

Desert Survivor Team Building Exercise

The "Desert Survival" Team Building Exercise is a fun way to bring your group together as they problem solve, work as a team, and learn to trust one another. Divide the group into teams. For the sake of group solidarity and bonding, it's a good idea to recommend that each team come up with a name for their group. Distribute the *Desert Survival Team Building Exercise* handout and tell each team that they must follow the directions. Give the class ten minutes to fill out the ranking individually then teams twenty minutes to rank the importance of the items they salvaged from the plane wreck and to come up with a plan for either escaping the desert or finding help. When the time is up, reconvene and invite a member of each group to come forward share their team's decisions, along with rationalizations for their actions. Because this activity fosters teamwork and trust, there are no "losers."

After each group reports out, discuss how in healthy relationships we must depend on one another for survival. We must trust others and be willing to share opinions without being afraid.

The activity should show students that depending on one another increases their chances of survival, not just in a plane crash, but also in sobriety.

“Desert Survival” Team Building Exercise

It is 1:00 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon at the end of May. You and your teammates have just finished a two-day training in Casablanca, Morocco. You are all on board a chartered, twin-engine plane that is destined for Dakhla, Morocco, a small town on the coast of the North Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1000 miles from Casablanca. At the beginning of the flight the Captain came on the overhead speaker and invited you to sit back and relax during the two-hour flight. The first fifty minutes of the flight were fine. Around this time the pilot comes back on the speaker to let you know that you are currently flying over the Sahara Desert and that weather reports showed a temperature high of 115 degrees. Approximately one hour and ten minutes into the flight, you hear a loud blast and the plane nosedives. Within minutes you realize that the cabin is losing pressure. When you look outside the windows, you notice that the desert below is growing larger as the plane rapidly descends toward the ground. You notice that the only things you can see out of your window are some large boulders and miles and miles of sand. The pilot comes on once again to let you know that the plane has blown an engine and is therefore, indisputably, going to crash and so all on board should prepare for a turbulent, possibly fatal, crash landing. Within minutes the plane crashes and smoke and flames fill the cabin. All surviving passengers and crewmembers scramble to exit the plane before it explodes. Seven minutes after the crash, the plane explodes in a fiery ball that reduces it to rubble. With the exception of the airplane's captain and one crewmember, you, your teammates, one flight crewmember, and the co-captain have all survived the crash. Now you must decide how to work together to survive the desert climate and terrain, get help, and hopefully make it out of the desert alive. On your way off the plane, in the few minutes before it exploded, you and your teammates were able to salvage the items in the list below. It is May and you and your teammates are dressed in business casual for the hot summer months of Africa. With only the clothes on your back and the items pulled from the wreckage, how will you survive?

Steps:

1. Individually, rank the items below in order of importance, “1” being most important and “18” being least important.
2. Individually, write down your plan for survival in a few sentences.
3. When the teacher announces time is up, choose a recorder for your group and on the handout the teacher provides, use the group information to create a group plan. First decide the order of importance of the items then decide on a group plan for survival.
4. Report out to class, including the following:
 - a. Did discussing the items and plan with the group change anyone's mind?
 - b. Does each group member think the group plan is the best or do some people believe their individual plan is better.

Items

- 1 Book of matches
- 3 Airplane blankets
- 20 Feet of nylon rope
- 1 Sewing kit
- 2 50 kg Tanks of oxygen
- 20 Cans of soda
- 1 Life raft
- 1 Bottle opener
- 1 Magnetic compass
- 1 Single-blade pocketknife
- 15 Gallons of water
- 3 Signal flares
- 1 First aid kit
- 1 Snakebite kit
- 25 Mini bags of pretzels
- 55 Mini bags of peanuts
- 1 Safety razor blade
- 4 Airplane pillows

[illegible]

Plan for survival:

Group Plan

Item	Team member 1	Team member 2	Team member 3	Team member 4	Average score

Group Plan for survival: