



Icebreakers for Diversity Workshops

Overview:

In this document you will be introduced to three different icebreaker activities that are especially suitable for the beginning of a diversity workshop or in a new community. Each activity encourages people to open up and share aspects of their cultural background with each other. Each icebreaker helps to set the tone of the training through positive energy. The icebreakers are presented in light of training trainers to do them and also provide an opportunity for people to practice and discuss.

Category:

Facilitation; team-building; project planning and management

Level:

Activities are suitable for all levels, but are geared for introductory training of trainers/facilitators. Icebreakers are designed for groups of 15-25 people, but can be modified for larger groups

Recommended

Bonner Sequence: This workshop is most appropriate for using, as a resource, for any retreat or large-group trainings. Or, it is best designed to train participants, such as sophomores and juniors, for leadership and project coordinator roles.

expectation	explore	experience	example	expertise

VALUES: ALL - community engagement, community building, diversity

Type:

Structured activity suitable for workshop (e.g. retreat, training) or use during regular meeting structure.

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- Provide participants with three examples of effective team-building icebreakers.
- Illustrate how to do an effective icebreaker.
- If training students or participants as trainers, reinforce skills by providing practice and the opportunity to debrief.

How to Prepare:

In this guide, you will find steps towards 3 different icebreakers. Please refer to detailed preparation for each of the activities within text.

Icebreaker # 1: Gesture Game

Materials:

- Open space
- Make circle during the activity.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

Prepare yourself by reviewing the guide and becoming comfortable with the facilitation process. You should start the game by explaining the steps to the participants. Your main purpose in the activity is to have everyone get comfortable with each other. Have everyone get up and move their bodies. This activity can be done with a group of 20 people. It is hard to know everyone's names and do the gestures if the group is more than 25 people. But it can be done with a bigger group, if you divide the group in two.

The outline has the following parts:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Brief warm up | suggested time 3 minutes |
| 2) Introduce the activity | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 3) Gesture Activity | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 4) Wrap Up | suggested time 3 minutes |
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Part 1) Brief Warm Up

Suggested time: 3 minutes

Welcome everyone to the workshop by introducing yourself. Say your name, where you are from, what you do, and why you are there. Here's an example of how you might start off: "Welcome every one. My name is ____ and today we are here for _____. Well, we are going to begin the workshop by getting to know each other a little bit because I don't know everyone here and I am sure not everyone knows each other here either." You should ask everyone to get up and form a circle. Tell your participants "let's warm up a little bit and get energized."

Part 2) Introduce the Activity

Suggested time: 5 minutes

- Start off with asking who has a good memory. A couple of people might raise their hands or you might not even get anyone. But if you do then you ask for their name and

ask if they would like to stand next to you. Introduce the activity by announcing enthusiastically that “we are going to do an activity which is called a gesture and a name game”. In this activity we want to understand how different our gestures are and how different our names are.

- You can start off by saying: “we are going to do the gesture and a name game. The gesture activity consists **of making up a gesture that you like while saying your name**. For instance, tell us what your name is and (make up a gesture...you can clap your hands, jump, run, cheer or anything that you like). Any gesture, which describes you or feel comfortable with.”
- So, as a facilitator you can start by saying: “I am going to introduce myself. My name is Jill and...” (make up a gesture)... (your gesture might be to jump on one leg). Then you can say: “Here is the trick to the activity...” Say your name and gesture... And then point to the person next to you. He or she will say their name and his/her gesture, and will also say my name and my gesture. And that will go for the person next to this person. He/she will say their name and their gesture as well as repeat my gesture and my name and the person next to me. And so on, with each new person saying his/her own name and doing his/her own gesture while also saying the names and repeating the gestures of everyone who came before.
- Then you can return to the person on the other side to you and say: “The challenge for you is to know everyone’s name and gesture, but we can help you as we go along.”
- Also, you can give some type of direction to the activity by saying: “you should make a gesture you think everyone can repeat and copy easily. Nothing too hard. But you can’t repeat something twice, and everyone should be creative with their own gesture.”
- Ask everyone if they understand the activity, and are comfortable enough to begin. If so, move on to the activity.

Part 3) Gesture Activity

Suggested time: 15 minutes

- Start the activity yourself. Then let the activity follow as it starts off.
- Let the participants help each other. Keep a nice smile on your face. And try to pay attention to the names because it is good practice for a facilitator to know names.

Part 4) Wrap up

Suggested time: 3 minutes

- When you are done with the game, thank everyone for participating.
- Emphasize the fact that the activity showed how different we are in our gestures and how diverse our names are.
- You can say: “I hope we learned different gestures and names today. This activity got me energized and I hope everyone is ready to participate in the workshop. Again thanks for participating.”
- In the end, people will be energized and it might be hard to get everyone’s attention. So ask everyone to take their seats and get their attention.

Icebreaker # 2: Name and Adjective Game

Materials:

- Open space
- Make a circle

How to Do/Brief Outline:

Prepare yourself to facilitate by reviewing the guide and becoming comfortable with the facilitation process. You should start the game by explaining the steps to the participants. Your main purpose in the activity is to learn each other's names and an adjective that the person chooses to describe him-or herself.

This activity [suggested for groups] of only 15-20 people.

The outline has the following parts:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Brief warm up | suggested time 3 minutes |
| 2. Introduce the activity | suggested time 3 minutes |
| 3. Activity
minutes | suggested time 15 |
| 4. Wrap Up | suggested time 3 minutes |

Part 1) Brief Warm Up

Suggested time: 3 minutes

- Welcome everyone to the workshop. In your introduction say your name, where you from, what you do, and why you are there.
- You can start off by saying: Welcome every one. *"My name is ____ and today we are here for _____. Well, we are going to begin the workshop by getting to know each other a little bit because I don't know everyone here and I am sure not everyone knows each other either."*
- You should ask everyone to form a circle sitting down on chairs.

Part 2) Introduce the Activity

Suggested time: 5 minutes

- Well, start off with asking who has a good memory. A couple of people might raise their hands or you might not even get anyone. But if you do then you ask for their name and ask if they would like to sit next to you. Introduce the activity by saying with enthusiasm that we are going to do an activity, which is called a name and an adjective game.
- You can start off by saying: *"Think about an adjective which describes you the best and starts with the same letter as with your name."*

- So, as a facilitator you can start by saying: *"I am going to introduce myself. My name is Jill Jones and I am joyful."*
- Then you can say: *"Here is the trick to the activity... I say my name and my adjective."*
- And then point to the person next to you. He or she will say their name and their adjective but also say my name and my adjective. And that will continue with the person next to this person. He/she will say their name and their adjective and as well as repeat my name and my adjective and the person next to me.
- Then you can return to the person on the other side to you and say: *"The challenge for you is to know everyone's name and their adjectives, but we can help you as we go along."*
- So give about 2 minutes for the participants to think about their adjectives. And start the game.
- Ask everyone if they understand the activity. If they feel comfortable to do it. So, after getting some type of consensus move on to the activity.

Part 3) Activity

Suggested time: 15 minutes

- Start the activity yourself. As a facilitator you should start off (say your name and your adjective). Then let the activity follow as it starts off.
- Let the participants help each other. Keep a nice smile on your face. And try to pay attention to the names, because it's a good practice for a facilitator to know the participant's names.

Part 4) Wrap Up

Suggested time: 3 minutes

- Now you are done with the game; thank everyone for participating in the game.
- You can also end the activity by saying how differently and colorfully we have described ourselves. It is so nice to see diversity in the room.
- You can say: *"I hope we learned different things about each other and how well we describe ourselves."*

Icebreaker #3: Human Bingo

Materials:

- Open space
- Bingo sheet
- Pen & Pencil

How to Do/Brief Outline:

Prepare yourself to facilitate by reviewing the guide and becoming comfortable with the facilitation process. You might want to participate in the activity in order to know the

participants yourself. Your main purpose in the activity is to have everyone moving around and getting to know each other.

The outline has the following parts:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Brief warm up | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 2. Pass out the materials | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 3. Introduce the activity | suggested time 5 minute |
| 4. Bingo winner announcement | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 5. Large group discussion | suggested time 15 minutes |

Part 1) Brief Warm Up

Suggested time: 5 minutes

- Welcome everyone to the workshop. In your introduction say: your name, school, city you are from, what do you do, and something about yourself. If you have co-facilitators and helpers do they should do the same.
- You can start off by saying: *“Welcome every one. My name is ____ and today we are here for _____. Well, we are going to begin the workshop by getting to know each other a little bit because I don’t know everyone here and I am sure not everyone knows each other either.”*
- Make sure the floor space is emptied. You can ask your participants to help you clear the floor and make a big open space. You should ask everyone to form a circle sitting down on chairs.

Part 2) Pass out materials

Suggested time: 5 minutes

- If you have 20+ participants in the room make sure you have enough supplies for everyone.
- Make sure you have extra materials because it’s better to have extra than less. Make sure you pass the sheets to everyone. Don’t start to introduce the activity until everyone is facing you for more direction.
- Although many people might have played this game before, you might want to change some questions in the box in order to make it more interesting. Also, you can ask questions according to the workshop you are doing.

Part 3) Introduce the Activity

- Suggested time: 5 minutes
- Give a brief description of human bingo:
- Here is an opportunity for you to get the workshop going and begin introducing the exercise. This is when you explain what activity the participants are about to do.

Explain and introduce bingo to the participants. Explain how it is different than playing a real bingo.

- Human bingo is structured to know people in the room. To explain how to play human bingo, pass out the bingo sheets to everyone.

How to play the bingo.

- Make sure everyone has a copy of bingo and something to write with.
- Tell everyone to place their names in the middle box that says “name.”
- Tell everyone to look at the sheet and see the blocks. Each block has something written in it. As a participant you cannot sign the box other than in your name box.
- Explain how each participant has to go around the room and ask **different** people to sign the box that describes them well. For example: Joe looks at the box and sees “someone who has red hair.” Joe’s mission is to ask someone who has red hair to sign the box. He sees a girl with red hair and introduces himself to that girl. He asks her the question, if she has red hair...she answers “yes.” Then Joe has to ask Kelly (the girl with red hair) to sign the box that states “someone who has red hair.” After Kelly signs the box Joe moves on to the next box and sees who he should ask next.
- The main purpose of the game is to ask someone **different** each time to sign the box. You want to look at different people and how different we are from each other. And how diversity is represented in this room. The rules are that you cannot sign the same person’s name twice. Therefore, the participants tend to move around the room and ask different people different questions.
- The easy way to explain the activity is also to illustrate the activity in front of the participants. Take the sheet, choose a question and ask one of the participants a question. When they answer it ask them to sign your sheet. Or you can ask them if they can affiliate with anything on the sheet. When the participants answer, ask them to sign your sheet.
- And at last, say whoever finishes the sheet first is the bingo winner.

Part 4) Bingo Winner

Suggested time: 5 minutes

- Whoever calls bingo first is your bingo winner. Have your bingo winner introduce him/her self to the group. Have them state their name, what they do, where they are from, and school. Facilitator might want to give something small like a candy bar but if not have the audience give the winner a hand of applause. You might want to have the winner read off the signs out of each box. You also have to make sure that the same signature is not repeated twice.

Part 5) Large Group Discussion

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Team facilitator should:

- Have everyone sit in a circle.

- You should read the question from each box out loud so everyone can hear names. You could ask people to stand up or raise their hands if they affiliate with the box. This way people can see each other and find something common with others.
- The way to end this activity is to show how diversified the room is. It is to help people see the multicultural aspect of people.

Notes on Training Trainers

Suggested time: 15 minutes

If you are doing this workshop to train participants in how to effectively do icebreakers, give people the opportunity to practice, either in small groups or rounds. Then, have people debrief with each other using the following guidelines:

- Introductions of activity: Did the presenter concisely and clearly explain the activity? Did he/she model it? What feed back do you have?
- Ensuring the activity happened smoothly? What did the facilitator do to make sure that the activity worked? How was the language? The body language?
- Debrief: How did the facilitator tie together or close the activity? Did she/he debrief it?
- What did the participants think about the advantages and challenges of each icebreaker?