



Engaged Supervision Short Activity

Piecing Together the Puzzle

Active and engaged supervision is critical when running a safe program. We know that your staff encounter unpredictable challenges that may make supervision difficult. We've created a new activity for you to use with staff to help them think through creative ways to navigate these challenges. Through the visual representation of a puzzle, staff will understand the importance of being flexible and implementing multiple strategies to effectively supervise youth.

Time:

10+ minutes

Materials Needed for Each Participant:

1. Index card
2. Printed jigsaw puzzle (see example at the end)
3. Writing utensil—marker, pen, or pencil

Initial Talking Points:

- Emphasize the critical role supervision plays in ensuring the safety and well-being of the youth in your programs.
- Discuss how effective supervision goes beyond just being present. Staff need to be engaged with youth at all times.
- Acknowledge that various challenges can arise while supervising youth—from unexpected incidents to distractions.
- Stress the value that creative problem-solving plays in addressing these challenges.
- Discuss the need for implementing multiple strategies when remaining engaged and keeping youth safe.

Instructions:

1. Discuss the initial talking points with your staff.
2. Provide each staff member with an index card, printed jigsaw puzzle, and writing utensils.
3. Instruct each staff member to write down, on their index card, the most common roadblock or unexpected challenge they've faced while supervising youth. Some examples that staff may use if they are unable to think of their own include:
 - Programs being short-staffed
 - Cellphones
 - Handling conflicts or disagreements among youth
 - Dealing with an injury or accident
 - Weather conditions impacting program plans
 - Equipment or other program supplies malfunctions
 - Delays or changes in transportation
 - Unexpected visits from parents
4. Pair up your staff and have them share their identified roadblock/challenge. Have them also discuss why this roadblock/challenge distracts them from being fully engaged and an effective supervisor.

5. Introduce the concept of solving these supervision roadblocks/challenges as a puzzle:
 - Each roadblock/challenge we encounter while supervising youth, needs multiple solutions in order to effectively overcome them. It is with each of these solutions, when connected together, a comprehensive strategy is formed. Similar to how a puzzle works—you need each puzzle piece in order to solve the complete puzzle.
6. Instruct each staff member to write down four key strategies that they can use to overcome their roadblock/challenge. Each strategy should go in one puzzle piece, and be specific and practical. Some examples you may share with staff to help them begin brainstorming include:
 - Have hip pocket games ready to use
 - Learn my organization's emergency response plan
 - Create a backup schedule before programming in case anything goes wrong (weather, equipment challenges, etc.)
7. Once both people are done in their pairs, have them present their completed puzzle to the other person, explaining how each piece represents a part of their solution.
8. Conclude the activity by facilitating a conversation with your staff. Some sample questions include:
 - What was your biggest takeaway from this activity?
 - Why is having multiple strategies important when you are faced with a supervision roadblock/challenge?
 - How do you plan to apply the strategies you brainstormed today to your daily supervision?

