post it, with the first group starting their solutions immediately below the obstacle card.
6. Use the whistle or bell to start and stop the 2-minute process.
7. When 2 minutes are up, have the groups rotate clockwise to the next obstacle. Tell them they cannot repeat any of the solutions that have already been written under the obstacle – that is, they need to come up with new solutions. Let them know that this will get harder as more groups have written solutions for that obstacle. Give each group time to read the prior groups' solutions. Start the 2-minute solution generation process again.
8. Repeat the process until all groups have had a chance to respond to each obstacle.
9. When all groups have completed the obstacle course, count up how many solutions each group has generated across all the obstacles. Congratulate the top scoring group, but also congratulate all groups for the many solutions they each have generated.
10. Next, have the groups look at the solutions generated for one of the obstacles and discuss which they think are some of the best solutions for addressing the obstacle. Have them consider how combining two or more of the solutions will increase the likelihood that the problem the obstacle represents will be solved.

*If it is not feasible to place Post-It sheets around the room, stations can be formed by having groups of 4-8 students make circles with their desks. Each circle represents a station that receives a large sheet of paper with one of the obstacles written at the top. The student groups (each using a unique color pencil or marker) can circulate to each of the stations and write down their solutions on the sheets.

11. Repeat this process for the other obstacles (if time does not permit review of all the obstacles and solutions, have the participants select the obstacles they would most like to discuss).
12. If time permits, pass out the cards from the Hunger Solution Deck to the participants and have them take turns reading them. See how many of these solutions they also came up with.
13. Also see if they came up with solutions that are not contained in the Hunger Solution Deck. Have someone create a list of the novel solutions generated by the group so they can be shared with the ETP leaders.

Alternative Instructions for Younger Groups

1. Divide the students into 3 groups and assign them each a color that is associated with a marker color (e.g., a red group, a green group, and a blue group).
2. Select 3 obstacles for the students to address.
3. Starting with obstacle 1, have the red group think of as many solutions as they can within a 1-2 minute period (the teacher writes their solutions down using the red marker).
4. Next have the other color groups each take a turn generating solutions for obstacle 1. After completing obstacle 1, go to obstacle 2, but this time, start with the green group....finally repeat process for obstacle 3, starting with the blue group.
5. Once all 3 obstacles are addressed, see how many responses each group generated, and then discuss the value of the different types of ideas they listed.

**Evaluation Questions
Hunger Obstacle Course**

County_____

Name of Program_____

Age: 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

___Male ___Female

Where I live is considered to be ___Urban ___Rural

Race: ___White ___African American ___Hispanic

 ___Native American ___Asian ___Other:

Think about what you knew about hunger before doing this activity and what you have learned about hunger after doing this activity when you answer the following questions:

	Before this activity			After this activity		
	Very Little 1	Some 2	A Lot 3	Very Little 1	Some 2	A Lot 3
How much had you thought about global hunger issues?	1	2	3	1	2	3
How much had you thought about hunger in Alabama?	1	2	3	1	2	3
How much did you know about hunger-related problems?	1	2	3	1	2	3
How much did you know about possible solutions for addressing hunger-related problems?	1	2	3	1	2	3
How much did you think that you could help with solving problems related to hunger?	1	2	3	1	2	3

OBSTACLE 1

There are families in your community where the adults and children often miss meals because of food insecurity.

OBSTACLE 2

Your class learns that there are poor children in Kenya who would like to communicate with children in the U.S. but do not know how.

OBSTACLE 3

Many children in your school do not know very much about the problem of hunger and do not seem to care.

OBSTACLE 4

There are poor children living in rural Cambodia and other developing countries who could receive food at school if more donations were made. It takes 19 cents to feed a school child for one day (\$34 for one year).

OBSTACLE 5

There are some elderly people in your community who live alone and often don't have healthy meals to eat, and little social contact.

OBSTACLE 6

There are families living in a Bangladesh community in simple huts with no electricity, who are experiencing hunger because of a serious drought this year.

OBSTACLE 7

A family from Nepal has moved to your community and the two kids in the family attend your school. Some other kids are making fun of them because they have bad teeth due to malnutrition.

OBSTACLE 8

You find out that some of the kids at your school are experiencing food insecurity (going hungry several days per week).

Hunger Solution Deck

<p>Create an educational presentation – could be a lecture, play, song, picture/mural.... about hunger that can be used to educate other students at your school.</p>	<p>Contact the World Food Programme to find out how your class can help hungry families in Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, Cambodia or other countries where families face extreme hunger.</p>	<p>Help set up a free “Make a Healthy After School Snack” day each week or month. All classes participate and donations are made anonymously so those who are unable to donate do not feel uncomfortable.</p>
<p>Talk with grocery stores and restaurants in your area to find out if they donate to the local food bank. Shop more at the stores that do and encourage those that do not to consider donating to the food bank.</p>	<p>Have a fundraiser at your school to donate money to help feed school children in developing countries. Have classes or grade levels or different schools in your community compete to see how many school children in a developing country they can feed (19 cents per child per day; \$34 for one child for a year).</p>	<p>If you belong to a youth group, see if members are interested in sponsoring a monthly community barbeque where local businesses donate the food and all community members are invited. At the barbecue publically acknowledge the businesses that made donations and provide educational materials about hunger and ways to help.</p>
<p>Treat people who are different from you or who are having problems with kindness and caring. Encourage other kids to be kind also.</p>	<p>Organize a day each month for students in your class or from classes at your school to volunteer at the local food bank or with other community groups who help individuals and families living in poverty.</p>	<p>Have a competition among classes in your school to raise can goods to donate to families in your community.</p>
<p>Create more caring in your class or your school by having opportunities for students to appreciate one another. The opportunities might include having students pair up and then each write a paragraph about their partner’s positive qualities and accomplishments, having students in the class or school share (anonymously) some of the challenges they have faced, or having a mix it up lunch day where students willingly eat lunch with other students they usually don’t hang out with.</p>	<p>Have your class (and possibly parents too), find out if you can volunteer to assist groups that help low income elderly by helping them with grocery shopping, bringing meals to their homes, and talking with/reading to them.</p>	<p>Talk with teachers and parents about ways you can communicate with children living in other countries (letter writing, the internet, sharing photos or drawings...)</p>
<p>Form a student or parent-student reading group where you read and discuss books/websites about hunger and poverty in different countries.</p>	<p>Have your class watch and discuss a movie* about hunger: “Afghan Stories,” “Lost Boys of Sudan,” “Life and Debt,” “Hidden in America,” “Salaam Bombay”</p>	<p>Have students in your class surf the internet for educational sites addressing hunger/poverty. Have students review and present information about these sites.</p>

*Teacher needs to determine appropriateness of movie for class