

# TENT POLE

This activity is a powerful exercise for learning how to work together and communicate to small and medium-sized groups.



25-30 minutes



Groups of 8-12 (can have multiple groups)



1 thin, lightweight tent pole per group

Source: Unknown

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- What was your initial reaction to this exercise?
- How did your group cope with the challenge?
- What skills did it take for your group to be successful?
- What would an outside observer say were the strengths and weaknesses of your group?
- What other situations can work like this?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Lay tent poles flat on the ground throughout the room – you'll need one tent pole for each group.
2. Divide participants into multiple groups of 8-12 (depending on the number of participants).
3. Have group members line up on either side of the tent pole, lift up the tent pole to shoulder height and balance it on their index fingers. Note: no pinching or grabbing of the pole is allowed.
4. The object of the activity is to lower the tent pole to the ground from shoulder height. Easy, right? Wait, there are a few additional steps:
  - a. The team must work together to lower the tent pole to the ground from the starting position of shoulder height.
  - b. If at any time a team member's finger loses contact with the pole, the team must go back to the start and begin again.
5. As the facilitator, if a group is struggling you can offer suggestions to the group to help them out. If a group is moving too quickly remind them if a team member's finger loses contact they must start over again.
6. Finish when at least one team has gotten their tent pole to the ground.