

Experiential Exercise

Wilderness Survival

You are a member of a hiking party. After reaching base camp on the first day, you decide to take a quick sunset hike by yourself. After hiking a few exhilarating miles, you decide to return to camp. On your way back, you soon realize that you are lost. You have shouted for help, to no avail. It is now dark. And getting cold.

Your Task

Without communicating with anyone else in your group, read the following scenarios and choose the best answer. Keep track of your answers on a sheet of paper. You have 10 minutes to answer the 10 questions.

1. The first thing you decide to do is to build a fire. However, you have no matches, so you use the bow-and-drill method. What is the bow-and-drill method?
 - a. A dry, soft stick is rubbed between one's hands against a board of supple green wood.
 - b. A soft green stick is rubbed between one's hands against a hardwood board.
 - c. A straight stick of wood is quickly rubbed back-and-forth against a dead tree.
 - d. Two sticks (one being the bow, the other the drill) are struck to create a spark.*
2. It occurs to you that you can also use the fire as a distress signal. When signaling with fire, how do you form the international distress signal?
 - a. 2 fires
 - b. 4 fires in a square
 - c. 4 fires in a cross
 - d. 3 fires in a line*
3. You are very thirsty. You go to a nearby stream and collect some water in the small metal cup you have in your backpack. How long should you boil the water?
 - a. Fifteen minutes
 - b. A few seconds
 - c. One hour
 - d. Depends on the altitude*
4. You are also very hungry, so you decide to eat what appear to be edible berries. When performing the Universal Edibility Test what should you do?
 - a. Do not eat for 2 hours before the test.
 - b. If the plant stings your lip, confirm the sting by holding it under your tongue for 15 minutes.
 - c. If nothing bad has happened 2 hours after digestion, eat half a cup of the plant and wait again.
 - d. Separate the plant into its basic components and eat each component one at a time.*
5. Next, you decide to build a shelter for the evening. In selecting a site, what do you not have to consider?
 - a. It must contain material to make the type of shelter you need
 - b. It must be free from insects, reptiles, and poisonous plants.
 - c. It must be large enough and level enough for you to lie down comfortably.

- d. It must be on a hill so you can signal rescuers and keep an eye on your surroundings.*
6. In the shelter that you built, you notice a spider. You heard from a fellow hiker that black widow spiders populate the area. How do you identify a black widow spider?
 - a. Its head and abdomen is black; its thorax is red.
 - b. It is attracted to light.
 - c. It runs away from light.
 - d. It is a dark spider with a red or orange marking on the female's abdomen.*
 7. After getting some sleep, you notice that the night sky has cleared, and so you decide to try and find your way back to base camp. You believe you should travel north and can use North Star for navigation. How do you locate the North Star?
 - a. Hold your right hand up as far as you can and look between your index and middle fingers.
 - b. Find Sirius and look 60 degrees above it and to the right.
 - c. Look for the Big Dipper and follow the line created by its cup end.*
 - d. Follow the line of Orion's belt.
 8. You come across a fast-moving stream. What is the best way to cross it?
 - a. Find a spot downstream from a sandbar as the water will be calmer.
 - b. Build a bridge.
 - c. Find a rocky area, as the water will be shallow and you will have hand- and footholds
 - d. Find a level stretch where it breaks into a few channels.*
 9. After walking for about an hour, you feel several spiders in your pants. You don't feel any pain, but you realize some spider bites are painless. Which of these spider bites is painless?
 - a. Black Widow
 - b. Brown Recluse *
 - c. Wolf Spider
 - d. Harvestman (Daddy Longlegs)
 10. You decide to eat some insects. Which insects should you avoid?
 - a. Adults that sting or bite
 - b. Caterpillars and insects that have a pungent odor
 - c. Hairy or brightly colored one.
 - d. All of the above*

*Correct answer

Group Task

Break into groups of 5–6 people. Now imagine that your whole group is lost. Answer each question as a group, employing a consensus approach to reach each decision. Once the group comes to an agreement, write the decision down on the same sheet of paper that you used for your individual answers. You will have approximately 20 minutes for the group task.

Scoring Your Answers

Your instructor will provide you with the correct answers which are based on expert judgments in these situations (www.wilderness-survival.net). Once you have received the answers, calculate: (A) your individual score; (B) your group's score; (C) the average

individual score in the group; (D) the best individual score in the group. Write these down, and consult with your group to ensure that these scores are accurate.

- (A) Your individual score _____
- (B) Your group's score _____
- (C) Average individual score in group _____
- (D) Best individual score in group _____

Discussion Questions

1. How did your group (B) perform relative to yourself (A)?
2. How did your group (B) perform relative to the average individual score in the group (C)?
3. How did your group (B) perform relative to the best individual score in the group (D)?
4. Compare your results with those of other groups. Did some groups do a better job of outperforming individuals than did others?
5. What do these results tell you about the effectiveness of group decision making?
6. What can groups do to make group decision making more effective?

Teaching Notes

1. Exercise instructions are detailed above.
2. When students have finished, select a group to share the results of their discussion. Ask other groups how their results compare or contrast to that group's.

Ethical Dilemma

Dealing with Shirkers

We've noted that one of the most common problems in groups is social loafing, which means group members contribute less than if they were working on their own. We might call such individuals "shirkers"—those who are contributing far less than other group members.

Most of us have experienced social loafing, or shirking, in groups. And we may even admit to times when we shirked ourselves. We discussed earlier in the chapter some ways of discouraging social loafing, such as limiting group size, holding individuals responsible for their contributions, and setting group goals. While these tactics may be effective, in our experience, many students simply work around shirkers. "We just did it ourselves—it was easier that way," says one group member.

Consider the following questions for dealing with shirking in groups:

1. If group members end up "working around" shirkers, do you think this information should be communicated to the instructor so that individual's contribution to the project is judged more fairly? If so, does the group have an ethical responsibility to communicate this to the shirking group member? If not, isn't the shirking group member unfairly reaping the rewards of a "free ride"?

Answer: Yes, this information should be communicated to the instructor. Yes, there is an ethical responsibility to communicate this to the shirking group member. They should understand that they need to contribute to the overall goals. No one should receive a "free ride." Equity is important and everyone should do their fair share in order to reap the rewards.

2. Do you think confronting the shirking group member is justified? Does this depend on the skills of the shirker (whether he is capable of doing good-quality work)?

Answer: Yes, the shirker should be confronted since he/she is accountable to the group. No, it does not depend on the skills since everyone can play a role and participate based on his/her individual skill set. If he/she needs additional help, other group members can accommodate.

3. Social loafing has been found to be higher in Western, more individualist nations, than in other countries. Do you think this means we should tolerate shirking on the part of U.S. workers to a greater degree than if it occurred with someone from Asia?

Answer: No, Western cultures tend to be more individualistic. Everyone needs to place emphasis on the goals of the group and attain them collectively. We should not lower our standards nor accommodate for those who are loafing. The managerial implication is rewarding poor behavior.