



CAMP VACAMAS
256 Macopin Road
West Milford
NJ 07480

TELEPHONE: (973) 838-1394
TOLL FREE: (877) 428-8222
FAX: (973) 838-7534
E-MAIL: conference@vacamas.org
WEB: www.vacamas.org



Challenge Course



Situated in two isolated areas of camp, the Low and High Challenge courses serve as unique opportunities for groups to cooperate and problem solve. The courses are designed to enhance listening, socialization and communication skills, as well as providing a sense of achievement, trust, and fun. Based around a *challenge by choice philosophy*, each participant sets their own goals, completing only the elements they are completely comfortable with.

Challenge Course

The main objective of Vacamas is to provide children with a safe, non-threatening environment where they can learn more about themselves and other people. Some themes that surface on a regular basis are communication, goal setting, scapegoating, negativism/hostility, success/pleasure, racism, sexism, gender issues, competition, fear, trust and peer pressure.

CHALLENGE INITIATIVES serve as the beginning of this experience. Initiatives are problem solving tasks that are presented to a group in a secure environment, sometimes with the help of props. The theory is to limit the physical challenge and let the participants gain confidence in physical contact and their problem solving abilities.

TRUST INITIATIVES are similar to the challenge experience, but an element of trust is deliberately added. This could mean lifting or being lifted by participants, catching leaning or falling participants, being blindfolded or leading someone that is blindfolded. The obstacle of trust can be very difficult to overcome, and these initiatives serve as a solid base to support this effort.

LOW CHALLENGE COURSE is a series of 16 obstacles constructed of trees, treated poles, tires, bungee cord, and aircraft cable, all of which are less than 8 feet off the ground. The low course expands what the participants learned during the initiatives by adding the element of perceived risk. Perceived risk is when the participants believe that they are in danger when actually the physical danger is very limited due to the design and spotting practices.

HIGH ROPES COURSE is very similar in construction to the low elements, but they are located between 25 and 35 feet off the ground. The 4 high ropes course elements shift the focus of the experience towards the participants' self-confidence, due to physical and emotional challenges with which they are faced. The element of trust is exaggerated by a belay system of ropes and pulleys which links the instructor to the participant.

DEBRIEF PROCESS is an integral part of the challenge experience. Actual participation in these activities is not enough, each group is guided through debriefs. In processing the experience we form a healthy learning environment with the life lessons and concrete examples.

“There is more in us than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps, for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less.”

(Kurt Hahn - Founder, Outward Bound)

