“The Marshmallow Challenge”: Teambuilding and Creative Thinking

# ****Purpose:****

To facilitate team building, collaboration, creativity, and innovative thinking through a fun challenge called the “Marshmallow Challenge.”

# ****Materials Needed:****

* Uncooked spaghetti noodles (20 noodles per group)
* Masking tape (one meter per group)
* String (one meter per group)
* Scissors (make available to each group)
* Marshmallows (one per group)
* Measuring tape
* Flip chart paper and markers (or access to a white or black board and dry erase markers or chalk)

# ****Challenge Instructions:****

1. Ask Culture Change Coalition (CCC) members to move into groups of 3-4 persons. Challenge each group to take 15 minutes to create the tallest, free-standing structure possible with the given materials. The group is not allowed to tape anything to the ground, and the marshmallow must be at the highest point of the structure.
2. Teams are free to break the spaghetti, and cut up the tape and string to create new structures.
3. At the end of 15 minutes, the facilitator should measure each structure and declare a winner.
4. Ask coalition members to come together as a large group and reflect on the process.

## Suggested Discussion Questions:

* What was the process like for your group? Did you plan ahead of time? Did you stick with the original plan?
* Consider the following comments from the marshmallowchallenge.com website. Ask the group what they learned about changing paths and trying unexpected ideas.
* “Kids do better than Business Students: On virtually every measure of innovation, kindergarteners create taller and more interesting structures.
* Prototyping Matters: The reason kids do better than business school students is kids spend more time playing and prototyping. They naturally start with the marshmallow and stick in the sticks. The Business School students spend a vast amount of time planning, then executing on the plan, with almost no time to fix the design once they put the marshmallow on top.”
* What lessons can we take from this exercise to our own culture change journey? What unlikely collaborations helped your process?

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