



# Four On A Couch

To get the correct group members sitting on the “couch” together

## TIME

20-30 minutes



## TEAM STAGE

Norming, Performing

## MATERIALS

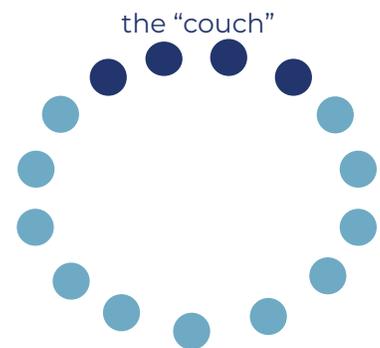
Couch markers and team markers (stickers, hats, bandanas, etc.), paper, pens, bowl

## SUMMARY

This activity challenges group members problem solving abilities as they try to strategically move members of their team into four specific “couch” seats.

## SET UP

- Create a circle of chairs. There must be enough chairs in the circle for every participant to have a seat plus one extra chair.
- Place the four “couch” markers on four adjacent chairs to form the “couch”.
- Prepare two different team markers to give participants that will indicate who is on which team.



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Begin by splitting the group into two equal teams (if there is an odd number, have the facilitator participate to even out the teams) and give each participant a team marker to indicate which team they are on. Have all of the players sit in a chair so that the teams alternate and no one is sitting immediately next to a member of their team.
  - **Facilitator Note:** An easy way to get this entire step done is to have everyone sit in a chair before assigning teams and then pass out alternating team markers to every other person.
- Next, have everyone write their name on a scrap of paper and place it in a bowl. Then, go around and have everyone pull a “new” name from the bowl. It is okay if it is their own name, but they cannot show anyone the name that they pulled or tell anyone what their “new” name is. This “new” name is what each participant will respond to for the rest of the activity.
- Instruct the participants that in this activity, the goal is to have four members of their team fill the four seats on the “couch” by strategically moving people around the circle.
- To start, the person to the left of the empty seat in the circle is allowed to call the name of someone sitting in the circle. The person who has drawn that name from the bowl will then move to the empty seat.
- Then, the person to the left of the newly emptied seat can call another name. This will go on until a team has filled the “couch” seats with four of their members.
- Participants cannot call the same name immediately after it was already called and cannot help the person who is calling names by pointing, shouting, gesturing etc.
  - **Facilitator Note:** For groups to be successful they will have to try to remember everyone’s “new” names, plan their moves carefully, and adapt to changes in the activity.



## VARIATIONS

- To make the activity more challenging, add a rule that you cannot call a name that was already called until at least two (or more) different names have been called.
- For another added challenge, add more seats to the “couch”.
-  **Large Group:** To facilitate this activity for a large group, consider having three teams instead of two. Start with the empty seat on the couch so that no team has an advantage of starting with more people on the couch than the other teams.
-  **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, use a shared document and prepare it with a series of squares arranged in a circle. There should be one more square than there are participants, and four of the squares should be a different color to indicate the couch. Add a textbox with each participant’s name and place each name in one of the squares. Use different colored text to indicate the different teams. Message each participant the name of another participant to serve as their “new” name that they will “respond to” (it may be helpful to assign who will be messaged what name before facilitating this activity). Have the person whose name comes after the empty square when looking in a clockwise direction call out a name. Then, have whoever was assigned that “new” name move their actual name into the empty square. Repeat this process so that the person whose name comes after the empty square when looking in a clockwise direction is always calling out the next name, and participants are always moving their actual name when their “new” name is called. [[click here for video](#)]

## DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
    - What were the challenging aspects of this activity?
    - How did you keep yourself accountable for paying attention and remembering which names correspond to which participants?
  - So What:
    - Why is it important that every participant remains accountable to the group goal in an activity like this?
    - How do we stay aligned with our team members when we cannot communicate with them directly?
  - Now What:
    - What can you do to stay accountable to your group’s goals?
    - How can you ensure your group remains in alignment with your goals and strategies?
-  **Facilitator Note:** These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group’s experience and add or change questions as needed.