

## Broken Squares

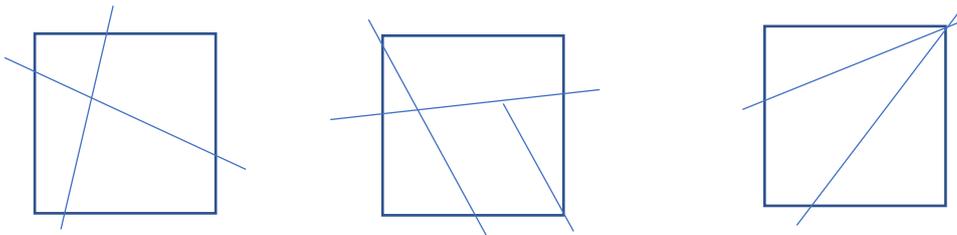
A classic (physical) exercise explores communication, collaboration, teamwork, problem-solving and achieving objectives. With large groups, a variation can be run to explore leadership – especially collaborative or servant leadership.

### Activity 1 – Broken Squares

#### Preparation

You will need to prepare a number of cards in advance as follows. Cut A4 card into squares of equal size. You will need to have one square for each person so if running a workshop for 12 people, you'll need to make 12 squares.

Then, using straight lines only, cut the squares into 3-6 pieces. They should all be cut differently. 3 or 4 pieces works best – create triangles and irregular quadrilaterals as much as possible. E.g.



Mix up the pieces.

#### The Activity

Explain that participants will be given pieces of card and the idea is for everyone to make a square and put it in front of them. The team will be awarded points depending on how quickly they achieve it. Each person will get 10 points for under a minute, 9 points for under 2 minutes etc. 1 point if it's achieved in 10-15 minutes (or something like this).

Each person can only have one square in front of them at the end.

Give participants random pieces so that each person has roughly the same number, and set them off.

They can only achieve this (of course) if they collaborate and work towards a team rather than an individual goal).

**NOTE:** You can add further restrictions such as only one person at a time can speak, or no-one can speak, or no-one can move from their place, or you must always have at least one fragment in front of you. Perhaps only add restrictions for smaller groups!

## Debrief

Discuss the exercise. Talking points can include:

- How did they define the problem?
- How did they agree a solution?
- How did they communicate to solve the problem (especially if working with restrictions)?
- What roles did people play?
- How quickly did you decide to work together rather than focusing on your own task?
- What team behaviours (Tuckman) were exhibited?

## Variation (if the group is large)

Run in 2 groups, and ask each group to elect a leader. It's up to the leader to select a course of action and is the only one who can **take** pieces from people (anyone can receive pieces).

Observe the different roles they play – how do they involve team members? Do they just do everything themselves? Do they take on suggestions? Do they think creatively? Try to find roles for others?

A simple solution here is for the leader to collect all pieces put them in a pile and ask each team member to come up and make a square! Another way is to ask each person what they need to complete their square and to bring it for them (servant leadership).