



Mole Game

An activity about working together through challenges with trust

TIME

20-30 minutes



TEAM STAGE

Storming, Norming, Performing

MATERIALS

Paper, markers, "Mole slips"

SUMMARY

In this activity, the facilitator creates a situation where group members have the potential to distrust each other while completing an activity. The focus of the debrief usually centers on how to work through distrust in the group and what impact it has on performance.

SET UP

- Draw a picture that the groups will have to duplicate. The more abstract and complex it is, the better.
- Prepare one Mole slip that says "you ARE the Mole" and one that says "you are NOT the Mole".
 - **Facilitator Note:** The only mole slip that will actually get used is the one that says "you are NOT the Mole".

INSTRUCTIONS

- Divide participants into small groups of five to seven people.
- Separate groups and give each group a piece of paper and a set of markers.
- Tell the groups to select an artist who will be the only person allowed to use the markers and paper.
- Explain that the objective is for each group to recreate a drawing as accurately as possible. The facilitator will be holding the original drawing and will show participants the drawing one at a time, for only a few seconds at a time.
 - **Facilitator Note:** It is helpful to keep the drawing on a clipboard with another piece of paper over it. Hold the clipboard in front of you and lift the paper on top of it to show participants the drawing.
- Tell participants that the role of the Mole is to sabotage the group. Explain that they will each be shown a slip that indicates whether or not they are a Mole.
- Have each person close their eyes, and show them each the Mole slip one at a time. Instruct them to keep this information secret.
 - **Facilitator Note:** Even though you have told participants about the role of the Mole, there is no real Mole in this version of the activity. In order to avoid lying to the group and hurting your credibility with the participants, do not say that there WILL be a Mole. Instead, simply explain the role of the Mole and explain that you will be showing them Mole slips to determine whether or not they will be a Mole.
- Tell participants the rules:
 - Only one group member may leave their group's area at a time to look at the drawing.
 - Every group member (except the artist) must leave the group's area once before anyone goes a second time.
 - The artist may not leave the group's area.
 - Once a group member leaves the group's area, there is NO talking.



INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*

- Tell participants that they will have 15 minutes to complete the activity.
 - ▣ **Facilitator Note:** During the activity, monitor talking and make sure that participants are following all of the rules.
- In order to be effective, this activity must be debriefed. After a few initial debrief questions, ask participants to identify who they think the Mole is in their group.
- Then, reveal to everyone that there was no Mole the entire time. Continue the debrief so that participants can explore how this new realization impacts their view of the activity, their actions, and their thoughts about other participants.

VARIATIONS

- Instead of using a drawing, build a structure using building blocks or other materials and give groups the materials needed to recreate the structure. Cover the original structure with a box that has a hole in it that participants can peek through on their turn.

 **High Risk:** To facilitate a higher risk version of this activity, include an actual Mole. Show one or more participants in each group the Mole slip that says “you ARE the Mole”. Be intentional about who is selected as the Mole in each group. Avoid choosing participants who are new to the group, are shy, or may be sensitive to others criticizing their actions. Groups can have different numbers of Moles. Some groups can have no Mole while others have one Mole and others have several Moles. Consider how learning outcomes will be different if there is actually a Mole in this activity.

 **Small Group:** To facilitate this activity for a small group, have all participants participate as one group instead of dividing into smaller groups.

 **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, take a picture of a drawing that participants will recreate. Explain the rules and tell participants to close their eyes. Then, one at a time, call participants’ names and have them open their eyes briefly to see one of the Mole slips. (For a large group, skip this part and instead tell participants that you will message them if they are the Mole and if they do not get a message, they are not the Mole. Pretend to type messages but do not message anyone that they are the Mole). Put each group into a breakout room and explain that one at a time they may leave the breakout room to see the drawing. When participants re-enter the main meeting room from their breakout room, use screen sharing to show them the drawing for a few seconds. At the end of the activity, bring everyone back to the main meeting room and show them the drawing. [\[click here for video\]](#)

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS *(on next page)*



DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
 - What made you think somebody was or was not the Mole?
 - How did you treat people who you thought might be the Mole? How did you treat people who you thought were not the Mole?
- So What:
 - How can lack of trust effect group dynamics?
 - How do our perceptions of others increase or diminish our trust in them?
- Now What:
 - How can you ensure that members of your group can trust one another?
 - In what ways can our perceptions of others be deceiving?

■ **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.