Zin Obelisk

More Game Resources: CQII.org

Fun Scale ● ● ● ● ○	Ease of Play Online ● ● ● ○ ○	Connection to QI ● ● ● ● ○

Type of Game: A competitive game among teams to teach problem-solving and group decision-making

How Long: 20-30 minutes

Learning Objectives

- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of teams as team members work to solve a difficult problem
- Develop strategies for better listening and cooperation within teams
- Show how to develop better knowledge through multiple cycles of hypothesis development and testing
- Help teams understand leadership and facilitation in team problem-solving

Suggested Audiences

Team members and others who work together as a team, as well as organizational leaders who will be overseeing and coaching the work of these teams

History and More Information

The source for this game is: Francis, D., & Young, D. "Improving Work Groups: A Practical Manual for Team Building." San Diego, CA: University Associates, 1979, p. 147—151. This game was previously described in the NQC Game Guide (Interactive Exercises for Trainers to Teach Quality Improvement in HIV Care) developed by the New York Department of Health in August 2006 (CQII.org). CQII has incorporated this game in its advanced QI training program: Training of Consumers on Quality (TCQPlus).

Materials

For this game, you will need:

- Copies of the Zin Obelisk Participant Handout (targethiv.org/virtual-game-guide)
- Copies of the Zin Obelisk Facilitator Handout (targethiv.org/virtual-game-guide)
- CQII instructional slides and additional resources (targethiv.org/virtual-game-guide)
- Zoom account (or other video conferencing platform) with breakout room access
- Access to a computer and/or handheld mobile device, and internet connection

Preparation

To prepare for this session:

- Familiarize yourself with the session's structure and content:
  - Read through the game instructions and key teaching points in its entirety

  - Practice the game itself
  - Practice presenting the key teaching points
- Prepare the game:
  - Create teams of 5-8 participants using Zoom breakout rooms

The Zin Obelisk is a difficult and, in some ways, absurd puzzle. It uses made-up situations and made-up words, putting everyone on the team in the same position of being unfamiliar with the situation. The members of the team must listen to, and respect, each other — and since the puzzle is difficult and the time to complete it is short, team members tempers may fray. Teams should realize that random stabs at an answer will not help them; they need a systematic approach. The scientific method that underlies the PDSA concept may in fact help the teams sort through the Zin Obelisk. Just as you learned in high school biology, the scientific method involves developing a hypothesis about what may happen, conducting an experiment and seeing if the result confirms your hypothesis. Most health care workers are familiar with this concept and will be open to applying it to problem-solving.

Playing the Game

Welcome and Introductions

To begin the game, welcome participants and thank them for their participation. If necessary, ask individuals to introduce themselves to the group. Reassure participants that this is a difficult exercise taking place under time pressure.

Agenda

Provide a brief description of the game's primary components:

1. Background to the Zin Obelisk game
2. The game itself
3. Debrief and discussion on what the game shows, and how its lessons can be applied to HIV care
4. Feedback and close

The Game

Step 1: Provide a brief introduction of the game to participants, including instructions and premise of the game

Step 2: Divide your group into teams of 5 to 8 participants; ask for one facilitator in each group

Step 3: Review the Zin Obelisk Group instructions and scenario

Step 4: Distribute the Zin Obelisk Facilitator Handout to each facilitator and ask the facilitator to randomly share among the members of each team; you can use the Zoom chat room to reach the facilitator. You need one complete set per team; in other words, you need to distribute all cards randomly within one team. Alternatively, you can share the Zin Obelisk Participant Handout with all participants.

Step 5: Break up the teams into Zoom breakout rooms and routine check with them about their progression to find the solution

Step 6: Allow the team to work on the task in Zoom breakout rooms; stop after 25 minutes if they have not completed the task by then

Debrief and Discussion

- Make sure each participant understands the rationale for the answer, walking through it if necessary. Ask each group to describe its process:
  - What behavior helped the group accomplish the task? What behavior hindered the group in completing the task? How did leadership emerge in the team? What feelings did you experience as the task progressed? What suggestions would you make to improve team performance?
- Ask if groups used the scientific method and, if so, whether it was helpful
- Ask participants about teamwork in their HIV programs:
  - Do they use teams to solve complex problems? If so, how do they work? What works well, and what could be improved? Do any of these teams use the scientific method as an approach? Do they try to develop and test hypotheses about changes that might lead to improvement? If so, how does this work? If not, how could you get them to try this approach?

Feedback and Close

- Ask your audience for feedback on whether this session met its objectives; take note of their responses and keep it for your use in the future
- Schedule an informal follow-up session with any audience member who wants clarification or more information on the game or the concepts you discussed
- Thank your audience and congratulate them on their hard work and success