

## **Mouse Trap Pass**

**Game Type:** *TRUST*

**Purpose:** *Illustrate the importance of trust in relationships.  
Trust and safety is the key to open, honest communication.*

**Props:** *Mouse Trap (unused)*

**Appropriate minimum group size:** *any size*

### **Set up of game with group:**

Have the group “line up in a circle”.

Ask the group “What is the single most important factor in a healthy relationship?”

Someone will answer trust. Suggest to the group that any relationship’s ability to grow - whether dating, marriage or parent-child – is directly proportional to the amount of trust shared between the people involved in that relationship.

Question: “Teenagers what is the benefit to you if you have your parents trust?”

Answer: privileges, freedom, etc.

Question: “Parents what is the benefit to you if you are able to trust your teenager?”

Answer: Less worry, less stress and tension in the family.

Key point: Trust in a family benefits everyone involved and conversely the lack of trust restricts and creates stress for everyone in the family.

Announce - “We are going to play a game about building trust called ‘Mouse Trap Pass’.”

Explain that trust is built in tiny increments and that every time I act responsibly and follow through on the things I said I would do, then I build a little bit of trust. On the other hand distrust comes in huge chunks so, one act that breaks trust wipes out 8 to 10 trustworthy acts.

### **Instructions:**

What we are going to do is to pass this mousetrap around the circle. At no time can you pick-up the mousetrap just slide it off onto the hand of the person next to you. So, you can place one hand behind your back.

**Facilitator:** (to the person to your right) Ask- If I passed this mousetrap to you and took good care to not let it snap you, then would you trust me a little more?

**Answer:** “ A little”

**Facilitator :** Right because trust is built in little tiny increments, but, would your ability to trust me would go up just a little.

But what if, just as you were about to take the mousetrap I turned my hand over quickly and made it snap your hand – How much would you trust me then?

**Answer:** “Not at all!” Right, and I wouldn’t blame you.

**Facilitator:** So, now since “Joe” won’t stand next to me the next time I’m going to stand next to Susie. Susie, how much are you going to trust me.

**Susie:** I’m not!

**Facilitator:** (to Susie) That’s not fair, I snapped Joe not you, why don’t you trust me?

**Susie:** Because if you did it to him you might do it to me!

**Facilitator:** (to the group) Right, because when you break trust with one person it doesn’t just effect your trust level with that one person it effects your trust level with anyone who knows about it. So, breaking trust can have a devastating effect in a family. Because it effects the way everyone in the family trusts you.

So, during the activity if I was making noises and saying things like “SNAP” would that be building trust or breaking trust? Breaking trust and remember we are building trust.

### **Debrief:**

Ask the group which was more difficult receiving the mousetrap or passing it?  
Typically you will get mixed answers from the group.

Why did some of you say receiving was more difficult?

Answer: “I was scared I might get snapped” or “I didn’t have any control over what they were going to do.”

**Facilitator:** It was scary because you were taking a risk and any time you trust another person it requires taking a risk.

Why did some of you say passing?

Answer: “I was afraid of snapping the other person.”

**Facilitator:** When another person trusts you there is a responsibility placed on you to prove yourself worthy of their trust.

*There are always those two sides of trust at work in all of our decisions.  
You will always do one of two things – build trust or break trust.*