



SHARE POWER

## Marshmallow Towers

Working Together Requires Sharing Power

### Description

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Teams work together to construct a tower made out of marshmallows and spaghetti sticks in this fun activity. Participants then reflect on how they were able to share power through this experience.

### Objective

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- Build and strengthen relationships among participants
- Deepen understanding of the element of Share Power

### Connecting with the Framework

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Sharing power requires negotiation and collaboration between people. This activity prompts participants to share power by negotiating how to build their towers and collaborating to complete them.

### Planning and Preparation

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 **Participants:** Up to 40 (divided into teams of 4-5 participants)

 **Time:** 30-45 minutes

 **Materials:**

 **Set up:**

- Bags of marshmallows (about 20 marshmallows for each team)
  - Box of uncooked spaghetti (about 20 spaghetti sticks for each team)
  - Large paper plates (one for each team)
  - Measuring tape, yardstick or string to measure the towers
  - Handout with questions for small groups (or write them on poster paper or a PowerPoint slide)
- Divide into even teams of 4-5 participants each. Give each team one plate and an equal amount of marshmallows and dry spaghetti sticks. (Usually about 20 marshmallows and 20 spaghetti sticks works well.)

### Facilitator Notes:

- After participants build their marshmallow towers, the structures often start falling right away. So it's helpful to have more than one person to measure at the same time.
- Feel free to let participants eat any unused marshmallows!
- While facilitating, consider the ways you can model sharing power with the participants. Ideas include:
  - Deciding as a group how many marshmallows and pieces of spaghetti each group gets.
  - Allowing participants to choose their own groups.
  - Setting shared goals for how tall they want their towers to be.
  - Inviting participants to take on leadership roles, such as passing out materials or taking notes during the discussion.

### Facilitator Instructions

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1. If participants have been introduced to the Developmental Relationships Framework, let them know that through this activity we will be practicing the element of Share Power. Remind them that sharing power is about respecting others, letting different people take the lead at different times, and learning to work together. Let them know they will have to work together as a team by negotiating and collaborating to build a tower out of marshmallows
2. Tell teams they will have about five minutes to make a plan together as a team without touching the supplies.
3. Next, tell the teams they will have 7 minutes to try and create the tallest tower with the supplies they have on their plate. (They should build the towers on the plates so they don't get other surfaces sticky.) Let participants know they may break the spaghetti or marshmallows, but once they are broken, pieces will not be replaced. Every person on the team needs to contribute to building the tower, and the tower has to stand on its own with no one touching it when time is up. Tell them you will measure the towers at the end to determine a winner.
4. Let teams know when there is one minute to go. Walk around and roughly measure the towers to declare a winner.



## Putting It Into Practice

This is an activity that can be repeated frequently, particularly with the adaptations. Use this game as a warm up to other activities that require teamwork or collaboration or as an energy builder/burner. The group could set a long-term goal for how long they want to keep the balloon in the air and work toward it over a longer period of time as well.

5. Have participants discuss the following questions with their groups for five minutes. Distribute copies of the handout to each group or just write these questions on poster paper or on a whiteboard. Let them know they will be sharing out a few ideas with the larger group.

- How did you come up with your plan as a group?
- What did you do if different people had different ideas?
- How did each person contribute? What was their role?
- How did your plan change as you began to build the tower?
- What was it like to have to work together?
- What did you do to make sure that everyone on your team contributed?
- Are there ways you could improve on sharing power if you were to do this activity again? If so, what would you do differently?

### Reflect

Discuss these questions as a large group:

- Share out a few thoughts that came up in your group’s conversation.
- Which tower-building techniques worked well? (Participants might notice that the ones that had multiple connections were stronger. Tell them to think about a young person as one of those marshmallows - what happens in real life when that young person has more connections?)
- What are some other situations in life where you have had to work together with other people—at school, home, in programs, on teams, etc.?
- What similarities do you see between what happened in this activity and how you negotiate with others?
- If you could change one thing about how you “share power” with other people (in friendships, on teams, in groups), what would you want to work on? What might be a first step?

### Taking Action (optional)

Ask participants to think about and share one way they will try sharing power in the next week.

## Marshmallow Towers: Questions

How did you come up with your plan as a group?

What did you do if different people had different ideas?

How did each person contribute? What was their role?

How did your plan change as you began to build the tower?

What was it like to have to work together?

What did you do to make sure that everyone on your team contributed?

Is there anything you would have done differently?