

Icebreaker Exercises

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Time Needed: Approximately twenty minutes

Materials Needed: Index cards and pens

Optimal Number of Participants: Up to fifteen

Directions:

- Each participant gets one index card and on the card writes two true statements and one lie about himself. Allow three minutes for this step.
- The facilitator collects the cards and, standing in the front of the group, selects one card at random to read aloud to the group.
- The group guesses aloud who wrote that card. If after several guesses, the author is not identified, he is asked to reveal his identity.
- The facilitator reads another card and the process continues until all cards are read and their authors identified.

Facilitator notes:

This game helps people get to know each other both personally and professionally. It is also fun because people can be as creative as they want and may come up with some very unique facts. Facilitator should also participate.

If the group is too large (25+), think about breaking the group in half and using a co-facilitator.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR?

Time Needed: Five to ten minutes, or more depending on the group size

Materials Needed: None

Optimal Number of Participants: Good for large groups

Directions:

- Have participants sit (or stand shoulder to shoulder, with no space between) in a circle, except for one person who stands in the middle.
- Have participants find out the first name of the person on either side of them.
- The person in the center picks someone in the circle and asks her, "Do you know your neighbors?" That person responds, "Yes, I'd like you to meet _____ and _____." Then the person who was picked exchanges places with the person in the center of the circle.
- The new person in the center now says who she would like to meet, for example, "I'd like to meet everyone who _____ (has on blue socks, took public transit to get here, is an AmeriCorps member, etc)."
- Those people who fit the description stand up and find a new place in the circle, with new neighbors.

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- One person is left in the center. She picks someone from the circle, and asks, “Do you know your neighbors?” and the process repeats.

Facilitator notes:

This game helps people get to know each other both personally and professionally. It is also fun because it gets people interacting with each other from the start. The facilitator should also participate. Ideally the facilitator will be the first person in the middle of the circle to model the game.

MUMBLE JUMBLE

Time Needed: Ten minutes

Materials Needed: Pictures cut from magazines, paper bag, tape, and cardboard

Optimal Number of Participants: Good for large groups; can also break a large group into smaller groups.

Directions:

- The facilitator cuts up a few pictures into puzzle pieces and places them in a bag.
- Each participant grabs one piece from the bag and keeps it hidden from others nearby.
- Once everyone has a piece, the facilitator explains that the object is to complete the puzzles, and that each person has one piece. The facilitator points out the table or space for each puzzle to be assembled, and then invites everyone to begin.
- Participants then try to locate the others who have the appropriate pieces to complete their puzzle, and they begin to assemble the puzzle.
- Whichever group completes a puzzle first wins.

Facilitator notes:

This is a good exercise to do with a larger group. Participants should be given puzzle pieces as they enter the room. If pieces remain, some participants may need to be given additional pieces so that each puzzle can be completed. This is also a good activity to break large groups into smaller groups. This is also a good exercise to get people moving after a break.

NEW AND GOOD

Time Needed: Fifteen to twenty minutes

Materials Needed: None

Optimal Number of Participants: Up to twenty people.

Directions:

- Go around the room and have participants introduce themselves (i.e. name, organization) and ask them to share something “new and good” that happened to them within the last week.

Facilitator Note:

This is a quick and energizing icebreaker which can help the facilitator stress the positive aspects of new experiences.

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CAN YOU GUESS?

Time Needed: Twenty minutes

Materials Needed: Small pieces of paper, pens, and a paper bag

Optimal Number of Participants: Comfortable for fifteen to twenty people

Directions:

- Give participants a piece of paper and ask them to write one secret about themselves that the rest of the group doesn't know. Ask them to fold the paper in two.
- Collect the papers in a bag, and then have a volunteer pick one piece of paper, read it aloud, and then try to guess the author's identity, as well as provide a reason for the guess.
- If the volunteer guesses correctly, he chooses the next person to draw from the bag, and the process repeats.
- If he guesses incorrectly, the facilitator gives everyone a chance to guess.
- If no one guesses correctly, then the author of the secret reveals who she is.

UNFINISHED SENTENCES

Time Needed: Depends on number of participants: five minutes on up

Materials Needed: None

Optimal Number of Participants: Unlimited

Directions:

Pick one of the questions/ statements below, or make up your own. Have participants introduce themselves, one at a time, to the group, giving their name and organization, and answering the chosen question or statement.

- On Saturdays, I like to . . .
- If I had only 24 hours to live I would . . .
- If I had the car of my choice it would be . . .
- I feel best when people . . .
- If I had a million dollars I would . . .
- Secretly I wish . . .
- If I could change the world, I would . . .
- If I found \$1,000 in a vacant lot I would . . .
- If I had a magic wand I would . . .
- Something that really bugs me is . . .
- What was your nickname growing up?
- What are you looking forward to the most during your time with AmeriCorps?
- What is your favorite interest or hobby?
- What would be a dream vacation for you?
- If you could change one thing about the world what would it be?
- Do you know any good, clean jokes? And do tell. . . .
- What is the one thing that nobody in this room knows about you?