RIVER CROSSING

WHAT TO SAY

After identifying the problem, these are good next steps in problem solving.

Come up with Solutions:
- Be creative and expansive.
- No idea is a bad idea.
- Try to generate as many solutions as possible.

Evaluate each possible solution:
- Feasibility: how likely are you to be able to pull it off; what resources (time, money, help from others) will it require.
- Impact: assess impact via cost-benefit ratio (advantages and disadvantages), perspective taking (who benefits, who might get hurt) and short versus long term consequences.
- Outcome: how likely is it to fix the problem; is the fix temporary or permanent?

Choose one and try
- Choose and implement the best solution.
- Evaluate its impact and outcome.
  - Try again (following the same steps) if necessary.

Requires Resources? Yes
Grade Level: 9-12
Indoor/Outdoor: Indoor
Group Size: 6+

WHAT TO DO

- Mark both sides of the river, and make the stepping stones. Rubber disks, cardboard cutouts or other items can be used (even sheets of paper!). Stones should be small enough that only one person can stand on them at a time.
- Because the goal of the game is for the team to cross the river with a limited number of stones, you either want to 1) make the river wide enough that they have to pick up the stones behind them, or 2) give them fewer stones that they'll have to reuse.
- Read the following script: "While your group is out adventuring, you stumble across an acidic river contaminated with immense amounts of pollution. If you touch the water in the river, your skin will instantly melt off. You could try to go around the river, but it would take days to return to your campsite, and you might run out of resources. Thus, your group decides that you'll have to find a safe way to cross it. One of you notices stepping stones by the edge of this river that can be used to get you across. However, these stones need to have pressure on them at all times while they're in the river, or they'll drift away. This means that one of you will need to have a foot on every stone at all times. If one of you steps off the stone, into the acidic river, I will take away that stone and you will be unable to use it for the remainder of the task. You have 20 (or 30) minutes to get your entire team safely across the river before the tide rises."
- Once the instructions have been read, the timer can be started.

Variations: #1 Identify team members (from the beginning or in the middle of the game) that are blindfolded, unable to talk or have "missing limbs;" #2 Lose a stone? Take 2 minutes off the clock.

WHAT TO ASK

- Did you rush into the situation with a trial and error mentality or did you develop a plan before proceeding? Was your approach successful? Why or why not?
- Everyone has different perspectives and ideas. How did you decide whose plan to go with?
- Did you feel comfortable speaking up during the brainstorm? Why or why not?
- How does this relate to the real world when we encounter problems? What can you take away from this activity?