

[WHEN PEOPLE PLAY]

Chain Reaction or Pulse



Activity Objective: A timed activity where participants see how fast they can pass squeeze around the circle by holding hands.

Facilitated Objective: A fun icebreaker to get the team to laugh and break social barriers.

Needs: A stopwatch but no other props needed but I do use a dog squeaker toy in the video.

Numbers: Best for groups the size of 25-100 people.

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Procedure:

1. Gather everyone in a circle. Ask the group who they believe to be the most gregarious.
2. Ask this person if they are willing to be “that person.” The most outspoken and gregarious person in the room. If they agree, ask them to give their best party yell.
3. Tell the group to hold each other’s hands. Then, referring to the new party person, tell them that when you say go they will squeeze the hand next to them and they in turn will continue to pass that squeeze around the circle. At the same time you, the facilitator will start the stopwatch.
4. When the party person receives the squeeze back at the end, she/he will need to give their best party yell.

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5. Upon the yell, as the facilitator, you will stop the stopwatch and announce to the group their time.
6. Repeat to process with a couple of rounds to see if they can improve their time.

Safety: When asking for a volunteer, be sure they agree. If not ask for a new volunteer. There are times when students and even adults will point to one person as the party person to embarrass them. Don't push it, just say thanks and move on to someone else. As the facilitator, be sure to always consider the mental and emotional safety of others.

Facilitation: Depending on the size of the group, it might be best that you stand in line with the circle and not in the center of the circle. In the video link below you will see me standing in the middle. The group size that day was about 50 people. They could hear me but people standing behind do struggle with hearing the instructions. With larger groups, everyone has a chance to hear you best if you are a part of the circle. Why, because your voice only projects one direction.

Observations/Questions:

1. After round one ask, "Do you feel that the group can do better? Give a thumbs up or thumbs down to vote." "Why or why not?"
2. After round two or three ask, "Did you achieve a better time? If so what was that feeling like? For the rest of the day, what would it be like to keep that feeling for the rest of the day?" "What would it take to keep that feeling going?"

Variations:

1. Instead of asking for a party person, use a noise maker like a dog squeaker toy to make the noise.
2. Instead of squeezing the hand next to you, you can pass a high five. Each person has to give a high five to the person to their right.

[Video Link](#)

History: This is an activity that I learned from Stephen Mackintosh, owner of Group Dynamix. Though he has admitted this is an old activity passed from facilitator to facilitator, he cannot remember who he learned it from.