

# Jumping Your Hurdles

## 6. Electric Hurdle

**Spatial Requirements:** Gym/outdoor space required

**Activity Type:** Movement/group

**Grades:** 5-12

**Group Size:** 8-14

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Introduction:** Everyone has challenges, trials, and problems. The people who go far are those that use problem solving to jump these hurdles. The object of this activity is to give students a hands-on experience that walks them through a basic problem-solving model. It also illustrates the importance of working as a team when it comes to solving problems.

### Materials:

- 16-foot bungee cord
- Tumbling mat or lawn

### Activity:

You may or may not choose to allow talking during this activity. To prepare, tie the bungee cord horizontally across an area 15 to 20 feet long, with the bungee cord about 32 inches above the ground. The cord can be tied to a doorknob, a table, a file cabinet, a tree, etc. (See example below.) Teach the basic concepts and steps of jumping over hurdles, then explain the task. The goal for the group is to get everyone over the hurdle without touching the bungee cord. The group is required to be connected at all times for safety reasons (i.e. hand to hand, foot to foot, hand to arm etc.), especially when going over the hurdle. Allow the group enough time to come up with at least three options. Encourage the group to select one of these options and execute it. Discourage unsafe options, such as standing on backs. When the bungee is touched, the person who touched it must return to the end of the line. After three touches, the entire team must start over. When all members are over the bungee cord, process the activity.

### Notes to the facilitator:

As you explain the rules of the activity to the group, ask members to close their eyes and hold up fingers between 1 and 10 to show their belief level that the task can be accomplished. One finger means “no way” and ten fingers means “It can definitely be accomplished.” Keep a mental note on the response. After the activity, ask the same question. Compare the results of each and share the results during the processing period.

### Processing the Experience:

Review the steps of jumping over hurdles as they apply to the activity, and write them on the board.

1. Identify the hurdle - the electric hurdle
2. Create options - What options did the group come up with?
3. Get help - How did group members help others get over the hurdle?
4. Take action - What specific behaviors did you use and what worked? What behaviors did you stop doing and what behaviors did you start doing?
5. Believe in change - What was your belief level for the success of this activity before you started? Did your belief level change as you went through the activity?
6. Jump back up - If the group had to start over, what did they learn from their experience? Did it make them stronger?

### Processing Questions:

- How did you feel when you made it over the hurdle?
- How did you feel when you started over?
- Is it OK to make mistakes?

- What can you learn from your mistakes?
- Why are you a winner if you don't quit?
- Why should you try to jump over your own hurdles?
- What problems and challenges have you "jumped over" (accomplished) before that can help you now?
- What should your self-talk be telling you as you try to jump over your hurdle?

**Safety concerns:**

This activity is safest when there are two facilitators present on either side of the hurdle to help spot. If it looks unsafe, have the group or individual come up with another option. Do not let the group stand on another person's back to go over the hurdle. Never allow students to go over the hurdle with their heads toward the ground. As they come up with three or four different methods, be aware of the safety issues for each. The following are methods we have seen groups use:

1. Cradle

Two people face each other to create a "cradle" and lift a third person over the cord. Two arms support the back and the other two arms go under the legs.

Safety Issue

A third person may need to be behind to help lift. As a facilitator, be on the other side to "spot" as they come over the hurdle. Remember that the group has to be connected at all times during the process. A break in connection is a casualty.

2. Fireman lift

Two people lift another over the hurdle by having person "A" grab their own arm halfway up the arm between the wrist and the elbow using their right hand.

Person "A" then grabs the right arm of person "B" with their left hand halfway up the arm between the wrist and the elbow. Person "B" then grabs the right arm of person "A" with their left hand halfway up the arm between the wrist and the elbow.

Safety issue

A third person may need to be behind to help lift. As a facilitator, be on the other side to spot as they come over the hurdle.

3. Knees

A person steps on the knee(s) of a team member(s) and steps over the hurdle onto the ground or on the knee(s) of another person(s). If the group is struggling using one knee, ask them how stable a one-legged stool is vs. a two-legged stool vs. a three-legged stool? Two knees overlapping provide a more stable foundation. Do not tell them how to do it.

Safety issue

Team members need to be on either side of the person going over to "spot" and assist with balance. As a facilitator, be on the other side of the hurdle to spot as the person comes over. Make sure that there is a stable foundation (two or three knees) before you allow people over the hurdle. Of all the methods to get over the hurdle, the Knee method requires the most attention to safety. This method works best with two facilitators, one on each side of the bungee cord.

4. Inch worm

Group members face each other in a straight line. The first person closest to the hurdle lays across the arms of the people in the line with his/her feet toward the hurdle. The person being passed over the hurdle will be laying about waist height on the arms of the other group members. The person that is laying flat on his/her back is "inch wormed" along (bounced) toward the hurdle. As the person gets close to the hurdle, they sit up and step down to the other side. The process is continued.

### Safety issue

Make sure the group members have a good grip as people are bounced toward the other side of the bungee cord. As a facilitator, be on the other side of the hurdle to spot as they step down.

### 5. Jump over

Usually the first and last person jumps over the hurdle to start and complete the task. Warning: Do not let the entire group jump at the same time to get over the hurdle.

### Safety issue

Give the individual jumping plenty of room. Let them know they need to land on their feet. (No diving, Fosbury Flop, flips, etc.) As a facilitator, be close by as they jump over to spot and assist if needed.

### 6. Bridge

Two people form a human bridge. Once the first person is over, he or she faces a person on the other side and both “bridge” the hurdle by placing both arms on the shoulders of the person across from them. People climb over the human bridge.

### Safety issue

People will go over the “human bridge” many different ways. As a facilitator, spot their landing.

### 7. Bridge/Knee

Two people form a human bridge. Once the first person is over he or she faces a person on the other side and both “bridge” the hurdle by placing both arms on the shoulders of the person across from them. Two other people kneel down so that a knee on each side can be stepped on. A person going over steps on one knee holds on to the “human bridge” and steps on the knee of the person on the other side.

### Safety issue

As a facilitator, spot them as they step down. Other members of the group should be there to assist as needed.

