

Icebreakers 101

What is an Icebreaker?

Icebreakers are exercises designed to help form a team. They are used to help a group members get comfortable with each other.

Types of Icebreakers

Getting to Know You – Emphasize sharing personal information about one another. Team members will know more about each other, ranging from basic (like names and hometowns) to more advanced topics.

Example: The M&M Game. Ask each member of the group to take a handful of M&Ms, but instruct them not to eat their M&Ms yet. For every M&M a member takes, he or she must share one thing about themselves with the group. For more structure, use different colors of M&Ms for different categories; i.e., red M&Ms for family, blue M&Ms for hobbies, etc.

Energizer – Often used to energize the group and encourage participants to bring their attention to the task at hand. Sometimes they are just for fun!

Example: Captain's Table. Great for large groups! In a large space, group members must perform the following actions when a command is called. Anyone unable to complete the command is out. Commands are as follows:

- Captain's Coming: members must stand and salute.
- Man Overboard: members must form groups of two and stand back to back, miming looking out at sea
- Crow's Nest: members must form a group of three, stand back to back, and link elbows
- Captain's Table: members form a group of four, sit on the ground all facing each other
- Walk the Plank: members form a group of five, lining up facing the same direction, placing their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them

Repeat the commands until only a couple group members are left!

Things to consider...

- What is your audience? What are they comfortable doing or sharing?
- What are you trying to achieve? Select an icebreaker based on what you want the group to learn about each other, or if you prefer a "just for fun" activity.
- Icebreakers can be used at any time – not just at a retreat or at the beginning of the year!
- Consider using an icebreaker anytime a new member is added to the group.

Find Icebreakers here:

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers.htm>

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