

Initiatives

Greetings

The Name Game

Each participant thinks of an adjective and a verb that begins with the first sound of their name. The first person says the adjective, their name and then the verb. (Daring Debbie Doodles). The second person repeats what the first person said, and then adds their name (Silly Susan Supposes).

Introduce Your Neighbor

Participants have a minute to talk to their neighbor (on their left). They will then introduce their neighbor to the whole group and tell a few facts they learned about their neighbor. Facilitators need to model first to structure how much time each introduction can take.

The Weather Report Greeting

Standing in a circle, the first person tells their neighbor “Good Morning” and then shares their own emotion or feeling of the day in weather terms. The facilitator should model a few examples first. Examples can include: “Good morning, I feel fogged in.” Good morning, sunny skies today”. The facilitator then asks for a volunteer to start the circle.

Number Greeting

Place a slip of paper in a basket with a number on it for each person in the group. If there are twenty-four people in the group, put the numbers one through twelve in the basket with each number appearing twice. Each person then draws one slip of paper from the basket. The two people with the number one come to the center of the circle to greet each other and so on until everyone has been greeted.

Icebreakers

Word Whip

The facilitator picks a topic question then asks the participants to share one word which comes to mind when this is heard. This goes around the circle until it arrives back to the person who volunteered to start the word whip. Each participant is to say their word with no further commentary as to why they chose it. (Example: facilitator can ask “Tell us with one word how you feel about what you have learned at the institute so far.”)

Body Motion

Same as Word Whip except the facilitator asks each participant to share one “appropriate” body gesture that will let us know how they are feeling. Example: The facilitator can ask, “Show us with one body motion how you feel about what you have learned at the institute so far.”

Handshake, High 5 or a Hug

The facilitator tells the group that he/she is going to pass a greeting around the circle and anyone can change the greeting in whatever way they wish. As a start the facilitator turns to the person on his/her left and asks “Would you like a handshake, a high 5 or a hug?” The facilitator gives that person whatever they choose. This continues around the circle with each participant repeating the set phrase “a handshake, a high 5 or a hug” or changing for other words, i.e. “a massage.”

Energizers

Group Juggle

(Materials: 3 soft items that can be tossed)

Facilitator sets rules: “You are going to say a person’s name, and then toss the ball to that person. (You may not pass to the person beside you). The person receiving the ball says “Thank you (your name). The receiver then says another person’s name and then tosses the ball to them. Once a person has received the ball, they should put their hands behind their back so that it will be known who has not had a turn. Pattern is repeated until everyone has received the ball and the facilitator gets the ball back. Participants are asked to remember who they tossed to for the activity to be repeated again. Facilitator asks how much time the participants feel it would take to get the ball around to everyone. The challenge is set and the facilitator throws the ball. As the ball starts going around, the facilitator throws in the second ball. Once the second ball is in the rotation, the facilitator throws in the third ball.

All My Neighbors

Participants are seated in a circle with the facilitator standing in the middle of the circle. There should be no spare chairs in the circle. The facilitator thinks of criteria that applies to him/herself and calls it out, “All my neighbors who have read all the Harry Potter books”. Any seated participants who have read the Harry Potter books need to stand up and run to another chair. Last person standing without a chair has to go to the center of the circle and call out other criteria. Example: “All my neighbors who have taught for more than 10 years” or “All my neighbors who like Chinese food” etc.

All My Friends

All participants stand in a circle. The facilitator walks to the center of the circle calling out a personal experience that others might share. Example: The facilitator calls out, “All my friends who were born in another state.” Those people come into the center of the circle with the facilitator and give each other a high 5. Participants who did not come into the circle clap to recognize the people in the center of the circle. Everyone returns to stand in the circle and someone else can walk into the circle calling out their experience. Examples: “All my friends who have a tattoo” “All my friends who have taught more than 12 years” “All my friends who love John Grisham books.”