



ACTIVITY: 'A-HA-HA'

TIME: 5–10 minutes
SIZE: For small groups
SPACE: Clear room to lie down
RESOURCES: Checkerboard and checkers (optional)

NB: This activity is best for girls. Be sensitive to issues like personal proximity and body self-consciousness.

The aim is for students to participate in an activity where laughter is likely.

The result should be class discussion about the physiological benefits of laughter.

1. Set a serious mood and explain that this is an activity focusing on self-control.
2. Break the class into small groups of three to five students. Have these groups lay in circles on their backs, so each student has his/her head on the tummy of another student in the group.*
3. Eyes closed (optional).
4. Explain that the challenge here is not to laugh.
5. Nominate a 'first person' in each group. That student is to say a loud, 'Ha!'. Going clockwise, the next student must say, 'Ha-Ha!'. The third student must then say, 'Ha-Ha-Ha!', and so-forth, continuing around the group until it breaks down with laughter.
6. To vary: create a race between groups. Each time a group successfully completes a 'Ha-Ha' cycle of the circle without breaking into uncontrollable laughter, one member gets to his/her feet and runs to a checkerboard to advance a checker one row forward. Any group failing a cycle must retreat a row. The first group to 'cross' the checkerboard wins.
7. Commence class discussion.

*If you think this close contact might be too confronting, consider having students stand in a circle with linked arms.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What were you thinking and feeling when the rules of the activity were explained? Were you excited? Anxious? Annoyed? What were you saying to yourself?
- What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? Were these different to your thoughts and feelings before the activity started?
- What were your physical symptoms during the activity? How do you feel physically now?
- What were people who remained serious longest saying to themselves during the activity? Did this change? What were you thinking when other members of your group were unable to control themselves?
- What situations in real life might be similar to this activity? Why is it so important to put events into perspective and find ways to discover their enjoyable aspects?