

Facilitator's Tool Box
Hoola-Hoop Drop
Introductory, Emotional Regulation or Family Systems Module*

*This could be used for any of these modules, with minor adaptations in the processing.

Purpose: To give participants an opportunity to recognize such aspects as blaming, assuming the worst about others, withdrawing, etc., in their own behavior when faced with frustration, which are common to interactions within most families.

Outcome: Increased awareness of negative tactics family members often resort to in order to save face, avoid being wrong or taking responsibility for one's contribution to conflict.

Instructions: Divide your group into equal groups of 6 or 8, if possible, smaller if necessary.

Have 6 or 8 participants stand in a circle about 2' larger in diameter than the hoola-hoop. Instruct each person to extend their arms in front of them, elbows slightly bent, and the index and middle fingers of each hand extended, together, perpendicular to the floor (index finger on top of the middle finger, touching).

The facilitator will rest the hoola-hoop on the extended fingers of the participants. They are not to grasp or hold on to the hoola-hoop—just let it rest on their outstretched fingers. Working as a unit, they are to lower the hoola-hoop to the floor.

Invariably, the hoop starts to rise. Eventually people tend to start blaming each other, accusing someone of sabotaging the effort, etc. Make note of the emotion and comments for processing.

After several tries, if there are enough people in the group, let the others try to accomplish lowering the hoola-hoop to the floor.

Process: *What did you notice happening when the goal was not accomplished? What kinds of comments did you hear being made? Was there any blaming? If you were one being blamed, how did that feel? Did anyone stop to think about what **they** might be doing to prevent the hoola-hoop from being lowered? Do we ever do this in our families? With other people? If so, in what situations?*