



ACTIVITY: Get Out of Your Comfort Zone!

Purpose

- Learn about the benefits of stepping out of your comfort zone.
- Discover ways to move out of your own comfort zone and challenge yourself.

ESTIMATED TIME

5-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Required:

- A. Pen/ paper
- B. Paper or handout

Background

Our comfort zone is not an actual place, but rather a psychological state where we feel safe, secure, and in control. It represents areas in our life where we generally know what to expect, feel skilled in handling the situation or tasks involved, and experience little stress or anxiety. It is a natural human desire to stay in our comfort zone and to protect ourselves from increased stress or the possibility of emotional or physical discomfort.

So why would we choose to step out of our comfort zone and willingly increase our stress levels? It turns out that stepping out of your comfort zone has huge benefits.

- We become **more productive**. Being too comfortable can decrease our drive and ambition. A level of "optimal anxiety" increases our skills and performance.
- When we take risks in small, controlled ways, we get **better at dealing with change**.
- We **gain confidence and self-efficacy** as we learn that we can handle discomfort and the unexpected.
- New experiences and skills **increase creativity and insight**.

Life is going to throw challenges and the unexpected at us no matter what. By choosing to step out of our own comfort zone, we are better prepared to handle any situation.



Activity

- 1) Pass out paper or the handout on page 3.
- 2) Share the information from page 1, including the definition of a comfort zone and why it's beneficial to step outside of one's comfort zone.
- 3) Have participants write about a time where they had to step outside of their comfort zone. What were the effects of this? (Questions 1 & 2 on handout)
- 4) Have participants share in small groups.
- 5) Ask participants to think about and write down things that are currently outside their comfort zone. Have them choose one way they could step out of their comfort zone in the next month. (Questions 3 & 4 on handout)
- 6) Have participants share in small groups. You can discuss as a larger group as well.

Discussion Questions/ Key Points

- Where is your current comfort zone (or zones)?
- Does anyone currently make it a habit to step out of their comfort zone?
- What are some small ways we could step out of our comfort zone?
Possible ideas:
 - Taking a new route to work
 - Inviting someone new to coffee or lunch
 - Change your daily routine
 - Try an exercise class that you wouldn't normally consider
 - Go one week without watching TV
 - Volunteer for a new task or responsibility at work
- Comfort zones are different for everyone. What are some areas where you are comfortable but are difficult for others? What are some areas that are difficult for you but seem comfortable for others?

Comfort Zone episode of the TED Radio Hour.

<https://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/606073044/comfort-zone?showDate=2018-04-27>

The Science of Breaking Out of Your Comfort Zone by Alan Henry. Lifehacker.

<https://lifehacker.com/the-science-of-breaking-out-of-your-comfort-zone-and-w-656426705>



RESILIENCY

Getting Outside of Your Comfort ZONE

- 1) Describe a time when you stepped out of your comfort zone.
- 2) What were the effects of this experience?
- 3) What are some things that are currently outside your comfort zone?
- 4) What is one way you could step outside your comfort zone in the near future? What would be the benefit to stepping out of your comfort zone in this particular way?