

The Bridge
(Building Supports from Here to There)

Purpose: 1. To increase the student's sense of personal responsibility in career planning, goal setting and decision making skills in terms of choosing and managing appropriate supports to help reach goals.

Materials: Roll of durable toilet tissue. May show support video after activity:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgHP6ve6I98&safety_mode=true&persistent_safety_mode=1&safe=active

Student Materials: Paper and Pencil.

Time: 25 minutes.

Key Concepts: Supports, Time, Building, Planning, Replacing, Destination, Effort.

Introduction: Introduce/reintroduce yourself to the students. Make sure the kids know who you are. Tell them a little bit about what it took to become a counselor and how long you had to work at it.

Part 1

Direct: Students to number their paper 1-5.

- Ask:**
1. What's the purpose of a bridge?
 2. Name three famous bridges.
 3. If you could build a bridge go from your front door to anywhere in the world, where would your bridge go to?
 4. Write down what materials or supports you would use for your bridge.
 5. If you had to walk the distance of your bridge from beginning to end, how long would it take you...minutes, hours, weeks, months or years?

Recruit: Two Volunteers.

Determine: (optional) If volunteers are qualified; while holding up the roll of building material ask:

1. Do you both consider yourselves to be experts when it comes to using this material?
2. On average, how many times a week do you both come in contact with this building material?
3. Have you ever considered yourselves to be overachievers when it comes to using this material?
4. Are either one of you more left handed or right handed when using this material?

5. Have either of you ever been on a “job site” where you underestimated both time and resources needed to complete the job? That is, have you ever had to yell out “Hey, I need some more building material in here!”

Part 2

Instruct: The two volunteers stand 20-30 feet apart. Connect the two people with one continuous strand (20-30 feet) of the building material. Both volunteers should be holding onto their respective ends.

Tell: The two primary volunteers (holding the ends of the bridge) that they will be taking turns in gathering supports for the bridge. Designate one person A and the other B. Each of them will be asked to make specific requests to their classmates to join them as supports and all supporters have to do is to come up and gently place their hands (palms up) under the bridge.

(Sample requests based on age of participants)

Rotate (between volunteers A & B): Ask the following requests a loud:

- A. Choose three people to come up to support the bridge by saying: “(Names) I need your support, would you please help me?”
- B. Choose two people who would make great friends to come up to support the bridge by saying “(Names) I need your support, would you please help me?”
- A. Of the people supporting your bridge, choose the one person most likely not to keep a promise to sit back down in their seat by saying “(Name) Thank you, but I don’t need your support anymore.”
- B. Of the people that haven’t been chosen yet, choose one person most likely to graduate with all A’s (honors) to come up and support the bridge “(Name) I need your support, would you please help me?”
- A. Of the people that haven’t been chosen, choose a person to come up and take the place of someone that’s not doing a great job of supporting the bridge. For example, that person may be holding the bridge too high, too low, has wiped his or her nose on it, or is being careless with his or her responsibilities in supporting the bridge. Replace that person by saying “(Name) I need you to please take (name’s) place.”
- B. Of the supports in place, sit down a good friend who may not have the same goals as you by saying, “(Name) Thank you, but I don’t need that kind of support right now.”
- A. Of the people supporting the bridge, sit down the person most likely not to help you study for a test by saying “(Name) Thanks for all you’ve done and I still like you but I don’t need your support anymore.”
- B. Call on someone you don’t know very well and ask that person for their support.

Instruct: One person in the middle to go back to their seat and sit down & announce to the class that person “is no longer available to support the bridge.”

- A Choose someone that you don’t know very well to come up and support the bridge by saying “(Name) I could really use your support, would you please help me?”
- B. Choose two people who one day could become great coaches (parents, step-parents, or foster parents) to come and support the bridge by saying “(Names) I could really use your support, would you please help me?”
- A Of the people supporting the bridge, sit down three people who might be thinking that they are the one’s actually in charge of the bridge.
- B. Please sit down one of two supports that aren’t necessarily working very well together. Be sure to thank that person.

(Spend approximately 12 minutes having people coming and going. You may also take the liberty of inserting or replacing seldom chosen people with ones who are chosen frequently)

Begin: To bring closure to this part of the activity by having A and B volunteers start sitting down all of the support people either one at a time or in pairs. Leave the two end people in place with the bridge sagging between them for visual effect. Ask for a round of applause for everyone who participated=)

Gather: A round of applause for volunteers A & B as they return to their seats after you gather the used material.

Announce: While holding up the material: “Souvenirs from today’s activity will be available in the gift shop immediately following the conclusion of this presentation.”

Part 3

Review: Student answers to the five questions asked at the beginning of the activity.

Emphasize: These points:

1. The purpose of a bridge is to connect two points (here to there.)
2. The most famous bridge is the one you will build for yourself.
3. Point A of your bridge is here and now. You get to choose point B.
4. The supports you use are the people you choose.
5. Great bridges take years to build and they often involve working at and achieving educational goals such as finishing high school, college and trade schools.

Ask: For a show of hands:

- A “Have you ever needed someone’s support only to have that person let you down?

- B "Has anyone here ever been surprised by someone in your life who turned out to be a great support?"
- C "Have anyone here ever lost a support to death, imprisonment, or disappearance?"
- D "Who is this room has ever had a stepmom or stepdad become a support?"
- E "Have you ever needed to tell a friend to "go home" mostly because he or she wasn't doing what was in your best interest?"
- F "Have you ever asked a teacher, coach, neighbor, or other family member for support?"
- G "Have you ever wanted to tell an uncle, aunt, mom, stepdad or other family member something like: "No thanks....that's not the kind of support I need right now?"
- H "Have you ever had someone intentionally or unintentionally ruin a bridge you were trying to build or a goal you were trying to reach?"
- I "Has it ever felt that in the absence of a very special support someone, finishing the bridge felt useless?" "How did you move forward in that person's absence?"
- J Raise your hand if you ever relied on your faith to be a support in your life.

Share with Students:

- That the most important bridge in the world...your world is the one you create for yourself.
- Most worthwhile bridges take years to build and all bridges are built one day at a time.
- Where you are now may be a beginning point. Where you want to be one day in your thirties, forties, or fifties and all you hope to accomplish can be an end point.
- We also have the responsibility to "sit down" supports that appear to be destructive and or antagonistic toward other supporters and may no longer have our best interests in mind.
- Remember that supports come and go along the way. Teachers, friends, jobs, education, and family are some of those supports. Choose supports that are strong, dependable, and reliable. Realize some supports can never be replaced however know that this "void" can be reserved as a place or memorial of special meaning.
- Counseling can help bridge builders figure out not only a starting point but an ending point in achieving personal, educational, and career goals. Counseling helps bridge builders learn to choose strong, reliable, and dependable supports and can provide encouragement and other supportive resources when building has been reconsidered, stalled, or sabotaged.

Cautions:

Be mindful that the bridge is always subject to tears, rips, and complete breaks with so many people coming and going. If a break occurs, have the two initial volunteers choose a support person that both feel can "keep the bridge together" by holding or tying the two severed ends. This cautionary tale has a great lesson to be learned for all bridge builders.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgHP6ve6I98&safety_mode=true&persistent_safety_mode=1&safe=active