

**NAME:** Survival Challenge: South Pacific

**SOURCE:**

- Unknown: adapted by James Hill OTR/L 2018 – jim@moritaschool.com

**INTENTION:** This exercise rapidly places group members in a position of problem solving something they have limited experience with. It offers a great platform to explore flexibility in adopting new perspectives

**MATERIALS:**

- Worksheets and pens or pencils for each group member.

**USE:**

- Provide group members the worksheet. Read the situation and challenge. Keep time for people to accomplish the task.

**USE RESTRICTIONS:**

- People are free to duplicate, use and adapt this activity for clinical or educational purposes, as long as this is done at no charge.
- People are encouraged to contact Jim Hill ([jim@moritaschool.com](mailto:jim@moritaschool.com)) with suggestions for improvement, translations, and adaptations.
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**DISCUSSION:** suggested ways to process the experience.

- It has been useful to observe the issues and processes that arise in a given group and tailor discussion to these issues.
- Common themes include
  - Fusion with a thought that is misleading or undermines group effectiveness.
  - Avoidance of conflict
  - Withdrawal from uncomfortable group dynamics or roles
  - Dominance, passivity, or other forms of inflexibility.
- What limits the group from adopting the best ideas? How is this similar to other group problem solving situations in your life?

**SCORING:**

- Find the difference between the *individual ranking* and the *group ranking* as compared to the *expert ranking* (subtract the small number from the larger number). This gives you the relative likelihood of survival on your own and as a member of this group compared to experts.
- Typically consensus decision making will result in better outcomes for the group, but poor communication (avoidance, inflexibility, defending ego, etc.) may result in groups not adopting the best ideas and therefore some individuals scoring better than the group. In these cases it is interesting to explore why these ideas were not adopted by the group. What limits groups from trusting ideas that may be useful?

# SOUTH PACIFIC SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

**Situation:**

You are adrift on a private yacht in the South Pacific. Much of it has been destroyed by fire. It is slowly sinking. Your location is unclear. Your best estimate is that you are 1,000 miles south-southwest of the nearest land.

Your first task is to prioritize the items listed in terms of their importance to your survival. In addition to these items you also have a serviceable rubber life raft, with oars and large enough for all the survivors and supplies, 1 package of cigarettes, 3 books of matches, and 5 one dollar bills.

**Challenge:**

Rank order the items from 1 (most important) to 15 (least important)

1. Give individuals 10 minutes to rank the items individually
2. Give group 20 minutes to rank the items by group consensus
3. Provide EXPERT Rankings (TABLE BELOW)

R	ITEM	RATIONALE
15	SEXTANT	Without tables and a chronometer, relatively useless.
1	SHAVING MIRROR	Number 1 priority is to signal for help. Most rescues occur in the first 36 hours. You can survive without food or water this long.
3	FIVE GALLON CAN OF WATER	Next priority after signaling is to stay hydrated.
14	MOSQUITO NETTING	No Mosquito's in the mid-Pacific.
4	1 CASE OF US ARMY C RATIONS	Food is priority after water.
13	MAPS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN	Useless without additional navigational equipment. Where you are is not important. Where rescuers are is.
9	SEAT CUSHION (FLOTATION DEVICE)	Could be used as life preserver if someone fell overboard.
2	2 GALLONS OF OIL-GAS MIXTURE	Critical for signaling. Floats on water could be ignited with dollar bill and a match.
12	SMALL TRANSISTOR RADIO	Of little use since it has no transmitter. You are not likely to get your favorite radio shows.
10	SHARK REPELLANT	Lots of sharks in the South Pacific
5	20 SQUARE FEET OF OPAQUE PLASTIC	Can be used to collect rain water and shelter from the sun.
11	ONE QUARE 160 PROOF PUERTO RICAN RUM	Enough alcohol content to be used as an antiseptic, but drinking it would lead to dehydration, so it's an added danger.
8	15 FEET NYLON ROPE	Used to lash items to raft, so you don't lose it overboard.
6	2 BOXES OF CHOCOLATE BARS	Reserve food supply. Ranked higher than fishing kit because there is not guarantee you would catch fish.
7	FISHING KIT	Could catch fish.

4. Have participants calculate survival potential by finding the difference between personal ratings and group ratings compared to EXPERT ratings and add these to get a total.
5. Groups often do better than individuals if they can really have a discussion and work to come to consensus.
6. Process fusion, avoidance, present moment, SAC issues that arise.
7. Process how communication and expertise might apply to other valued activities (health, relationships, school, work...). Who are your experts?

# South Pacific Ranking Form

ITEMS Rank in order of importance	YOUR RANKING		GROUP RANKING		EXPERT RANKING
SEXTANT					
SHAVING MIRROR					
FIVE GALLON CAN OF WATER					
MOSQUITO NETTING					
1 CASE OF US ARMY C RATIONS					
MAPS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN					
SEAT CUSHION (FLOTATION DEVICE)					
2 GALLONS OF OIL-GAS MIXTURE					
SMALL TRANSISTOR RADIO					
SHARK REPELLANT					
20 SQUARE FEET OF OPAQUE PLASTIC					
ONE QUARE 160 PROOF PUERTO RICAN RUM					
15 FEET NYLON ROPE					
2 BOXES OF CHOCOLATE BARS					
FISHING KIT					
<b>TOTALS</b>					

**Group Decision Making Guidelines:**

1. All decisions should be made by consensus (all group members can at least partially agree).
  - a. Avoid arguing for your own personal judgements.
  - b. Approach task based on logic.
  - c. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict or get to an agreement.
  - d. Support only agreements with which you can agree with to some degree.
  - e. Do not use "conflict reducing" techniques like majority vote, averaging, or deal making (if you accept my rank for this I will accept yours for that).
  - f. View differences of opinion as helpful rather than a problem.