

Recreation Therapy Games:



Warm up Games:

-Gotcha

- while standing in a circle, have each participant put their right thumb in the palm of the left hand of the person next to them (thumbs will be pointing down)
- pick a "magic" number, and once the number is said, the object is to pull your thumb away while attempting to grab the thumb of the person next to you

-Tag

- there must be thousands of ways to play tag, freeze tag, help tag, octopus tag, triangle tag, there are many, many tag games
- have your students/clients come up with creative ways to play tag, new rules, etc.
- tag is a great way to introduce/focus on safe touch

-Up Chuck

- great game for a challenge
- have all participants stand around one person in the center of a circle, each with a ball/object (soft) to toss
- the object is for the person in the center to catch as many objects thrown at them
- all objects must be thrown at the same time

-Left, Right, You, Me

- great way to learn names
- have all participants stand in a circle and have one person in the middle
- they point to a person in the circle and ask them to correctly name one person, either on their right, left, themselves or the person in the middle (hence, right, left, you, me)
- you have 3 seconds to correctly name the person
- if you do not correctly name the person, you take the place of the person in the center of the circle

-Touch my Can

- game to introduce/work on safe touch and boundaries
- one person has a can, the object is to have everyone touch the can

-Toss a Name

- one ball or more than one ball**
- have participants toss ball around randomly, and with each toss the catcher states their name and thanks the person who threw it to them**
- focus is on learning names of participants**

-Politician

- one person inside the circle, one person outside the circle**
- the person inside the circle is the "politician", the one on the outside is the "opposition"**
- the "politician's" job is to introduce themselves by shaking hands everyone in the circle**
- the "opposition's" job is to touch the each person in the circle on the top of the head and get back to the starting person before the "politician" shakes everyone's hand and introduces themselves**
- if the "politician" gets finished first, they choose someone to take their place and the "opposition" remains, and vice versa**

-Objectelephantitis

- start with one object in the circle to toss**
- one person in the middle of the circle with eyes closed**
- people in the circle toss items around randomly**
- when the person in the middle says, "stop", the person holding the object takes their place in the middle**
- add more objects as the game progresses, and challenge the people in the middle to find ways to say, "stop" at the same time**

-Speed Rabbit

- Begin with three animals: cow, rabbit and elephant**
- Show the symbols to create those three animals:**

-Cow:

- the person pointed to interlaces fingers of both hands and presses both palms out away from their body, resulting in both thumbs pointing to the ground**
- the person on either side of them must pull on the thumb of the middle person and make a "milking" motion**

-Rabbit:

- the person pointed to holds hands up near chest to simulate a "cute bunny" pose**

-person on either side holds up one arm above the head of the middle person making the two bunny ears

-Elephant:

-the person pointed to crosses one arm over the other extending one arm straight out creating the elephant trunk

-the two side people make half circles on the side of the middle person creating the elephant ears

-one person in the center of the circle

-the person in the center of the circle points to one person on the side of the circle and calls the name of the animal they are to recreate

-the person pointed to is the middle of the animal and the people on their immediate right and left must create the animal correctly before a 3 count

-whichever person does not correctly play their part, they take the place of the person in the middle of the circle

-have the group create their own animals as the game progresses

-High 5's

-challenge the group to see how many high 5's they can give in 30 seconds

-play the game a few times to see what strategies evolve

-Don't Touch Me

-challenge the group to move about the designated space without touching

-begin with walking slowly, progress through different locomotion styles (forward, backward, sliding, jumping, etc.)

-add blindfolded locomotion as the group progresses

-when anyone touches or is touched they must make a "honking" noise

-Impulse

-divide the group into smaller groups, making sure there are at least 5 in each group

-participants hold hands and stand in one line

-when the facilitator says, "go", the person at the front of the line squeezes the hand of the next person in line, and the squeeze gets passed along the line

- when the last person feels the squeeze, they raise their hand indicating they are done
- first group to finish, wins
- try it several times with sight, then attempt it without sight and analyze the difference
- can also be done holding shoulders, or with arms crossed
- How we Differ
 - Create a How we Differ sheet with various questions to highlight differences of people within the group
 - questions should be both superficial and deep in nature and should have lighthearted questions as well
 - give points for differences and bonus points accordingly
 - only give one sheet per small group to encourage discussion
- Toe Tag
 - Object of the game is to tag the most toes
 - only toe tags score points, no legs/shins
 - set a 30 second time limit
 - play several times to see what strategies evolve
- Check ins
 - a good place to start groups with
 - used to gauge where people are mentally/physically in group
 - get creative in how you check in
 - you can use numbers, animals, feelings, titles of books, cartoon characters, thumbs up/down, weather patterns, etc.
- Coffeepot
 - one person in the middle of the circle
 - they think of something and describe it vaguely in one sentence, replacing the word, "coffeepot" for their object
 - "my coffeepot is large and brown"
 - people in the circle ask yes/no questions to guess what the coffeepot is
 - if no one guesses correctly after three guesses, the person in the middle can go again or choose someone to replace them
 - the person who guesses correctly replaces the person in the middle

-Name 5

- one person in the middle of the circle. They are given a category and they must name 5 things that fit in that category
- while they are naming the things, the group around them begins clapping and yelling, "name 5"
- the person in the middle has until the group says, "name 5" five times to say five things in that category
- if they are unable to complete the task, they must remain in the circle for another category
- if they are able to complete the task, they choose a new center person and they choose the new category

PROBLEM SOLVING GAMES:

-Giants, Wizards and Elves

- have participants choose signs for each part
 - giants are typically tall, wizards typically use a wand-like motion, elves typically are short and have pointed ears
- divide the group into two teams
- each team must decide what sign to "throw" (similar to rocks, paper, scissors) at the other team
- both teams throw their signs at the same time
- all members of the team must throw the same sign
- giants beat wizards, wizards beat elves, elves beat giants
- to add another level of challenge, have the winning team decide a consequence the other team must perform

-Moonball

- activity requires one beachball
- the object is to see how many times the group can hit the ball keeping it in the air
- each person can only hit the ball once in a row
- any time a person hits it more than once in a row or the ball touches the ground, restart the count from zero

-4 letter word

- activity requires letter cards (one letter per card)
- the object is for the group to make as many 4+ letter words using the provided cards in a time limit

- for an added challenge, have the group only come up with words that fit a category
 - “feelings” is a great category
- Circle the Circle
 - have the group stand in a circle holding hands
 - use at least two hula hoops for this activity
 - start both hula hoops at one person
 - have one hula hoop travel around the circle to the right, and one to the left
 - time the group to see how long it takes for the hula hoop to get back to the start person
 - you must move the hula hoops without letting go of the hand you are holding
- Paul's balls
 - place a small bucket suspended above the ground (from a tree branch, on a table, from a doorway, etc.)
 - have enough small balls to have at least three per person
 - the object is to see how fast the group can toss all the balls into the suspended bucket without touching it
- Human pyramid challenge
 - Have the group come up with as many different ways to create a human pyramid as possible
 - For an added challenge, you can divide the group and have them challenge each other

TRUST ACTIVITIES:

- Intense High 5's
 - have participants pair off
 - give the following scenarios:
 1. Greet your partner as if you've never met before
 2. Greet your partner as if you are best friends
 3. Greet your partner as if you are best friends but haven't seen each other in a month
 4. Greet your partner as if you are best friends and just won a trip to Disney

-This, that or the other

- give the group three choices of categories where they feel they fit**
- indicate where in the space those categories are, and participants move to whichever category fits them best**
- Example: This: Dogs That: Cats The Other: Reptiles**

-Guardian Angel

- Have participants in the circle choose one person in the circle to represent their guardian angel, but they are not allowed to let them know they are chosen**
- Have participants in the circle choose another person to be their villain, but they are not allowed to let them know they are chosen**
- the objective is to keep your guardian angel between you and your villain**

-Come to me

- great way to gauge how the group feels about boundaries**
- pair up participants**
- one person has a blindfold on, the other does not**
- the person with the blindfold stands still in one spot**
- the person without the blindfold walks away from the person**
- the person with the blindfold says "Come to me" to their partner**
- the partner walks toward the blindfolded person until the blindfolded person says "stop"**
- once stop is said, the person with the blindfold looks to see where they stopped the partner**
- change roles**

-Have you ever

- participants stand in a circle, each person standing on a dot/rug square**
- one person in the middle (one less dot than number of people)**
- the person in the middle asks "have you ever ___" to the group**
 - they must be able to answer their own question yes (so no one can ask, "have you ever been to the moon")**
- the people on the dots answer the question by either moving or staying put**

-if the answer to the question is yes, they move to another dot, if it is no, they stay where they are

-since there is one less dot than people, someone will not end up on a dot, and will become the new person in the middle

-Human Knot

-participants stand in a circle

-they reach out with their hands and grab the hands of two different people across from them

-the object is to return to a shoulder to shoulder circle without letting go of joined hands

-Willow in the Wind

-participants stand in a circle

-one person stands in the center

-participants get close enough to touch the person by slightly reaching forward

-the person in the center of the circle wears a blindfold

-the person in the center stands with arms crossed in front of chest, feet together and keeps body stiff

-once the group has established that they are ready, the person at the center gently leans/falls toward the group, the group responds by guiding the person around the circle keeping them upright and safe

-Trust Wave

-two lines of participants facing each other

-extend arms and create a "zipper" with arms

-have one person start away from the line and walk/run toward the zippered line

-as the person gets close to the arms, raise arms up to allow them to pass safely

-Trust Circle

-have all group members stand in a circle as close to heel to toe as possible

-count to three and after three say, "sit"

-all group members sit down and end up sitting on each other's laps supporting the entire group

-Chair Sit

-tell group members that everyone in the group will sit on one chair

- line up group members with the last person in line standing in front of one chair
- have participants stand heel to toe and ensure the chair is well supported so it does not move backwards
- count to three and say, "sit"
- all group members sit, ending up on each other's lap and all on one chair

-Hog Call

- You need 4 x 6 cards with half of a compound word on it (for example: on one card you would have peanut and on another card write butter, together they make peanutbutter). You need enough cards for one per person
- Give each person one card, they must look at it but keep the word written on it a secret
- Have everyone spread out over the entire usable space
- Give each person a blindfold and have them put it on
- On your "Go" everyone says their word out loud, the object is to find your word partner (if you have peanut and you hear butter, you attempt to find them)

-Charlie's Angels Lift

- one person sitting on a chair
- four people around them, each clasping their hands to create the "Charlie's Angels" pose
 - fingers interlaced, pointer fingers extended
- put one person at each knee and one person at each armpit
- tell the group to lift the participant using only their two fingers
 - don't allow them to count or plan, just tell them to attempt to lift the person up
- once they cannot, have them breathe in unison as you give them commands, "breathe in, breathe out"
- as they breathe in, have them raise their hands above their heads, as they breathe out, lower their arms
- on the third breath, have each person take their position under each armpit or knee
- on the fourth breath in, tell them to lift the person up, and see what happens!

CLOSING ACTIVITIES:

-Word Whip

- Go around the circle and have each person say one word they would use to sum up the experience of that day's group
- For an added challenge, once a word is used, no one may use it again

-Picture Postcard

- Go around the circle and have each person describe their favorite part of that day's group as a picture
- For an extra piece, ask them who they would send the postcard to and why

-Web of Appreciation

- You will need a ball of yarn that has been rolled into a tight ball
- You begin with the ball and you say one thing you appreciate about a person in the circle, and you toss the ball of yarn to them as you describe what you appreciate
- In the end, you have a web that touches each person
- For something extra, have a pair of scissors in your pocket and once the web is complete, have each person snip their piece of web to take with them to remember the positive experience

