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Purpose This activity has each group determining which island a group of pirates should approach to replenish food and water supplies contaminated in a typhoon. Unknown to the group, the observer has an unrevealed task - a task that can impact how effectively the group works together. This exercise can lead into a discussion of leadership behaviours, motivating staff or supervision skills.

Time 45 to 60 minutes depending upon the number of groups.

Supplies Handout, flip chart paper for each group, felt pens. Each group should have a distinct area to work where what is going on in one group will not disturb another group.

Participants 10 to 30 people.

Method Form groups of five to seven. Assign one person from each group to be an observer. Ask the observers to meet with you in the other room so that you can go over their handout with them. Meet with the observers and assign roles. Brief them on their roles. Instruct them that they are only to comment on what they see or hear. Ask the observers to rejoin their group.

Hand out instructions to all participants. Read the instructions out loud and make sure that all participants are clear on what they are to do. Advise participants that they have 20 to 30 minutes to reach consensus. Tell them that the observers will be taking notes about the process. Assign areas and give each group flip chart paper and felt pens.

Advise the group when they have five minutes left until time. Call time.

Debriefing Have each group report on their decision and how they reached it. Ask observers to comment. Ask each group to give specific examples of what helped or hindered them in reaching their decision (write these on the flip charts).

Ask each observer to reveal what their hidden role was. Ask each group how they felt about the observer. Explain that the actions of each observer could represent a team leader or supervisor's behaviour. Ask the group to come up with a description or title for each observer role. Write these on three different sheets of flip chart paper. Ask the participants if they've ever run into supervisors who fit the descriptions. Using the three flip chart sheets, ask participants to note behaviours of each type which either help or hinder teamwork, idea generation and problem solving. Lead into a discussion of motivation, supervision skills or leadership behaviours.

Observer Handout

Unknown to the rest of the group, you have an assignment in addition to observing the group's decision-making process. The facilitator will tell you which of the roles below you are to undertake while observing the group's behaviour.

Observer A

You are to sit a short distance away from the group, lean back in the chair, cross your arms on your chest and assume a "you-guys-are-hopeless" expression on your face. When someone makes a suggestion, sneer or snicker with derision. Mumble comments such as, "Yeah, right!" or "Stupid, stupid, stupid."

Observer B

You are to sit with the group, lean forward in your chair, smile and nod your head when people come up with suggestions and comments.

Observer C

You are to sit with your back to the group, listening intently to their words but seemingly unaware of the group. If anyone asks you why you are facing away from the group, do not respond.

OBSERVER QUESTIONS

- What behaviours helped the decision making process?
- What behaviours hindered the decision making process?

Participant Handout

Each of you is a highly ranked member of the crew of a pirate ship. Your leader has learned over your five years together to value your opinions and rarely makes influential decisions without discussing the matter with you. It is the group's habit to try and reach consensus on major decisions.

Your ship has just weathered a typhoon. Your food supplies were soaked with salt water. But more importantly, your water supplies were contaminated - you need to find fresh water before you all perish. You've pinpointed where you are on a map and realize that there are five islands within sailing distance.

You must decide what to do.

Island One - Dutch fort estimated approximately 6 hours away to the west. There is a possibility that any ships in harbour may be undertaking repairs due to the typhoon. The fort is guarded by two cannons.

Island Two - Inhabited island 12 hours south-west with a dense jungle terrain. It is populated by primitive head-hunting natives. It has a rocky coastline and no natural harbours.

Island Three - Inhabited island 28 hours north. The island is sparsely populated with Dutch colonists who are armed with muskets and swords. There are several natural harbours.

Island Four - Portuguese harlot colony 32 hours east. You've previously visited this island on numerous occasions. There are no defences and the harlots always welcome you and your money with open arms; however, you know from experience that diseases of all kinds are rampant on this island.

Island Five - Island inhabited by fierce, war-like tribes, 17 hours south. There is a great deal of superstition surrounding this island - your crew has refused to land there in the past. There is a natural harbour; however, it is home to the island's sacred rock carving. This rock is always heavily guarded by native priests.