

TEAMBUILDERS / ENERGIZERS / ICE-BREAKERS

The following is a list of many Teambuilders, Energizers, and Ice-Breakers. Use these resources to help the members of your organization.

ENERGIZERS

Name: Hot Categories (variation on the classic "Freeze Tag")

Use: Get energy up, Get moving

Materials: Small ball (koosh works well)

Activity Description:

Start by tossing around the ball. As you are tossing, tell them that it has become very hot and if they hold it in their hands too long they will burn. They need to toss the ball as soon as they catch it.

Explain that while still tossing you will yell out a category. They will need to say something that relates to that category before they can toss the ball - if it takes them too long they are out. No Answers can be repeated. Each time a person is eliminated, start a new category. Do this as long as you want or until one person is left

Some sample categories: Types of magazines, Types of Candy, Cartoon Characters, soap opera characters, etc... you can also link the categories to the topics of the training or retreat.

Name: Animal Farm Dividing Activity

Use: Creatively divide into smaller groups, Gets people laughing

Materials: Pre written index cards, blindfolds (optional)

Activity Description:

Give participants a card with the name of a farm animal, i.e. horse, chicken, rooster, lamb, dog, cat, etc. They may not tell or show their card to anyone. Tell them in order to find their group they must make the sound of the animal on the card and group themselves accordingly. Participants may or may not have their eyes closed or be blindfolded at the discretion of the facilitator.

Another Variation:

Use other words/objects such as "boat" "lamb" "bells" or "ball". Participants must find their groups by humming a tune of a song that corresponds with their card (i.e. boat = row, row, row your boat, lamb = Mary had a Little Lamb, bells =jingle bells, ball =take me out to the ball game)

Name: Evolution (variation of the classic "Rock, Paper, Scissors")

Use: Gets people moving, Gets people laughing

Materials: None

Activity Description:

The "evolution" is from egg to chicken to eagle. And the "de-evolution" from eagle-chicken-egg.

Everyone starts as an egg (all hunkered down, low to the ground) and finds another egg. Each team plays paper, rock, scissors and the winner becomes a chicken (elbows out- bah bahk bahk) the loser stays an egg.

Eggs team with eggs, chickens team with chickens, eagles team with eagles until the facilitator decides to call it quits.

PROBLEM SOLVING, TEAMWORK, & BONDING

Name: Candle Lighting/Candle Passing

Use: Revealing/Emotion Sharing

Materials: Candle, Matches

Activity Description:

The group sits in a large circle on the floor. A candle is lighted and the first person to start speaks about their emotions and perceptions of their membership in the organization. Good topics are expectations, new friends, goals, etc. The candle is slowly passed around the room, allowing each person the opportunity to speak.

Name: Wrist Band Contract

Use: relationship building, sharing, showing appreciation

Materials: Colored beads, one of each color for everyone (can be kept in a sectioned box in a location where everyone has access to them), wristband for each participant (leather cord works well and looks good), white bead for everyone, gold bead for each everyone, flip chart paper, markers

Activity Description:

This is an "all retreat long" activity. At the beginning of the retreat, either brainstorm important qualities or pick them yourself and match them up to a particular colored bead (i.e., blue=caring, red=sincere, purple=compassion, etc.). Keep this color list with the beads in the divided box. Give all participants a wristband with a white bead already on it. Tie wristbands on.

Direct participants that throughout the retreat they will be interacting with people who may be demonstrating a quality mentioned above. When someone shows one of the qualities toward them, they are to go to the collection of beads, pick the appropriate color, seek out the person who demonstrated that quality towards them. Ceremoniously, sincerely, and with appreciation and gratitude remove the person's wristband while explaining exactly why you have chosen them to receive this particular bead.

Put the bead on the wristband and tie it back on the person's wrist.

At the end of the retreat, gather everyone together. The facilitator will give each person a gold bead for something special he/she noticed about each person. After everyone has received a gold bead, process this whole activity, giving people an opportunity to share what their bracelet means to them or what it meant to give to others or receive from others.

Name: Who am I? (variation of "Pat on the Back")

Use: discover self and projected perceptions, end a retreat on a positive note

Materials: loose leaf paper, pens, construction paper, glue, tape, markers

Activity Description:

Distribute loose leaf and pens. Participants will list words to describe themselves, how they see themselves, or how they feel about themselves on a sheet of paper. These can be positive and negative words. They do not share the list with the group. (If appropriate, the facilitator may want to collect these lists for review, you must tell them it will happen).

After the first list is made, participants are to have another 1/2 sheet of paper glued to a 1/2 sheet of construction paper. At the top of the paper write the person's name and the word "is". For example "Glen is..." Tape the paper to the back of each participant. Everyone is then instructed to go around and write something positive or nice about the person. No one is to take the paper off until time to stop the game. Instructor will need to monitor the activity closely and remind participants to write something positive. The object here is for the person to compare their list to the one provided by the group.

A variation is to use this to close a retreat. Have participants tape the paper on their back (or you can use post it notes of various colors) and each participant can share the impact that the others had through out their time together.

Name: Space Boots

Use: group planning, trust, group process, stereotypes,

Materials: masking tape/chalk/rope to make 2 lines, pair of large boots/construction paper

Activity Description:

Create 2 parallel lines approximately 15-20 feet apart using the tape/chalk/ropes.

All participants stand behind one of the lines.

The scenario is that a group of scientists and explorers are traveling on Mars. They have encountered this river of lava (the space between the lines). The Martians left one pair of "space boots" (the group will have to use their imagination for the boots, or use a large pair of galoshes)." The groups must get everyone across the river to meet their departing space ship.

Rules:

Both boots must be worn one time, in one direction, by each participant.

Once a person has put them on they can walk one time across the river but cannot walk back. The boots can only contain one foot at a time and you have to wear both boots (so no three legged races).

The group cannot "throw" the boots since there is no gravity and they would fly away.

They cannot walk around the river because they have to meet their ship and the river is too long.

They cannot jump across the river because it's too far.

A penalty for starting over: there is "cosmic space dust" that can render a person blind or mute (facilitator decides who this person is).

For safety concerns make sure you spot those going across, and don't allow people to climb on shoulders.

During processing, focus on the planning element, the trust that is needed, how different characteristics come into play (such as size, gender, stereotypes). Discuss how it feels when we mute others sometimes just because of their differences, and we don't realize that we do it.

Name: Three Read

Use: listening skills, focus, problem solving, personal strengths/weaknesses

Materials: At least 3 pieces of reading material (about 1 page each and in simple enough language that the lowest functioning member of your group can read them).

Activity Description:

One group member will sit in the middle of a circle with three others around him/her. The rest of the group can observe. Each of the members around the person in the middle receives a different reading passage. The participant in the middle is told that all they have to do is listen to the others read their stories and then summarize what each story was about giving any details that they can remember. Just before the activity begins, tell the group that the readers will all read their stories at the same time. A three count signals the readers to begin reading. Allow a minute to two of reading to go and say "STOP!" Find out what the person in the center can recall!

Name: Human Knot

Use: problem solving, communication, leadership, completing a task

Materials: none

Activity Description:

Use small groups of 6-10 people for the first round. For added challenge, you can try again with a larger group. Participants stand in a circle facing each other. Every member of the circle inserts their right hand and grabs someone else's hand. Then they insert their left hand and grab a different person's hand. Once everyone's hand is intertwined, the group works together to untangle without letting go of each other. This activity can be time consuming but very worthwhile for a team activity. The object is to have the group standing in an untangled circle again.

Name: Picnic

Use: problem solving, patience, some name/introduction.

Materials: none

Activity Description:

The group sits in a circle. Facilitator states he/she is having a picnic and would like to invite everyone along but he/she can only come to the picnic if they bring the right thing. The facilitator then states he would like everyone to introduce themselves before stating what they are going to bring. The Facilitator does not reveal that a Player will bring the "right" item if he/she states that the item they are bringing starts with the same letter as the first letter in their first name.

The first person starts "my name is _____ and I am going to bring ____." Then it passes to the left or right. Each person goes around and takes a turn. If the item they bring does not match the first letter of their first name, the facilitator states: "I'm sorry but you can not come to my picnic." If the item matches the facilitator states, "YES! You can come to my picnic." It goes all the way around the group back to the facilitator. The second time around, the players, who are invited with their first item, must add a second item also with the same first letter as his/her name.

For example, "My name is Kim and I am bringing Kites and Ketchup."

Players will try to find the "connection" as to what they can bring. Do not give them any clues but watch their individual behaviors: frustration, agitation, apathy, boredom... Process at the end regarding these feelings.

Name: Penny Game

Use: workshop opening, group participation

Materials: flip chart, markers

Activity Description:

Draw a circle on a flip chart. Ask the group to work together and describe a penny to you. (You can also draw 9 boxes and have them describe what is on the keys of a telephone.) Begin by getting them started, such as, you know that Lincoln is on the coin, and begin asking questions until the group takes over. Is it just his head, his head and shoulders and that is about as far as you should have to go. From there they must describe the placement of each item. When all have agreed that they have the finished product. You pass around pennies so everyone can see how well (or in almost all cases how poorly they did).

Process by relating this to attention to detail, knowledge gained from working as a team, listening to others, etc. Why is it easy, hard, and how can it relate to other things you see/use all of the time. If they saw their ritual, creed, rules, all of the time, would there be a better chance they would know them?

Name: Table for Four

Use: mutual support, team trust

Materials: 4 people to play, 1 person "in charge," 4 chairs with no arms.

Activity Description:

Arrange chairs in a square, facing in, almost touching corner-to-corner. Players sit down and leader directs them all to turn right and sit on edges on chairs. One by one players lean back until their shoulders rest firmly on the knees of the person behind them. Then they should all "tighten up" or arch their backs slightly. The leader can then remove the chairs and the pinwheel of players will remain self-supporting for a minute or two. Put chairs back before everybody starts laughing and falls down.

Note: If you wish to make it competitive have two groups of 5 people each do the exercise and see who can hold the pose the longest and award a prize to the winning team.

Name: Marshmallow Tower

Use: team work, competition, non verbal communication, creativity

Materials: bags of marshmallows, boxes of spaghetti noodles (# of each depends on how many group members/small groups you will create)

Activity Description:

Divide teams into groups (5-7 people works best); give each team a bag of marshmallows and a box of spaghetti noodles. Ask the team members to work together to build the tallest, most stable, wildest structure they can. They may not talk but only work towards accomplishing the goal. Place a time limit of your choice on the groups. When complete, ask the teams to share what was the most difficult, if someone emerged as a leader...you can fill in the rest.

Name: Orienting Oneself

Use: for large groups (over 20), ice breaker, get to know more about each other, non verbal communication

Materials: none

Activity Description:

Ask everyone to stand up and then announce to have everyone orient themselves to the room by age. The group has to figure out where the youngest person needs to stand, middle-aged folks and then elders. No one may speak. When completed, permit them to talk to announce their ages in line from one end to the other to see how they did.

Variations (since age isn't always the best topic): orient the group in the room by place of birth, astrological signs, number of siblings, length of time in the organization, etc.

Name: Untangle

Use: problem solving, communication, completing a task

Materials: one piece of string (3 ft long) for every person in your group

Activity Description:

Group participants in pairs, pass out string. One person ties the string to each wrist. The partner ties one end to one wrist, and then crosses the string under their partner's string and ties the remaining end to the other wrist. The strings should be crossed. The pairs must get "untangled". They are not allowed to take the string off their wrists.

Name: Loop the Group

Use: teamwork, encouragement

Materials: hula hoop, large space

Activity Description:

The group stands in a circle, holding hands. One person receives a hula hoop to hang off their elbow. The object is for everyone in the group to maneuver themselves through the hula hoop then pass it on to the next person without letting go of each others' hands. You do need a lot of space for this since you don't want the hoops getting caught on anything while the people are going through them. You can require them to complete the task in a certain time frame and then shorten that time the next few times they try.

Name: Bouncy-Ball Memory Game

Use: juggling tasks, knowing to look ahead and "behind," team work, problem solving

Materials: 3 balls or more, they can range in size, weight, etc.

Activity Description:

Participants stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. The leader does not participate but only starts the activity. The leader explains that each ball will be tossed to someone in the ring who will in turn toss it to someone else in the ring. This continues until all members in the ring have tossed the ball. Start with one ball and go around once.

Have them repeat the exercise but in reverse order. ON the next round, after the ball gets to the 3rd person, add a second ball, and a third, fourth, etc. depending on the size of the group and the numbers of balls you have. Next, tell the group that you will now give them a time limit (base this on how long that first time took). On the next round, shorten the time. Stop play and ask how they might be able to accomplish the task better and faster. Ask them how fast they think they can go. Have them try to do it in that time.

Process it by asking them to relate this to juggling tasks in their organization... sometimes you don't know what is coming, sometimes the person throws something to you without you knowing how to handle it, sometimes things go too fast and you "drop the ball," etc...

GET-TO-KNOW-YOU EXERCISES

Name: Wink

Use: break the ice, get people moving

Materials: enough chairs for ½ of the group + 1.

Activity Description:

If you have an even number of people the facilitator will have to participate. Set up the chairs in a circle. Divide the group in half with the "odd person" in the standing group. One half will sit in the chairs (there should be one empty chair) and the other half stand behind them in a circle.

The person standing behind the empty chair will choose a sitting person and wink at them. That person must get up and sit in the empty chair. The job of those standing is to not allow this to happen. The catch is that they cannot look at the winker, but must focus on the sitters.

You may want to make some extra rules like no tackling; you can only touch the sitters on the shoulders or waste, etc. This works well in a grass field.

Name: Shared Drawing

Use: works best in groups of 10-20, loosening up (especially for those with "control issues")

Materials: flip chart paper, pens or pencils,

Activity Description:

Each Participant will need a partner. Leader gives out blank pieces of paper; each two-member team gets one piece. (Typing paper is okay, but larger art paper is better.) Each two-member team also gets one pen or pencil. There should only be one between the two of them.

One member of the team (doesn't matter who) should draw a line horizontally across the paper, about two inches inch above the bottom edge of the paper. In the big space that's left, one of the team should draw a large oval in the center of the paper. (It's good to have one of these pre-drawn to show the group as an example.)

Explain that each team will draw a face. The leader says: one team member will take the pen and make **ONLY ONE LINE OR MARK** on the paper, and then pass the pen to the other team member. In other words, one person might draw an eyebrow, but cannot draw both eyebrows. There must be **NO TALKING**, no communicating of intent. Tell them, **NO LAUGHING**, since laughing is also a form of communication. Make sure to reiterate, **DRAW ONLY ONE LINE**, and then the other person gets the pen. When enough time has elapsed, and the teams have created some kind of face, the leader explains that the team will now write a caption, or title for the drawing, using the space left below the face. Using **ONLY CAPITAL LETTERS**, and **NO TALKING**, the team creates a caption by passing the pen back and forth, each person writing **ONLY ONE LETTER**. When the captions are written, the leader calls a halt. With some deliberate sense of ceremony, the leader should collect the drawings and lay them out (or put them on the wall) to have an "art" show, so that everyone can look at all the drawings and have a good hearty laugh, which will have been building up... The leader should explain that these drawings always turn out rather insane-looking. The captions often make no sense at all. Let the group know that this was exactly what was supposed to happen. A discussion should follow... ask them how it felt to create something without controlling the process. Did you feel yourself "going" with your partner's ideas, or resisting them?
Why?

Name: Who am I?

Use: communication, comfort in talking to people they may not know,

Materials: Index cards with the names of famous people on them, tape

Activity Description:

Put one prewritten card on each person's back without letting them know who it is. Then have everyone mingle and ask yes and no questions about "themselves." Once they guess who they are they are done and can sit down to watch everyone else.

A variation is for a group that does know each other well. Instead of using famous people, use the members of the groups. Make sure that each person gets a name other than their own.

Name: My Day

Use: for groups that have worked together for at least a short time

Materials: None

Activity Description:

Participants sit in a circle. Facilitator instructs them to imagine that they were the person sitting next to them (either right or left). Then they need to think about what kind of day they had and put it into 4-5 sentences. Each person will share what they have come up with.

The person concerned then gives a score for accuracy i.e. six out of ten. This usually makes for a good laugh but also has people walking a yard or two in one another's shoes. The group also learns a little more about each person.

Name: Ha Ha Name Game

Use: For groups who just met, allows them to try to associate names and adjectives to people.

Materials: none

Activity Description:

Participants sit in a circle and each introduces him/herself to the group leading adjective and ends with "Ha." For Example, 'Talking Tammy Ha!'

Next person must say while pointing to right individual "She is Talking Tammy and I am Happy Harry - Ha! Ha!" (or whatever their name and adjective is and one Ha! for each name the pointed and said.) Absolutely no laughing allowed. If someone laughs, the game restarts with that person - no need to remember everyone's name. Names will be learned and laughter will definitely occur! The Ha Ha Game is a classic from one of the "new game books". The group lies down in such a way that each person's head is resting on someone's stomach. Person one goes "Ha", Person two goes "Ha, Ha" and so on until every member of the group has gone. Of course if someone actually laughs you have to start over again. It is helpful to allow people to shift positions.

Name: Name Tag

Use: works best with a large group of people (20 or more), can know each other already or not.

Materials: A list of questions on a poster or overhead transparency (see below)

Activity Description:

Facilitator reads the first three questions on the list. The questions may be basic if the participants do not know each other (Name? Where do you live? Favorite Color?), or more challenging if already acquainted (Middle name, favorite cartoon character, # of times you have moved). At the sound of a bell, participants find a partner and each shares the answers to the questions. A short time later (45-30 seconds) a second bell rings and all talking stops. The facilitator is now "It". "It" goes around to different pairs asking questions such as "What his/her middle name?" or "How many times has she/he moved?" If "It" asks 5 people and all answer correctly, "It" rings the bell and new partners share their information. Anyone who does not have the answer to "It's" question becomes the new "It". Ring the bell often and change partners. Also, add to the list of questions, but keep the time limit the same.

Name: Childhood Stories

Use: get to know one another better through the stories, learn who is the most unpredictable, who's the most intuitive, etc.

Materials: paper, pen or pencil, a hat

Activity Description:

In this game each person writes down a story from their childhood that they think no one else in the room knows. They put all their stories into the hat and then people take the stories out and read them (each reading a story that is not his own). Then everyone votes on which story they think is who's. At the end, the owners of each story are revealed.

Name: A Wonderful Name Game

Use: good for younger or older groups to learn names of new people

Materials: one large blanket

Activity Description:

Divide group into 2 equal groups. Hold up a blanket between the two groups. One person from each group sits by the blanket so that when it is lifted the two people are face to face. The object is to say the name of the person facing you before they say your name. The person who loses joins the other team. The extra twist is that if you point at the person as you try to come up with their name, you must join the other team. You can vary by putting 2 people on each side.

Name: M & M's

Use: good for groups of new people, they can tell a lot about themselves, share stories

Materials: medium to large bag of M & M's, optional bowl or baggies

Activity Description:

You pass the bag of M & M's around the room and "share" them with everyone, but ask them not to eat them yet. Once everyone gets their M & M's you then ask everyone, one at a time to tell one thing about themselves for every M & M they have taken. They can eat them as they tell about themselves. Or move them into a separate pile. Variation: Tell everyone there is only 1 roll of toilet paper and you would like everyone to take as much as they feel they will need for that session or, that weekend and pass it around. Then for every sheet of toilet paper someone has, they tell something about themselves, tearing it apart as they go.

Name: True or False

Use: works well for people who know each other slightly or well, can also be a useful lead in on discussions about honesty, deception, etc.

Materials: paper, pen or pencil

Activity Description:

Ask each person to write down three or four things about themselves, one of which must be false. Ask them to pass the paper to the person on their left, alternatively, invite them to pair up with someone else in the group. Their partner reads the statements out loud and the entire group tries to fathom which is the false statement. This activity is also known as two truths and a lie or two lies and a truth. It also works without having the items written, and with having each person share the items themselves. Depending on the group you may have to monitor for appropriate content for your context.

Name: Something About Myself

Use: group members can learn about each other's personality

Materials: only need what the person has on or with them

Activity Description:

Have participants in a meeting/class introduce themselves by describing something they have with them/on them (clothing, jewelry, appointment books, etc.) that is illustrative of their personality. For example, "I have a toe ring" I'm a little adventurous. A variation of this is "What's in my Wallet." Usually people carry a wallet and have something interesting in it to share (pictures, fake id, condoms, phone numbers, expired cards, etc.)

Secret Box

Activity Description:

Bring in a box that can be opened from the bottom and has a slot in the top. Paper is handed out, half sheets work fine. Each person writes something no one else knows about them. They do not have to put their name on the paper. As they finish they fold up the paper and put it in the box. When all the "secrets" have been picked up the facilitator will read each secret one at a time. The secrets can be processed individually or at the end of the reading of all of them. This can bring out many feelings and should be done with some professional staff on hand. For a lighter version, use most embarrassing moments. This can even be done at showers, parties, etc. To add to the fun, if you know the people well, try to guess whose embarrassing moment it is!

Name: Power Shuffle

Use: groups people based on similar backgrounds, gender, common beliefs, etc.

Materials: none needed

Activity Description:

The group lines up on one side of the room. The facilitator asks one question at a time (see list below) and people move to the other side of the room if they can respond in the affirmative (and if they choose to move). The people who move to the other side turn and face the group remaining. The facilitator then says to the group: "Notice who is with you, notice who is not. Notice what you are feeling. Please step back." (Insert pauses between each sentence). This is done for each target group in the list below.

Facilitator: Please step to the other side of the room if you are or have: a woman, African-American, Hispanic, Latino/Latina,

Asian, Indian, indigenous people's or of native descent

Arabian, under 21 years old, over 60 years old, a veteran,

been raised poor or did not have enough resources growing up,

received public assistance, a visually apparent difference,

been called fat, been homeless, left handed, Catholic, Jewish,

been threatened or verbally put down because of ethnicity or religion, felt oppressed or discriminated against because of religion,

a physical disability, gone to bed hungry or did not know where your next meal was coming from, a

learning disability or otherwise "invisible" disability, you, a close friend, or a member of your family, sought mental health or, counseling services,

sought mental health or counseling services, been proscribed drugs to correct depression or some other mental health condition,

you, a close friend, or a member of your family have been sexually or physically abused or a victim of

incest, sexually or physically abused or a victim of incest, you, a close friend, or a member of your family

has had a drinking or drug problem, gay, lesbian, or bisexual or you have a close friend or family member who is

gay, lesbian, or bisexual, parents who never finished high school

parents who did not attend college, spent time in jail.

PERCEPTIONS/DIVERSITY/ISSUES

Name: Drawing Perceptions

Use: good game to play to begin a discussion about people's perceptions

Materials: two-sided chalk board, or paper, pencils, chalk

Activity Description:

You can play it one of two ways: if you have a two-sided chalkboard you have one person on one side, and the other person on the other side. The facilitator describes a face (e.g. round face, large, oval eyes, hoop earrings, small ears....etc.) until the participants draw a face. When the facilitator and the participants are done with the drawing, you compare the two drawings to see how each person "perceived" the description. The other way is to have the facilitator read the description and the group does it on paper. Later, everyone compares the drawings. You could use this to discuss perceptions, diversity, difference, and labels.

Name: Death by Handkerchief

Use: discusses themes of greed, wise use, social justice, also good physical activity

Materials: enough bandanas for each person in group

Activity Description:

Everyone hangs a bandana out of his/her back pocket. It must be hung in a way that allows it to be pulled out by the other players. Explain ONLY the following to the group: "The bandana represents all you need to live in the world (food, shelter, love, etc.) If the bandana is taken away, you die instantly and are out of the game." Without further explanation, the leader says, "On your marks, get set, go." Inevitably, they all run around and take each other's bandanas. When only one person is left alive, ask what happened, repeat the rules, and start another round. Keep the rounds going. Someone will pick up on the idea that they don't need to die and that they cannot use more than what they already have. Soon the idea catches on. Some participants may even form alliances to protect one another.

Name: Human Sculpture

Use: large group can recognize situations of diversity, represent it visually with group members

Materials: paper, pen or pencil

Activity Description:

This is an activity for groups of 20 or more. Have the group to sit in a large circle. The facilitator instructs the group to describe situations where diversity played a role; either they were discriminated against, etc. Each speaker must conclude their story with "And it made me feel..." and they fill in the blank. A recorder writes down themes and feelings of the stories shared. After a few people have told stories, the facilitator instructs that they will create "human sculptures" to represent these key themes from the list the recorder wrote down. The facilitator asks for three volunteers to stand in middle of the circle to be "clay" and asks for a fourth volunteer to be the "sculptor." The facilitator picks one of the themes (for example, gender relations) The sculptor must shape the clay to form a representation of the theme. The sculpture may add or subtract clay by using other members of the group. Only the facilitator is allowed to talk during this activity; the sculptor must devise a way for communication through body language and other non-verbal suggestions.

Name: Survey with Index Cards

Use: quickly surveys large group on their opinions, anonymously

Materials: index cards, pen or pencil

Activity Description:

Give each person a index card. Ask them to write their answer on the card then have them exchange cards with at least 3 people so they have no idea who's card they have. Then hear some of them. Example: Ask "What's appropriate (or inappropriate) to wear on "casual day" at the office? Or "What is the one interview question you'd most hate to be asked in a job interview?"

GOAL-SETTING/INFORMATION REVIEWS

Name: Human Scrabble

Use: good ice breaker to find out what everyone expects for the meeting

Materials: 8.5 x 11 cards for each person, pens or pencils

Activity Description:

Choose some words pertinent to your group activity. For example: TEAM CONSENSUS FEEDBACK VOTE. The only purpose of choosing the words is to assure a good distribution of vowels and consonants. Put one letter on a good size card (8.5 x 11) Make sure there are enough letters (cards) for each participant. Phase 1: At the beginning of a meeting (best if there is a pretty large group 25-60) announce the Human Scrabble Exercise and pass out the cards. Tell the group that they must form words with at least 4 letters and then stay with the group that formed the word. Every letter must be part of a word. People will start scrambling around looking to be part of a word. It is possible that some participants do not end up in a word which will cause the already formed words to change to include the leftover letters. Once everyone is part of a word formation with their group, ask them how the activity symbolized working together as a team. Some answers may include: a) It is chaotic at the start of a team project. b) Everyone has something to offer the team. c) Include everyone's ideas, information, talent. d) Sometimes it is necessary to start over Phase 2: Now ask each group to use their word to state their expectations for the meeting. Then go right into other more serious expectations for the meeting.

Name: TV Spot

Use: good activity to help a group process a large amount of information in short time

Materials: various silly props such as nose glasses, noisemakers, etc., video camera w/ tape, TV w/ VCR

Activity Description:

Before the session, warn the participants that they will have to do a commercial. This keeps them focused on important points. 1. Divide the group into teams of 4-5. This is enough to keep anxiety to a manageable level. 2. Tell each group they have 30 minutes to create a TV commercial lasting 90-120 seconds. The commercial must cover the most important points of the content. (You may also divide the content and assign a portion to each team.) 3. Provide the props needed. 4. Tape the commercials as they do them and play them back at other times during the course during "commercial breaks".