

Engage your class with this ready-to-use challenge activity!

Escape the Knot

Duration: **20 min.** Materials needed: **none**
Targeted Skills: **Collaboration, Communication, Problem-Solving**

Activity - Suggested Procedure:

- **First**, form teams of 6-12 and have each team stand in a small circle together. The circle should be small enough that everyone can reach the middle with their hand.
- **Next**, each person should reach their right hand into the middle, and grab the right hand of someone who is not directly on their left or right. Keep hold of that person's hand.
- **Next**, each person reaches their left hand into the middle and grabs the left hand of someone NEW (not the same person they are holding right hands with), and again, not directly on their left or right.
- **Now**, the challenge: Teams must untangle their arms (Escape this Human Knot they've created) without letting go of their teammates' hands! To do this, they will need to work together physically and intellectually to solve this problem.
- **Solution**: Since the setup of this 'knot' is quite random, there are multiple solutions for each 'knot' and as long as teams ended still grasping hands with their initial partner, they have solved the challenge! They may end up in one full circle, in two or more circles that are 'linked' together, or possibly in multiple circles that are un-linked.

Facilitation Tips:



You may need to establish/review norms to address the physical trust this activity requires.



You could offer a "one-time break" that a team could use if they get stuck, in which they can have one 'break' of hands and then re-grasp. However, the entire team needs to agree upon when to use this "one-time break."



Debrief Discussion:

- How did your team communicate with each other during this activity?
- Do you feel like your team was successful? Why or why not?
- How can an activity like this make your group better problem solvers?

Is your class ready
for the next challenge? 

