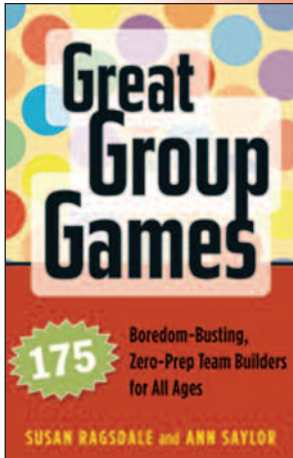


Build the Safety Asset by Playing With Purpose

Here is one game you can use to lead into a conversation about safety in your group. It's one of many asset building games from *Great Group Games: 175 Boredom-Busting, Zero-Prep Team Builders for All Ages*.

Leaning Book Ends

Time 5–30 minutes



The Game

Have players team up in threes. Determine who will be the “book” and the “bookends.” Ask the “book” to stand stiffly between the other two players with arms crossed

over chest. Direct “bookends” to move into supporter stance and face the book’s shoulders. The “book” should lean slowly into the arms of one of the players, who catches and gently pushes him or her in the opposite direction toward the other player. Players should continue the slow back and forth movement. The “book” will gradually lean lower as each “bookend” takes a small step backward. The “book” should fall only as low as he or she is comfortable and the “bookends” are capable. Let players switch roles.

Going Deeper

- Which role did you prefer, “book” or “bookends”?
- Were you able to trust the “bookends” to hold you steady?
- What role did trust play in this activity? Support?
- How do you feel about accomplishing this task as a supporting “bookend”? As the “book”?

Asset Categories Support, Empowerment, Positive Identity

the Asset MESSENGER

JUNE

Building Blocks for Healthy Development for ALL Young People

SAFETY IN THE SUMMER

Your summer programs are probably swarming with energetic kids, teens, and families. . . a happy time and a time to make sure we’re doing all we can to ensure that people in our programs have a safe, fun summer. **That’s a big responsibility for all staff.**

SAFETY is one of 40 Developmental Assets® that are proven to help young people thrive, and SAFETY is one factor that will keep youth involved in your organization. So safety is a key element to your program’s success.

Providing a safe space means that we need to consider both the physical and emotional sides of safety in our programs. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Get to know the names of your participants and members. Be intentional about helping make youth feel welcome and accepted.
- Ask young people about their perceptions about safety in your building – find out where and how they feel unsafe. Ask them if they have any ideas for making it a safer place, address their concerns, and invite them to help.
- Train yourself in peaceful conflict resolution. Then teach, encourage and expect all youth and adults to solve conflicts nonviolently.
- Invite youth and staff members to help set clear boundaries & expectations for safe behavior. If you set high expectations, people will usually rise to meet those expectations.
- Stop name calling and teasing that hurts. It takes courage to step in when people are being treated unkindly, but you can make such a big difference in someone’s life.
- Have adequate supervision. Youth needs adults to watch out for them, mentor them, and befriend them.

- Learn about signs of depression, chemical abuse, eating disorders, gang involvement and physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- Keep your safety certifications updated (CPR, First Aid, Child Abuse...). And offer to teach youth safety and self-protection skills
- Watch out for strangers. Know what to do in when strangers come into the building. Don’t let kids go home with people you don’t know
- Teach youth about the importance of reporting unsafe behavior and give them a safe way to let you know about the dangers.
- Let youth know that you see them, you respect them, and you care about them as individuals.

Youth organizations should provide young people with a safety net for healthy development that leads to other positive behaviors. This starts with supportive relationships in a safe environment. People *who feel safe tend to act in these ways: they are relaxed, warm, open & friendly; they enjoy being creative, dream big dreams & take risks, and they’re confident & secure.* By ensuring youth’s safety, we build assets and contribute to their empowerment. Once kids feel safe, they’re more likely to feel secure enough to try new things and give back to the community.

