

# Restructuring (Blindfolded Tent)

## Objectives

- To illustrate group problem-solving skills and offer opportunities for groups to practice effective communication and problem solving
- To provide a group with a challenging problem to solve that supports cooperation, communication, trust, leadership, and problem solving
- To experience EQ elements, Type preferences, conflict or motivational styles, and reversals in action when used in conjunction with the corresponding organization development instruments

## Trainer Instructions

The goal is for the group to construct and get inside of the tent while blindfolded.

**Note:** This exercise is best done with a group at the latter portion of a half day or full day program of experiential activities. The focus here is on communication and handling differences in perspective when a team has a vision they are trying to actualize. This can catalyze or magnify the performing phase of the group development model.

1. Explain to the group that this activity involves blindfolds that will be worn for the duration of the activity. Let them choose in advance whether to participate fully or choose to be silent observers to help with debrief.
2. The trainer gives these instructions:

Your group is attempting to restructure. The final vision has not been shared and this lack of vision is preventing the group from seeing the big picture (so you will be blindfolded for the duration of the exercise). The task is to build a new structure for your group (set up a tent) using the resources available to you (present the deconstructed tent) without any help from your facilitator. Once your structure is complete, your group should explore how well it fits (get the entire group inside the tent). Any questions? Please place the blindfolds on... GO!

3. For an easier or shorter exercise, allow the group to look at the blueprint of the tent prior to placing the blindfolds on and allow time to plan.
4. The trainer may also choose how long to give the group to restructure and see if the new structure fits. Typically, 30 minutes is minimum time allotted and 60 minutes is the maximum.
5. If someone opts not to put the blindfolds on, they can be silent observers, taking notes about the dynamics of the group and assisting with the debrief by mentioning some key observations they made.

## Category

Group Problem Solving

Post Introduction to Type, post introduction to EQ-i Feedback, SDI or introduction to other organization development psychometric assessment instrument

## Exercise Stage

Basic stand alone, as part of a half day to a full day of experiential activities

Post-intro to an organization development instrument

## Number of Participants

Minimum: 5-10 (possible for a small group to engage with this content but the benefits of group-level interaction are missing)

Ideal: 10

## Time Required

Minimum: 30 minutes  
Maximum: 60 minutes

## Materials Needed

- A free-standing tent large enough to get the whole group inside (a dome tent or A-frame suspension tent works best)
- Blindfolds for everyone



### Processing Questions Specific to This Activity

- What worked well – what are best practices – in getting the task completed?
- Was there any confusion in communication?
- What does that remind us of, if we put it in work context?
- Did anyone micromanage or compete for airtime or with solutions?

### Debriefing Instructions

1. Ask the processing questions above throughout the exercise or at the end, after they complete the task.
2. Ask the group if everyone's ideas were heard.
3. Ask how welcoming the group was to new ideas.
4. If there is more than one group involved, ask them if they cooperated or competed in coming up with a design
5. An interesting aspect of this exercise is how people will approach the solution with different processes. This is a great opportunity to discuss these different perspectives and ways to get to the final vision or product.
6. Was there more consensus or competition for the solution?
7. Was there buy in?
8. Discuss how people dealt with these differences and whether they were willing to compromise or collaborate in some small way. Or, was it easier for them to avoid, accommodate, or even compete for ideas and airtime.

### Debriefing Instructions If Activity is Used After MBTI Introduction

**Note:** This is a great activity to see how Extraverts and Introverts manage issues around communication as well as how J and P issues surface around planning. This activity can highlight other issues around the Data Gathering Function and around the Decision Making Function.

1. Was everyone heard?
2. Was there enough airtime management?
3. Was there a plan?
4. Were people more task-focused or people-focused? Was there balance?

### Debriefing Instruction If Activity is Used After EQ-i Introduction

**Note:** This is a great activity to see how behaviors associated with many EQ elements manifest. Most commonly encountered behaviors associated with EQ elements on this activity are: Emotional Self Awareness, Emotional Expression, Assertiveness, Independence, Empathy, Problem Solving, Social Responsibility, Impulse Control and Flexibility. The list of questions to ask around EQ elements are numerous, but some common ones are:



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1. Did anyone feel frustrated at some point?
  2. Were you able to identify the feelings experienced and what was causing them?
  3. How did you express or deal with that?
  4. Did anyone dominate the conversation or speak incessantly?
  5. Was anyone inhibited from voicing their opinion about how you should solve this problem?
  6. How assertive were you?
  7. Did people think of new ideas that had not been brought up before? Did they voice that?
  8. How did your emotions, as you experienced them, help or get in the way of working together on solving the challenging environment of varying opinions and perspectives?
  9. How flexible were you in adopting an idea and changing your views/emotions about it?
  10. Were you able to approach the changing directions with an open mind or were you stuck on the “old way of doing things?”

