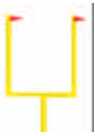


# Activity: The Mole



## Time Required: Varies

This is an “activity within an activity” so the time required varies based on the task you assign to the teams.



## Goals

- To encourage people to practice dealing with difficult and dysfunctional behaviors of others.



## Overview

This activity is a simulation with two elements. One element is a task related to the training being conducted (running a meeting, managing a project team, making a presentation, etc.). The other element is related to managing the behavior of people during that task. The “mole” portion of the activity involves assigning individuals to play a dysfunctional role or difficult person during a particular task, and the rest of the group identifying those inappropriate behaviors and taking action to eliminate them during the activity.



## Instructions

Divide the class into small teams. Instruct teams to complete a specific task, for example, “Create a project plan for your team’s assigned project.” Explain that they will have two objectives during this exercise. One is to complete the task (create a project plan) and the other is to address any inappropriate or unproductive behaviors they encounter on the team. Suggest that they should work as a team to address those behaviors, rather than rely solely on the team leader. Have each team member draw a role card to determine his or her role during the exercise. Role cards should include a team leader card, 2-3 “mole” behavior cards, and additional “normal” cards totaling the number of people on the team. Set some ground rules for them around the role cards (don’t reveal your role unless you are the team leader; don’t be obvious or overact, don’t try to guess the mole, etc.). Allow enough time for the activity so that they are able to experience problem behaviors and their impact.



## Handouts

- Role Cards describing dysfunctional behaviors. These can include:
  - Know it all: Act like you know more than everyone else. When people ask questions, give your opinion as the expert and ignore all others.
  - Challenger: Criticize all ideas proposed by the team. Challenge the project leader about his or her recommendations or directions.
  - Multi-tasker: Carry on side conversations. Check your email. Leave the room during the exercise. Answer your phone or make a call.
  - Avoider: Change the subject. Take the meeting off track. Bring up other issues beyond the scope of the exercise.
  - Naysayer: Express concern about every idea you hear. Find the problems with everything. Play “Devil’s Advocate.”
  - Attacker: Criticize the ideas of others with name calling. Label the ideas as stupid, ignorant, etc.
- Role Cards describing “normal” behaviors. These can include:
  - Team Leader: You will lead the team through this exercise. Use the skills and practices you have been learning in training. Address any “mole” behaviors you observe.
  - Gatekeeper: Get all team members involved. Ask for input from silent people. Focus on full team participation.
  - Encourager: Whatever ideas you hear are good ones. Give positive feedback when team members participate.
  - Summarizer: Periodically summarize the ideas or positions of the team. Comment about what has been addressed and what still needs to be covered.
  - Yourself: Play yourself in whatever way you would typically act in this exercise.



## Debrief

The first part of the debrief involves the actual task they were to complete. Have teams present their work, if that is appropriate. Then discuss the “mole” part of the activity by asking questions such as:

- *What mole behaviors did you observe and with whom? What was the impact of that behavior? (As they offer each behavior, ask that individual identified as the mole if that was their assigned role.)*
- *If you observed a mole behavior, how did you address it? What else could you have done?*
- *What mole behaviors were not addressed? (Have individuals read their cards.)*
- *What positive behaviors were observed? How did they impact the work on this activity?*