

Icebreakers, Team Builders & Energisers

Participatory exercises
for trainers and facilitators

Introduction

This booklet includes 30 fun and entertaining games and activities that facilitators can use to encourage participants of a training course, workshop, or other learning event to get involved with each other. Familiarise yourself with these activities and use one whenever you need to refocus your group or pick up the pace a little. Little games make learning a lot more interesting!

Why use games?

Games such as icebreakers, team-building activities, and energisers help create a relaxed atmosphere, conducive to learning and participation. Games can help people connect, and encourage sharing and discussion. They will get the group talking and thinking about specific issues, alter energy levels in the room, and help participants reflect upon what they have learnt. Games:

- help people to get to know one another quickly
- encourage interaction, teambuilding and trust
- help create a warm and friendly atmosphere where participants absorb and remember things faster and more effectively
- allow people to share their knowledge and experiences, and learn from each other
- can turn passive participants into active ones
- help clear people's minds, revive energy and stimulate creativity
- are fun and get people alert and engaged
- build a rapport between the participants and the facilitator and;
- help people engage with a topic or issue

When to use them?

Games can be used at the start of a training or event to bring a group together and begin work on a positive note. They will help facilitators to get a quick and useful idea of the personalities, learning preferences, and inter-personal dynamics in the room.

Games can also be used during the day to recharge the group (e.g.: after lunch, or after a long presentation), or to get people focused on a new area of learning. Equally, you can use a game at the end of a session to reflect upon and summarise learning-points.

Type of games

Icebreakers

When a new group comes together, its members can often feel uncertain, or even uncomfortable. Icebreakers are designed to help people to get to know each other in a relaxed environment. They can initiate the process of turning a group of individuals into a proper team.

Icebreakers enhance your training by stimulating cooperation and participation. They usually involve sharing names and other background information. They help establish connections quickly and informally, and are especially useful when participants are from diverse cultural, ethnic, or organisational backgrounds. They can also highlight participants' strengths and be used to introduce themes that will be explored later in the training course or workshop.

Energisers

Energisers are quick, enjoyable activities that restore energy levels by refocusing people's attention and interest. Energisers are particularly useful after:

- a meal
- an intense group discussion
- long periods of listening or sitting down or late in the day when energy is fading and motivation is decreasing

Energisers stimulate participants physically and mentally; it is easier to resume training activities with fresh minds. Not only can they help shift the group's mood and get people laughing, you can use them to check knowledge before or after an activity.

It is very important to adjust the style of your energisers to the specific context of the training: be purposeful when choosing one. Be careful to assess the energy, comfort level, and abilities of participants before starting. Some energisers require a degree of openness or familiarity that is not acceptable to all participants: be careful when involving physical contact, or when mixing female and male participants. Don't forget that energisers should be kept 'short and sweet'.

Team builders

Team spirit is not always self-evident. Often, people who are strangers must be encouraged to work together. A team building game is designed to help individuals bond into a well-functioning group.

Encouragement and motivation are key factors in team building. Team building games differ from icebreakers in that the group members have usually already learnt each other's names, and perhaps some personal information, and so the focus is on making the group more cohesive. Team building takes time but the end results are well worth the effort.

How do you choose the right game?

The reality is that icebreakers, team building activities, and energisers often overlap. For example, during a game in which participants are asked to line up in alphabetical order by first name, participants will learn each other's names (icebreaker), they will have to work together as a team to form the line (team building), and become refreshed when moving around the room (energiser).

Make sure the games you choose move the group in the direction you want them to go and suit your learning objectives. Make sure games are appropriate for both the group of participants (physical ability, cultural and social norms, and language skills) and the venue (time, space, setting, and available resources).

Choose games that fit your own skills and understanding of group dynamics. If it seems too complicated, try something simpler or more conventional. Experiment until you find a repertoire of games that work for you.

Do's and Don'ts of Games

Do

- use games to create a relaxed environment
- use games frequently
- choose games that are appropriate for the group and the local context
- select games in which everyone can participate
- be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the group
- ensure the safety of the group, particularly with games that involve lots of physical exercise
- use games to introduce a topic
- allow sufficient time for games
- keep the game and instructions simple and be enthusiastic
- monitor the participants and make sure they are enjoying themselves
- improvise, adapt, or move on to the next activity if the game isn't working

Don't

- forget that games can be used at any time in a training event
- force people to participate
- just use competitive games; remember to include ones that encourage team building
- introduce a game that will make people uncomfortable (physically or mentally)
- choose complicated games
- use too many games – it might have an adverse effect
- underestimate the time it takes to do a game
- forget to bring all the required materials

When facilitating keep in mind that, in a safe environment, games can be a fun way of pulling people out of their comfort zone – so you are allowed to take some risks! Give clear, step-by-step instructions to the group, broken down into logical steps. Allow enough time for participants to grasp what they should do. Anticipate questions. Be ready to use gentle persuasion and subtle peer-pressure to get everybody to participate in a game.

Ultimately, you are responsible for the educational value of the training, and how the participants benefit from the knowledge you are trying to impart. This booklet and the information contained herein are designed to help you, as the facilitator, support your groups and strengthen their learning.

Have fun!

Ingrid Gevers
Ilse Hennemann

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation

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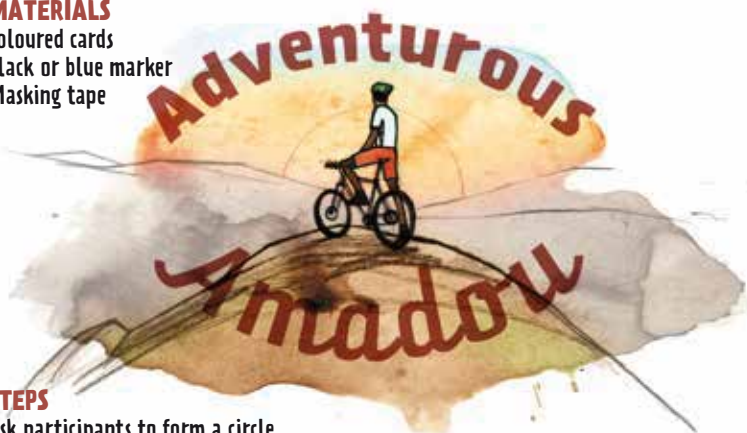
Knowing Me, Knowing You

OBJECTIVES

- To get to know each other's name in a fun way
- To relax the group, make individuals feel comfortable together, and start building a team

MATERIALS

- Coloured cards
- Black or blue marker
- Masking tape



STEPS

- Ask participants to form a circle.
- Ask everyone to come up with their own nickname. It should consist of an alliterative adjective – one that starts with the first letter of their name and describes their personality – combined with their first name. As examples:
 - Amadou – Adventurous Amadou (loves to travel)
 - Fatima – Fearless Fatima (always wants to try new things)
 - Mohamed – Money-making Mohamed (excellent at doing business)
- One person starts by saying his or her nickname. Maria might say: 'Hello. I am "Magnificent Maria."'
- The next person must repeat the first person's nickname, and then say their own name in the same fashion. Ahmed might say, 'Hi, Magnificent Maria, my name is "Active Ahmed."'
- The third player follows this pattern: 'Hi, Magnificent Maria and Active Ahmed, my name is "Laughing Linda."'
- This continues until the last person in the circle has repeated all the names and introduced him or herself.
- At the end of the game, ask the participants to write their nicknames on cards and use them as nametags.

Note

- ! If there are more than 10 participants, it may be simpler for the person to repeat only the last four names and then introduce him or herself.

Variation on the game

- ★ Ask the participants in the circle to announce their name with an action that begins with the same letter as the first letter of their name. E.g.: 'My name is "Jumping Jack"' or, 'My name is "Marching Mary."' The person must do the action as they speak it. Randomly choose anyone in the group, but make sure that everyone gets to have their go.



Lively up Yourself

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To encourage interaction and teambuilding
- ▶ To energise the group

MATERIALS

- ▶ None needed



STEPS

▶ Choose a characteristic on which the participants must rank themselves. This could be:

- age
- shoe size
- height
- number of buttons
- hair colour or length
- number of pockets
- first initial of their name
- something else suitable to the group

▶ Invite participants to form a line in a specific order relative to the characteristic chosen: from old to young; high to low; small to big; etc. For example, if you have chosen age, the participants should form a line with the youngest person at one end of the line, and the eldest at the other end; the others should then position themselves in age-order between them.

▶ Encourage the participants to discuss among themselves where they should stand.

▶ After the line is formed, select a couple of participants and ask them to share their reasons why they chose to stand where they did.

▶ The facilitator can then continue with other characteristics; these could be random or work-related. Try the following examples:

- shoe size (smallest to largest)
- height (shortest to tallest)
- number of children (highest to lowest)
- years of work-experience (highest to lowest)

Variation on the game

- ★ If there are enough participants, they can be divided into smaller groups: challenge each group to form their line faster than the other groups.



Name that Person

OBJECTIVES

- To practice participants' names in an active way
- Help the group to get to know one another

MATERIALS

- A (soft foam) ball or a ball made out of paper and masking tape

Sofia



STEPS

- Ask the participants to form a circle.
- Give one person the ball and explain that they should throw the ball to someone else in the circle, and call out their name.
- The person that catches the ball will thank the person that threw the ball and throw it to another person in the circle, calling out that person's name, and so on. For example:
 - Jacob, the first person in the game, throws the ball to Sofia and calls out: 'My name is Jacob and the ball is for Sofia.' Sofia continues by saying, 'Thanks, Jacob. My name is Sofia and I throw to Ahmed.'
- The game continues until all the participants had their turn.
- Make sure the ball keeps moving quickly to keep the energy in the game.

Variation on the game

- ★ Ask the person catching the ball to reveal something interesting about him- or herself before throwing the ball to somebody else in the circle. Players can share an interesting fact, a short story, a memory, or even an embarrassing moment.
- ★ You can also ask something related to a theme or topic of the training. During a training session on fisheries, for example, you can ask participants to share challenges facing fisheries. Each person receiving the ball must then share a challenge from their own work.
- ★ Add a second or third ball – this increases the need to pay attention and adds to the fun of the game.

Jacob

Speedy Meeting

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To meet a large number of fellow participants in a relatively short period of time
- ▶ To warm up the group with action and movement

MATERIALS

- ▶ A room with plenty of space (no chairs or tables, or moved to the side), or a suitable space outside the training building
- ▶ Alarm clock or bell or whistle: something that makes a loud noise
- ▶ Flipchart with markers



STEPS

- ▶ Divide the participants into two groups, named A and B.
- ▶ Ask group A to form a large circle, standing facing into the centre. Group B should form a similar circle inside that of group A, but facing out. Each member of group B should be paired with a member of group A.
- ▶ Each pair has two minutes to introduce themselves to each other.
- ▶ You can suggest topics for the introduction: write them down on a flipchart for participants to refer to. Keep the topics simple, as two minutes is not a lot of time. Examples of introductory topics include:

- their name, and the country or neighbourhood they are from
- what they do for a living
- why they are attending this training or workshop
- what part of the session they most look forward to
- they could relate a funny or memorable fact about themselves.

As examples:

- When was the last time you laughed at work?
- What was your favourite food as a child?
- What job would you really like to do?

▶ When the two minutes are up, ring the bell (or something that makes a loud noise; you will have to be heard over the sound of all participants talking) and tell the participants in the inner circle to move to the right and stop in front of the next person in the outer circle.

▶ The introductions begin again. The process is repeated until everyone in the outer circle has spoken to everyone in the inner circle. Remember to keep to time!

Variation on the game

- ★ Do this game when the participants are seated: if space allows, simply arrange two circles of chairs in pairs, with one of each pair facing into the circle, and the inner chair facing out.



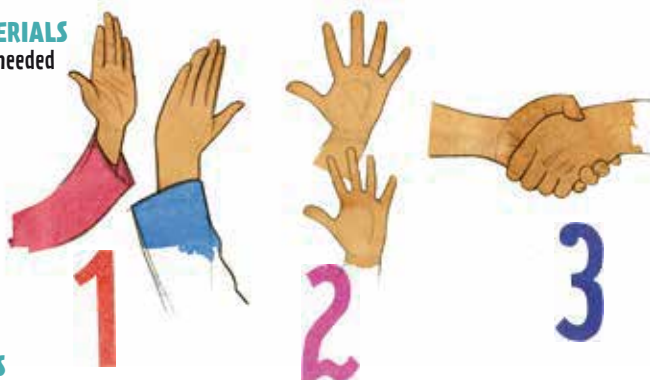
Saying Hi!

OBJECTIVES

- To help people be comfortable when greeting each other
- To help participants get to know and appreciate each other

MATERIALS

None needed



STEPS

- Divide the participants into pairs.
- Ask each pair to make up their own way of greeting each other: Each greeting should have three parts. For example: a 'high five,' a handshake, and a 'hip bump.'
- After 30 seconds of practice split the pairs up and ask players to form new pairs with different partners.
- Each person shows the greeting they just made up to their new partner.
- The two players must now combine their original greetings to make a new, longer one (six-part greetings).
- Finally, ask the pairs to split and then find a third partner. Let them work out a way to combine their six-part greetings into a super-long, 12-part greeting!



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

BINGO!

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To find out something interesting about group members in a limited amount of time
- ▶ To energise the group

MATERIALS

▶ One bingo card for each participant

- Make your own: Print or draw a grid of 20 or 25 squares (4x5 or 5x5) on paper. Each of these squares makes a box, which should contain one personal description.
- Ready-made: example Bingo sheets can be found on the Internet, or use one of the examples on the back side of this card.

▶ Pen or pencil

▶ Small prize (if appropriate)

▶ Minimum 10 people, the more the better.

STEPS

▶ Distribute one Bingo card and a pen or pencil to each participant.

▶ Explain that each participant needs to walk around the room to complete their Bingo cards as quickly as possible.

▶ They must match participants to the descriptions in each of the boxes. Remember, each description may relate to more than one person.

▶ Encourage the group to mingle and talk to everyone.

▶ When a participant finds a person who matches one of the descriptions, they must then ask that person to sign their name in the appropriate box. For example: "Has three or more children – Hussein" or "Likes football – Linda"

▶ When the first person has filled their bingo card with names – and shouts "BINGO!" – the game is over.

▶ Ask the Bingo winner to read out the names in each box and check with the participants if the description is correct.

▶ Ask if other people in the group also fit the same descriptions. Ask them to elaborate on what qualifies them for this box.

Variations on the game

- ★ Implement a rule that one person can sign a maximum of two boxes in another person's paper.
- ★ End the activity after 10 minutes and review some of the interesting facts that the group has discovered about one another.
- ★ Tailor the descriptions in the boxes to the content of the training course.
- ★ Leave one box blank: discuss with the participants before starting the game what sort of description could be written in this box.
- ★ Vary the contents of the boxes on the Bingo cards so that each card is different.

Has brown eyes	Is the tallest in the group	Enjoys dancing	Loves to read	Speaks 3 languages
Is left-handed	Wears glasses	Likes spicy food	Has an older brother	Favorite colour is green
Favorite food is pizza	Has lived abroad	Is wearing blue	Likes to go shopping	Plays a musical instrument
Loves soccer	Likes to get up early	Walks or cycles to work	Name begins with an 'A'	Has a birthday in December

Urbainak

Picture This!

OBJECTIVE

To allow participants to introduce themselves to one another in a creative way

MATERIALS

Paper (A4 or flipchart size): one sheet for each participant

Different coloured markers: at least one marker for each participant, preferably more colours per person.

STEPS

- Organise the group into pairs: make sure that they do not know each other yet.
- Ask the pairs to talk for two to three minutes to get to know each other. They should find out things like: where they come from, what they do, or what their hobbies or favourite foods are.
- When their time is up, hand out markers and a piece of paper to each of the participants.
- Ask people to draw a portrait or representation of the person they talked with. No words can be used.
- Remind the group that they should be creative and tell them that the standard of drawing is not important.
- After five to ten minutes, bring the group back together. Form a circle and let everyone take a look at all of the drawings. Which drawings have a lot of resemblance, and why?
- Ask each person to describe to the group the portrait that they worked on.
- Allocate no more than two minutes to each participant to ensure that the presentations are short, and to the point.

Variations on the game

- ★ Prepare a portrait as an example: Why not do a self-portrait? Make one beforehand and show it to the participants, or draw one as you explain the process and then ask them to make their own.
- ★ Use the portraits as starting point for subsequent sessions, especially if there are specific challenges in terms of work processes. Ask participants to work on their own portrait and draw different symbols around it that represent their work, people they work with, and any challenges they may face. When presenting the portraits, encourage group members to ask short questions to learn more. This will promote interpersonal connection and increase understanding about each other's job.

Pick and Mix

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce members of the group to one another
- To allow them to get to know each other

MATERIALS

- A bag of sweets

STEPS

- Have the group sit in a circle and pass the bag of sweets around.
- Tell the participants that they may take as many sweets as they like, but not to eat them yet.
- Once everyone has taken some sweets, inform them that they must now tell the group one thing about themselves for every sweet they took. This can be anything from where they live, to their favourite food or a hobby. Of course, don't tell people about this aspect of the game until they have already grabbed a handful.
- Go around the circle, allowing each participant his or her turn to talk. People that took 3 sweets have to share 3 things about themselves. Any sweet-toothed participants who took 10 sweets, however, will have to share 10 things.
- Once finished, tell them they may eat their sweets as a reward.

Variations on the game

- ★ Ask the participants to check the colour of the sweets they took. Tell the participants that the number of things a person must tell about themselves is related to the colour of a sweet they picked. For example the people having taken one or more red sweets will have to share 2 things, while persons that picked any green sweets will share 1 thing. Or you can decide that only the people that picked blue sweets will have to tell something about themselves. You can suit the rules to the mixture of sweets that you have brought with you or the time you have available to play the game.
- ★ Let each participants tell one thing first, then move on to the next person, and keep going around and around until everybody has shared according to the number of sweets they have in their hands. This way, someone who has taken five sweets doesn't have to think of five things at once, but will still have to share them in the end. Also everyone will be involved more quickly rather than waiting for the sweet-toothed ones to finish. This will also allow you to wrap up the session easier if, for example, some participants took 20 sweets each.

Get up - Stand up

OBJECTIVE

To introduce the participants to each other whilst sharing personal and work related experiences

MATERIALS

- Facilitator's list of statements.
- See example on the backside of this card.
- One chair for each participant



STEPS

- Prepare a list of statements to which people can agree (yes) or disagree (no).
- Ask all the participants to sit down before the start of the game.
- Tell the participants that you are going to read a series of statements and that they will stand up or sit down depending on whether or not the statement applies to them.
- Start with not-too-personal subjects. Once people get more comfortable, move on to more sensitive areas.
- Read the first statement. If a participant feels that their answer is **"yes"** they should stand up; if their answer is **"no"** then they remain seated. For example: "If you like to drink coffee, stand up." People that do not like coffee remain seated.
- Read statement number two. Again, if a participant's answer is **"yes"** they should stand up or remain standing if already on their feet. For example: "Stand up if you can play the piano". If their answer is **"no"** they should remain seated or, if standing, sit down.
- After each question, allow time for the participants to see who is standing. Ask some of the participants to elaborate on their answers.
- Continue this exercise until you have read out all the questions.
- You can adapt the questions to fit the group or the content of the training by adding related statements. If you have a group of fishermen, for example, ask them to stand up if they ever experienced a big storm when fishing. If you have a group of environmentalists, however, you could add statements related to nature conservation

Note

- If a person is unable to stand, let them raise their hand, or shout **"yes"** instead.

Get up - Stand up

Example questions can be. Get up - Stand up if...

- You are from Indonesia
- You are a woman
- You have never been to Europe
- You play a music instrument
- You know how to ride a bike
- Your phone is your best friend
- You know how to swim
- You love to sleep
- You know how to drive a car
- You like to drink coffee
- You like to eat pizza
- You have visited at least two countries
- You love to eat rice and fish
- You have milked a cow
- You can play guitar
- You are a good cook
- You like to play football
- You fish every day
- You have more than 10 years of work experience in...
- You are a good leader
- You can motivate people
- You like working in teams
- You avoid conflicts
- You think that you already have a strong understanding of the topic we are going to discuss today
- You feel that you can make your own decisions in your work
-

Things we have in Common

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To make participants feel comfortable and help build the team
- ▶ To help participants get to know and explore their shared interests

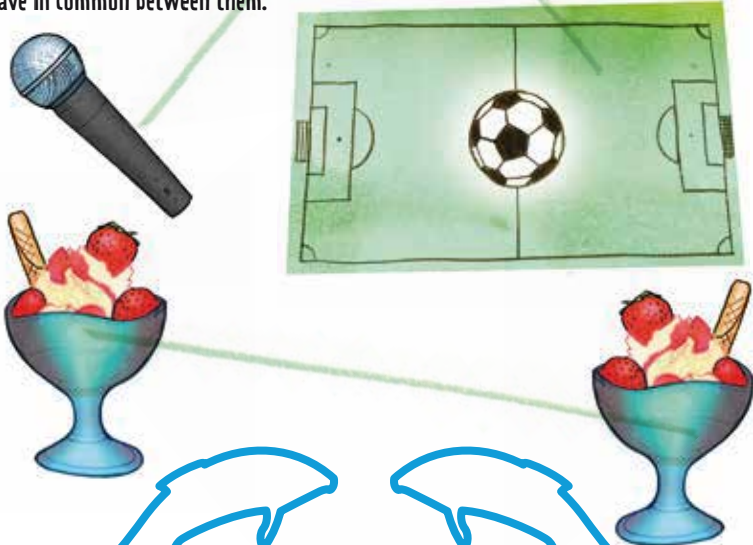
MATERIALS

- ▶ Paper and pen for each group



STEPS

- ▶ Divide the participants into groups of four or five and ask them to sit together. Each group should try to find ten things that they, as a group, have in common. These should have nothing to do with work. Equally, make it clear to the groups that they cannot choose body parts or items of clothing! Examples might include: "We like to eat cheese," "We all live in the same village," or "Manchester United is the greatest football team in the world!"
- ▶ One person in each group should take notes. After 10 to fifteen minutes, ask this person to make sure that each member of the group agrees with the list of things they have in common.
- ▶ Then ask each group to share their list with the whole room.
- ▶ Compare the lists of items generated in the groups and see how many things the groups have in common between them.



Snowball Fight

OBJECTIVE

To help participants who don't know each other very well to bond over similar hopes and fears, interests and expectations.

MATERIALS

Paper (A4)

Pen

Open space inside or outside

Flipchart and markers

STEPS

Give everyone a sheet of white paper and a pen.

Ask each participant to write three things on their piece of paper: On the left side, one thing that they are excited about; on the right, one thing that they are nervous about, and; in the middle, one thing that they would like to learn during the training course. Make sure that nobody writes their names on the paper and that they write clearly – so other people will be able to read what they have written.

Once everybody has finished writing on their paper, ask people to move to the open space. Start telling the group a story about winter and snow. You could say: "One night last week in Wageningen, the clouds were blown from the Arctic, and huge flakes of snow fell. The next morning, when we woke up, the streets and fields were covered in a thick blanket of gleaming white snow, and adults and children alike gathered to make and throw snowballs at each other. You don't need to be envious, even though you missed the fun of the snowfall, because we can create some of our own winter fun and have our own snowball fight."

Lead by example: Crumple your own paper into a 'paper snowball', and show the participants how to do the same.

Then throw your 'snowball' at someone and motivate everyone to join in the snowball fight.

Encourage the participants to keep picking up the 'snowballs' and continue to throw them at each other for while (30 seconds or so).

Call the fight to an end, and then ask each participant to pick up a snowball and form a circle. Everyone should then open the ball of paper in their hand and read what is written on the sheet to the group.

The hopes, fears and desires can be noted down or gathered up and used again at the end of the workshop to find out whether people have had their expectations met.

Shipwrecked

OBJECTIVES

- To help people to get to know each other and share their experiences
- To get participants to think creatively and learn about each other's problem solving skills
- To encourage interaction, teamwork, and consensus building

MATERIALS

- Flipchart/paper
- Pens & markers
- Small prize if appropriate



STEPS

- Tell the participants that after a shipwreck they find themselves stranded on a deserted island!
- Each person is allowed to rescue one item or object from the ship; something that represents them, or what they like or value.
- Encourage people to be creative: as examples, if someone loves music, s/he might choose to bring a guitar; an animal lover, a horse; a food lover, an apple pie.
- Ask each person to draw their item on a paper and explain to the rest of the group what they have chosen to bring, and why it is important to them.
- Randomly divide the participants into "Survival and Escape Committees": ask them to work together to improve their chances of survival by using all of the items and objects brought by every individual to the island.
- Encourage people to suggest ideas of how to use one another's items and let each "committee" draw their plans for escape on a flipchart paper.
- Once finished drawing, ask each "committee" to present its ideas on how they plan to use the group's items and objects to help them escape the island.
- You could offer a prize to the most creative individual or group.



Lighthouse - Fishing Boat

OBJECTIVES

- To build trust between the group members
- To strengthen communication and leadership skills

MATERIALS

- A room with enough space for participants to move freely
- Blindfold



STEPS

- Have one person volunteer to be the lighthouse. Ask him or her to stand at one end of the room on a chair facing the group.
- Have another person volunteer to be the fishing boat. S/he should stand at the opposite end of the room with their back facing the group.
- The rest of the group should then position themselves around the room standing, sitting, or lying on the 'sea' between the 'lighthouse' and the 'fishing boat'. They are the 'rocks'.
- The 'fishing boat' cannot talk, and must be blindfolded. It is the responsibility of the 'lighthouse' to give the 'fishing boat' instructions on how and where to navigate so that the 'fishing boat' can make it safely to the 'lighthouse' without crashing into one of the 'rocks'. The 'lighthouse' can give any kind of instructions as long as s/he does not leave the lighthouse stand.
- Then reflect with the group:
 - How did the 'fishing boat' feel to be guided by only one person ('lighthouse')? How trusting were they of that person?
 - Did any player ever question where they were going or demand an explanation?
 - What happens if we trust certain leaders and they lead us into problems?
 - How do we encourage more team-based leadership?
- The game can be played again with a different lighthouse, fishing boat, and pattern of rocks.



Aha! I was There!

OBJECTIVE

To build trust and create team spirit

MATERIALS

A room without chairs in which participants can move around freely

STEPS

- Explain that one participant will begin to tell a story and act out a role in it.
- Tell everyone in the group that they must perform the same actions as the storyteller.
- Explain that at any time another person in the group can shout, 'Aha! I was there!' The group has to respond by asking, 'And what did you see?'
- The person who interrupted takes over the story and the exercise continues as before.
- For example, you start telling a story:

- 'One day I was walking on the beach' [make a walking movement and encourage that all participants will do the same].
- Then continue, 'I saw a giant tree and began to climb it.' [make a climbing movements and all the participants do the same]
- And then somebody (in the training team, or a participant who has been primed) shouts, 'Aha! I was there!'
- The group should respond to this new person, 'And what did you see?' 'I saw somebody catching a fish'. Everyone should start fishing.
- You should encourage the story to continue through interventions from

other participants.

Point out that others should be ready to jump in and 'save' someone who appears stuck or uncomfortable when telling a story.

Remind the group that they should follow whatever the story teller does or says in the story – but point out that anyone can take the story in any direction.

Bring the game to an end when most participants have had an opportunity to be the story teller: Have an ending in mind. For example;

- 'Aha! I was there!'
- 'And what did you see?'
- 'Everyone getting in the car and driving to this training!' [mime; getting in the car and driving, tooting horn, changing gear, parking up, getting out of car, sitting in seat]

Ask participants to reflect on how they felt when playing the game. Any reasons why they felt this way?

Sum up by pointing out that people work better as team when they know that others are there to help and support them.



Thirty Seconds of Fame

OBJECTIVE

To build participants' confidence in public speaking

MATERIALS

No material needed



STEPS

- Explain that this is an exercise in which everyone will be given 30 seconds to speak to the group about anything s/he would like to.
- Tell the participants that: "At the end of the 30 seconds, no matter what is happening, I will start to clap, and that will be the signal for everyone else to begin clapping as well."
- Explain that they can do or say whatever they want in their 30-second presentation. However, even if they stop speaking, the group will not begin to clap until the 30 seconds are up.
- Everyone in the group should give each speaker their undivided attention and show enthusiastic interest.
- Remind the group that they should remain silent while a person speaks, and wait until you give the signal to begin clapping.
- Be clear that the speaker must not be interrupted in any way.
- Encourage everyone to clap as loudly for the last person as for the first, and for everyone in between.
- Tell the first person when to begin. After 30 seconds, no matter whether the speaker is in mid-sentence, you start the applause.
- Invite the next speaker to start and continue the process until everyone has had their go.



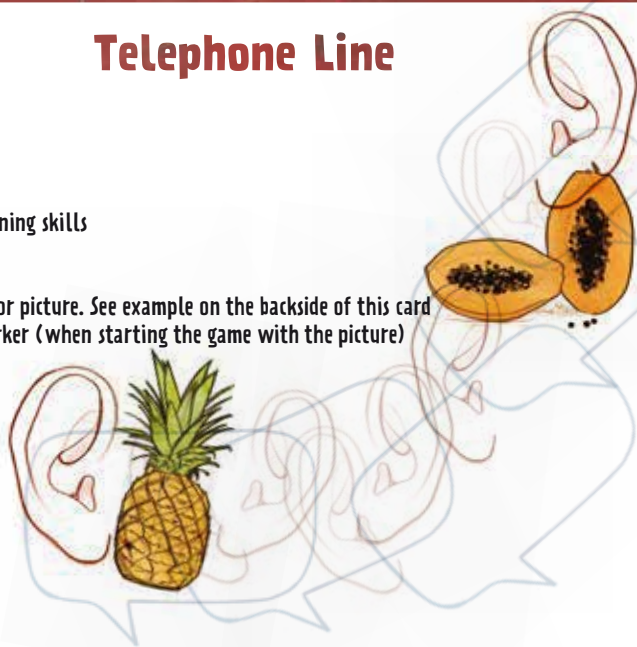
Telephone Line

OBJECTIVE

To practice listening skills

MATERIALS

A fun sentence or picture. See example on the backside of this card
Flipchart & marker (when starting the game with the picture)



STEPS

Ask a volunteer to look at the fun picture in secret, while the rest of the group form a line: the people in the line should not see the picture.

Explain to the group that they will be passing a message by whispering in each other's ear.

When the line is ready, ask the volunteer with the picture for a list of five things which s/he will whisper to the first person in line.

Ask the first person to pass on the whisper to the next person. Each person is to listen and then repeat what they think they hear to the next person in the line, until all the participants have heard it.

Ask the last person in line to tell the group the information s/he heard.

Then ask the volunteer to read out the 5 things that s/he has written down and to show everyone the picture. Then reflect with the entire group:

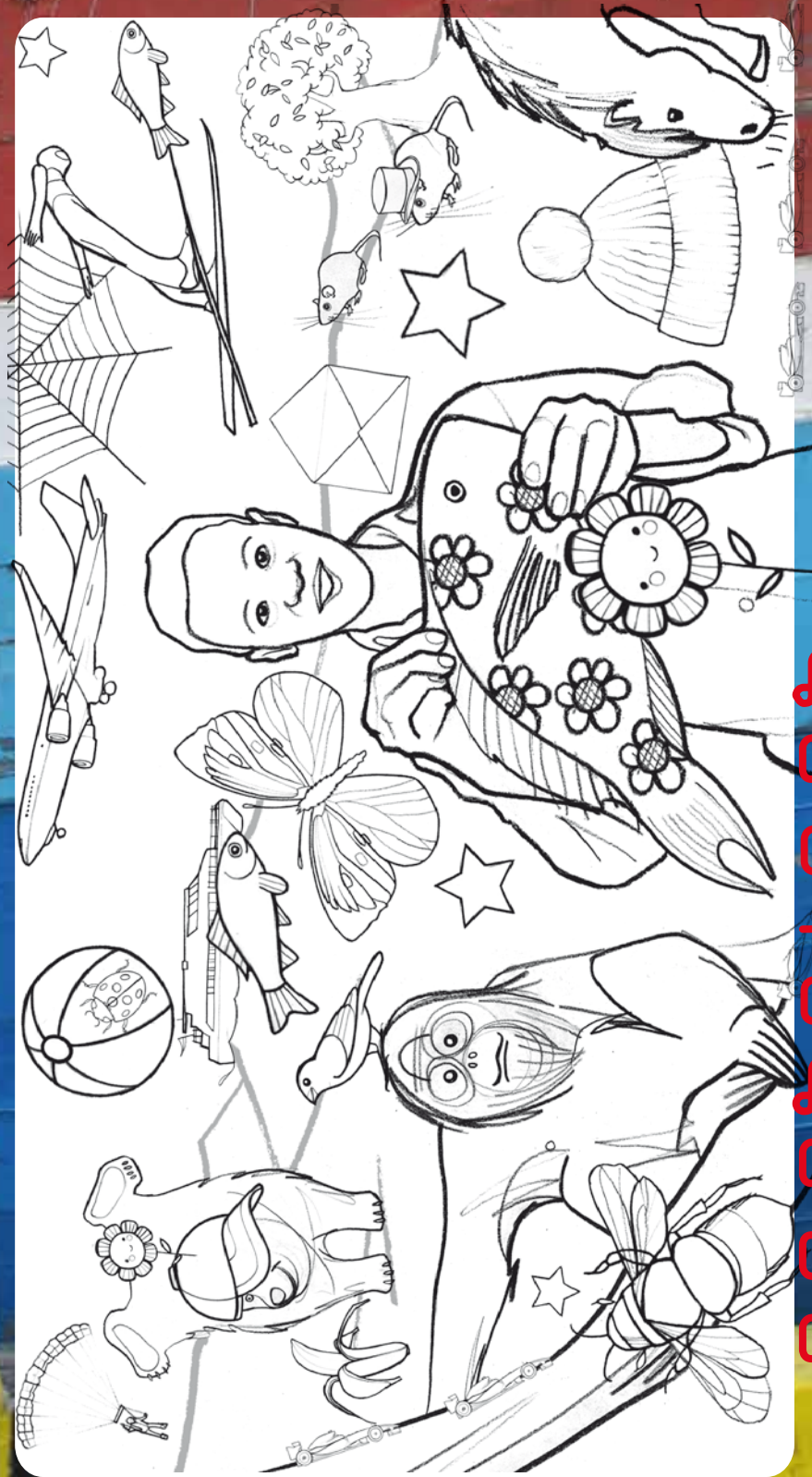
- What differences are there?
- What has been forgotten in the passage of the information?
- What has been changed?

Have a discussion about the fragility of the spoken word, how to guard against misunderstandings and the importance of clear communication and active listening.

Variation on the game

- ★ Start the game with a written phrase instead of a visual image. Give the first person a message written on a paper. Example message: "I heard yesterday that we will be eating spicy shrimp soup with noodles for lunch tomorrow but they're giving us cheese and onion sandwiches today". Continue the game as described above, until the final person in line speaks the message aloud to the group. Ask the first person to read out the original message. Then reflect with the entire group:

- Was the sentence correct?
- Which parts have changed?
- Why did this happen?



Back-to-Back

OBJECTIVES

- To illustrate the importance of teamwork
- To encourage clear communication

MATERIALS

- None needed



STEPS

- Ask the participants to make pairs and spread out across the room.
- Ask the pairs to sit on the floor, back-to-back with their partner. Make sure that participants feel confident to touch each other. If necessary, make female-only and male-only pairs.
- Instruct them to link their arms together.
- Tell the pairs to stand up, while keeping the arms and backs together. Encourage, but do not assist them to do so.
- It is not unusual that a few pairs will find getting stood up more difficult than other pairs.
- Make sure that all pairs have enough time to get up.
- Discuss what happened. Ask:
 - "Why this is difficult?"
 - "What they need to do to be successful?"
 - "What can be learned about team work?"

Note

- ! In some cultural settings it might be inappropriate to touch each other, or for men and women to carry out this exercise together. Do also not select this exercise if some participants are not physically capable or not comfortable to sit on the floor.

Ministry of Silly Walks

OBJECTIVE

To become active and energised in a fun way

MATERIALS

Music system

A fun, happy piece of music (for example the Liberty Bell March by de Souza

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6Dd0EaEbqg>)

Whistle or bell



STEPS

Ask participants to form a line.

Tell them that they all have to start moving through the room like a snake while making the same funny movement as the first person in the line.

Explain that once you blow on a whistle, or ring a bell, the first person peels off the front of the line and moves to the back of the line. The second person now can decide what movement all people in the line will have to make.

Play the music and ask the line to start moving. For example the first person might jump like a frog; the rest of the people in the line will copy the action and also jump like a frog.

After the whistle blows, the first person walks to the end of the line and the second person might, for example, start walking backwards and the others in the line will follow his or her lead.

The game is over once the song is finished.

Variation on the game

★ Ask participants to select a movement related to a theme. Examples of themes include:

- a motion they do at work
- how participants are feeling about the training at the moment

Stress that only non-verbal gestures may be used – no words are allowed. Participants must mime, or act, their motions (for example, holding an imaginary phone, washing imaginary dishes, jumping up and down from excitement). After they finished tell them to choose someone else to lead the activity.

Note

- Depending on the cultural context, people can touch each other's shoulders (for balance) when moving.

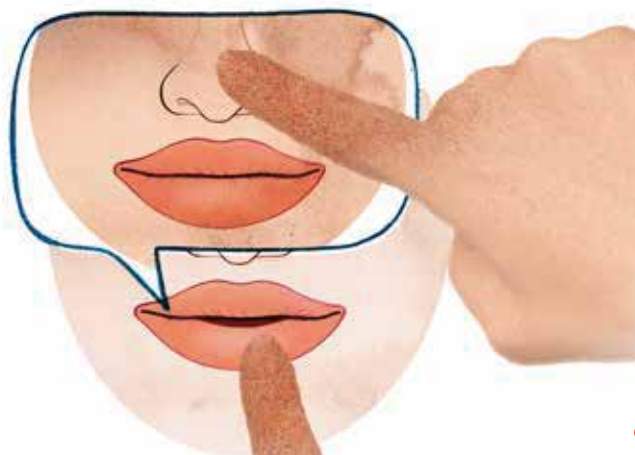
Do What I Say - Not What I Do

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To get participants moving
- ▶ To test the concentration levels of participants

MATERIALS

None needed



STEPS

- ▶ Ask the participants to stand in a circle.
- ▶ Tell them they will have to perform simple commands.
- ▶ Don't tell them that sometimes the spoken command and the actual movement performed may not be the same. Emphasise that they have to do as you say, not as you do! For example:

- You say: "Touch your head" (while touching your head)
 - Participants should respond by touching their head
- You say: "Touch your nose" (but you touch your mouth instead)
 - Participants should touch the nose and NOT the mouth
- You say: "Touch your knees" (but you touch your hips)
 - Participants should touch the knees and NOT the hips

▶ You can start giving the commands but during the game participants can take over and give the instructions. For example, ask a participant that has made a mistake to take over command.

▶ Continue, changing the 'commander' every few turns, until you feel people have become energised.

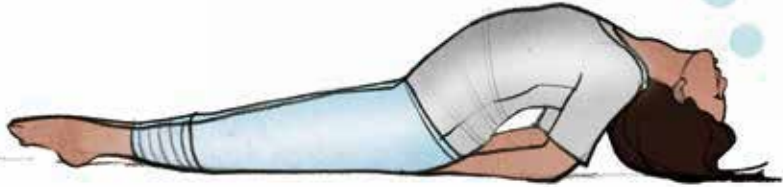
Give us a Clue

OBJECTIVES

- To contribute to team spirit
- To practice acting skills without using your voice

MATERIALS

- Stopwatch
- Paper and pen to keep score
- A list of words or phrases to be acted out by the participants
- Small prize for winning team if required



STEPS

Make a list of words that are relatively easy to act out. It is fun to link these words to a specific theme related to the workshop/training. For the theme "Fisheries," for example, words can be (persons, material, animals etc):

- Fishermen
- Fish inspector
- Shark
- Fishing net
- Fishing license
- Rubber boots; etc.

Divide the participants into 2 groups.

For each round, each group selects one representative.

You give the first representative of group A a word which s/he needs to act out in front of their group, without using his or her voice.

Group A has one minute to guess what their group member is acting out. If they guess the correct answer within 30 seconds they earn 2 points, and if they answer before the minute is up, they receive 1 point.

If group A cannot guess the correct answer within the time, group B can give an answer, and earn a point if they get the correct response.

Then group B repeats this exercise with a new word.

Repeat these steps until everyone has had a go.

At the end of the last round, reveal the total points earned by both groups and announce the winner.

For encouragement and creativity, you can promise the winners a small prize.

Slap the Table!

OBJECTIVE

To get participants energised and warmed up

MATERIALS

20–24 cards with opposite words. See examples on the backside of this card

1 set of cards for each pair of participants

Small tables with 2 chairs for each pair of participants

STEPS

Divide the participants into pairs and ask them to sit at a small table opposite each other.

All pairs will play the game at the same time.

Give each pair a set of cards and instruct them to divide the set into two piles of opposite words such as hot/cold, left/right, etc.

Shuffle the cards of each pile and put them on the table with the words facing down.

Instruct the participants to each turn one card from their pile at the same time.

Tell them that if the words on the two cards are opposites, they have to slap the table as quickly as possible, and shout, “**SLAP!**” The first person to slap the table wins and keeps the cards.

Let them continue until they have exhausted their decks; then tell them to shuffle the cards they have left over again, keeping the two piles separate.

Continue playing until all the cards are claimed.

The participant with the most pairs of opposite-word cards is the winner.

Warm

cool

Slap the Table!

Possible word pairs:

Clean / Dirty
Fresh / Rotten
Cheap / Expensive
Cool / Warm
Hot / Cold
Easy / Difficult
Wet / Dry
High / Low
Sad / Happy
Slow / Fast
Right / Wrong
Fat / Thin
Yes / No
Sour / Sweet
Light / Dark
Left / Right
Long / Short

Warm

Cool

Old MacDonald

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To release energy while having fun
- ▶ To split into smaller groups in a creative way

MATERIALS

- ▶ Small pieces of paper or card with names of animals that make a distinctive sound (each animal should feature on a minimum of four cards). See examples on the back side of this card
- ▶ Hat, cup, or bowl
- ▶ Blindfold for each participant
- ▶ Whistle or bell for signalling when time is up



STEPS

- ▶ Play this game only if the group consists of at least ten participants.
- ▶ Put the pieces of paper with the names of animals in a hat, cup, or bowl.
- ▶ Go around the group and ask each participant to pull a piece of paper out from the hat. Tell them to read it but keep it secret from their colleagues.
- ▶ Hand out blindfolds and help people to blindfold each other.
- ▶ Explain that the challenge is to use animal sounds to find their fellow animals: cows should moo; sheep can bleat; snakes should hiss, etc.
- ▶ Tell them you will count to three: then they can start walking around the room making their animal's sounds.
- ▶ Emphasise again that they cannot talk, but only make the sound of the animal on their card.
- ▶ Once they find someone impersonating the same animal as themselves, they should hold hands or stay together and try to find more participants using the same animal noises.
- ▶ Stop the game after all animals have grouped themselves, or sound a bell or whistle after 10 minutes.
- ▶ Once the game is stopped, ask each participant to remove their blindfold and look around; which animals groups are complete?
- ▶ Reflect on the process:
 - What happened in the beginning, how did the game evolve?
 - What was difficult?
 - What can we learn?
 - Do we all hear animals the same way?

Old MacDonald

Ideas for animals include:

- Mosquito
- Cat
- Dog
- Frog
- Snake
- Lion
- Cow
- Monkey
- Elephant
- Goat



NOTE

- Consider possible cultural issues whether an animal is sacred or offensive.



Chicken Dance

OBJECTIVES

- To make the group move, dance and have fun
- To energize the group when they are tired or bored

MATERIALS

- A room with enough space for participants to move around freely
- A music system
- Chicken dance music/song (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xmV5uHWNag>) or more hip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3i115sGh0dk>) can be found online



STEPS

- Instruct the participants to follow the movement you will be making to the music.
- Wait for the music to start and start making the following actions:

- Hold your arms up in front of you, forming beaks with your thumbs and fingers. Open and close your 'beaks' four times to the music.
- Put your thumbs in your armpits and flap your elbows (as if they are wings) four times to the music.
- Bend your knees and wiggle your hips four times to the music, placing your arms and hands low like the tail feathers of a chicken.
- Straighten your knees and clap four times.
- Repeat steps 1-4 four times until you hear the swing-like music
- Hook elbows with someone and skip in circles for eight counts and then switch to another partner for eight counts. Continue swapping until the chicken part of the dance begins again.

- Repeat the entire sequence again and again and again until the end of the song.

1

2

7-UP!

3

4

5

6

OBJECTIVES

- To restore the participants concentration
- To enhance awareness among the participants

MATERIALS

- A room with enough space for participants to move around

STEPS

- Ask the participants to stand and form a circle.
- Tell everybody that they are going to take turns to count out loud starting from 1.
- Each person whose number is a multiple of 7 (7, 14, 21, 28, etc.), or any number that ends with a 7 (17-27-37 etc.) must put their hand on their head and shout out: "7-UP!"
- The next person just continues the series as normal.
- The sequence starts like this: 1 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 6 - **7-UP!** - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13 - **7-UP!** - 15 - 16 - **7-UP!** - 18 - 19 - 20 - **7-UP!** - 22 ...
- Tell participants that if they make mistakes, they have to perform a short dance/leave the circle.

7-UP!

Variations on the game

- ★ Tell each person whose number is a multiple of 7 (7, 14, 21, 28, etc.) to put their hands on their head and shout out: "7-UP!" But anyone whose number ends with a 7 - except 7 - (17-27-37 etc.) must spin around on the spot and shout "UP-7!"
- ★ To make things more difficult you could ask the participants to count backwards from 70 to 1 (Remember: 70 is a multiple of 7, so the first person must start with "7-UP!").



Blind Artist

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To assess existing knowledge about a certain training topic
- ▶ To create a relaxed and fun atmosphere

MATERIALS

- ▶ Tables with 2 chairs, placed on opposite sides
- ▶ Drawings, illustrations, or pictures relevant to the content of the training. See example on the back side of this card
- ▶ Paper and pen

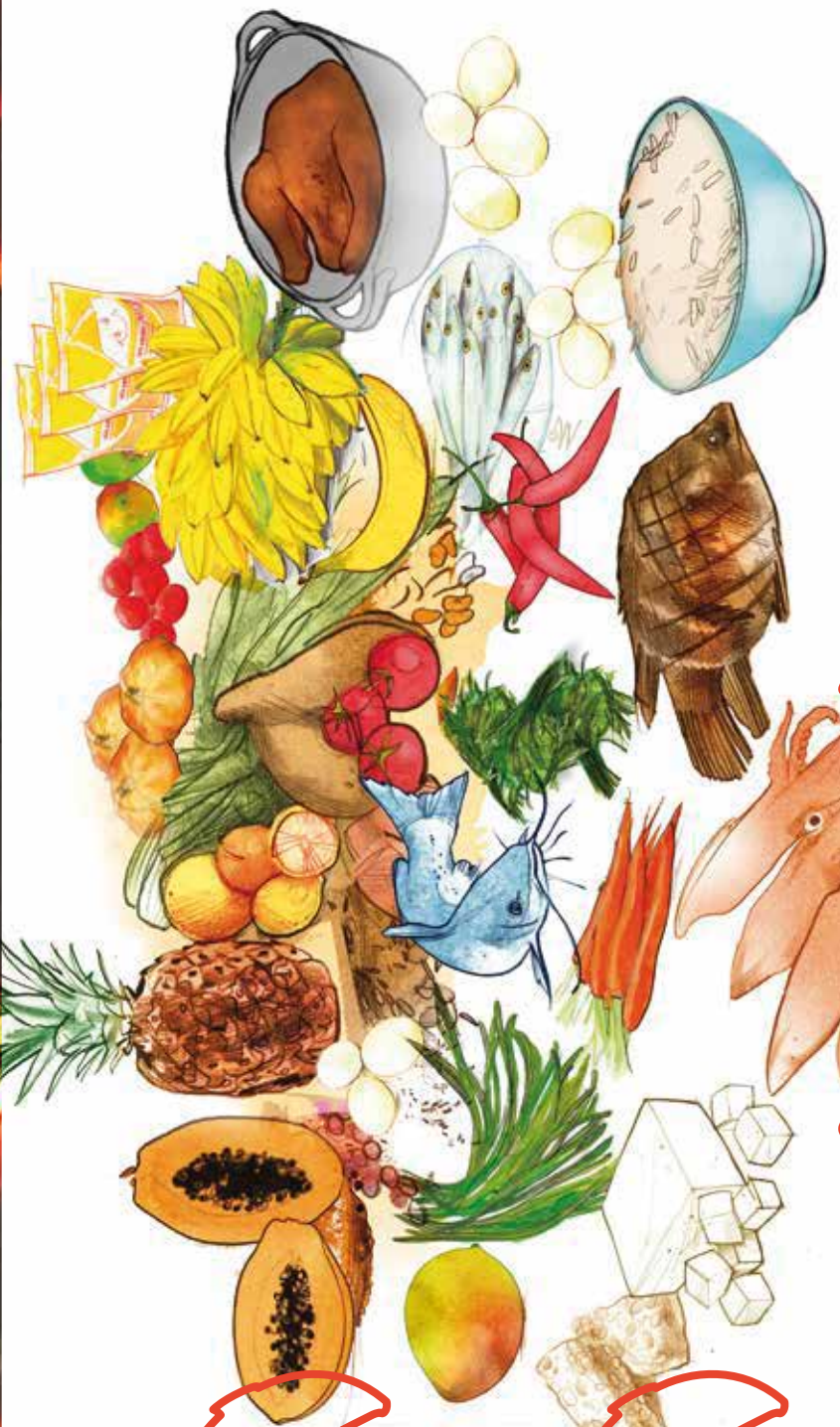


STEPS

- ▶ Have the participants form pairs and make them sit opposite each other at a table.
- ★ Give one participant of each pair a drawing and ask him or her to describe it to the colleague across the table.
- ▶ Tell the other person to draw the picture from the description that they hear – they cannot see the original picture.
- ▶ Once the drawings are finished, have the pairs explain to the rest of the group what the drawings are about
- ▶ Compare the drawings to the originals. What differences are there? What has been 'lost in translation?'

Variations on the game

- ★ To spice up the game, you can put a variety of conditions to it. For example: do not allow people to ask questions; ask them to draw with their non-writing hand, etc.



Transformers

OBJECTIVE

To allow the group to be creative in reflecting on what they have learnt and display it in a meaningful way

MATERIALS

A room with enough space for participants to move freely

STEPS

This energizer works best with 10 people or more.

Divide the participants into teams of 5–8 persons depending on the size of the group.

Start the game with a relatively simple instruction. Ask each team to form the letter “H”. After a minute or two, the participants will figure out how to arrange themselves.

Let the teams encourage each other by clapping and then introduce other increasingly complex tasks for each team to do. Some ideas are:

- Include actions specific to the subject being trained. For example, if time management is the topic, ask the team to form a ticking clock.
- When training fishermen, ask the teams to arrange themselves in the shape of a boat or a non-destructive fishing gear. Or, when talking about good handling of fish, let the team try to form an ice cube.

Spot the Difference

OBJECTIVE

To energise the group, help them feel more comfortable with each other, and to have a laugh

MATERIALS

A room with enough space for participants to make 2 lines



STEPS

Divide the participants in two equal groups.

Ask them to stand in two even-numbered lines, facing each other.

Tell them to look at each other carefully (give them a few seconds).

Ask group 'A' to turn around. Give group 'B' about 1 minute to "change" three things about their physical appearance. For example:

- take off glasses
- switch watch to their other wrist
- remove one shoe
- change their hair style

Be clear that all the changes have to be observable.

The first group now turns back around and tries to spot the differences.

Now repeat the exercise, but ask members of group 'A' to "change" their appearances and see if group 'B' can spot the differences.

Hot Potato

OBJECTIVES

- To energise the group
- To help participants feel more comfortable with each other and to have a laugh

MATERIALS

- Potatoes or tennis balls. One for each small group
- Music (laptop with speakers or sound system)
- Room with enough space to move around
- A chair for each participant

STEPS

Divide the participants into groups of four people or more and have them sit on chairs in a circle

Give each small group a 'hot potato'. Tell them that they do not want to hold onto to it too long or it will burn their fingers. So when they receive the 'hot potato', they should pass it on to their neighbour as quickly as possible.

Explain that when the music stops, the participant holding the 'hot potato' gets their fingers burnt and will have to stand up and perform an action. As examples:

- whistle like a bird
- jump like a kangaroo.

Once they have done the action tell them they can sit down again.

Start the music again and cheer the players on as they continue passing the 'hot potato.'

Tell the people who have already had their fingers burnt that they must stand up and perform the same action every time they receive the potato.

You will end up with a group doing different actions while passing the 'hot potato.'

Stop the exercise when everyone has 'had their fingers burnt.'

Monique van den Nod

www.moniquevandenhout.nl

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Rainmakers

OBJECTIVE

To experience the power of working together

MATERIALS

None needed

STEPS

Divide the participants into 4 groups and have them sit down.

Explain that each group has its own role:

- Group 1: Click their fingers slowly
- Group 2: Rub the palms of their hands on their knees
- Group 3: Stamp their feet on ground
- Group 4: Clap their hands

Allow the groups to practice their actions.

After everyone has mastered their roles, ask each group to follow your commands and not to stop until you say so.

Ask group 1 to start clicking their fingers. After about 16 beats, ask group 2 to start rubbing their knees. Again, after 16 beats, ask group 3 to start stamping their feet on the ground. Then, after another 16 beats, instruct group 4 to start clapping their hands. You can call a halt when you are ready, or ask each group to stop their actions in reverse order: 4 – 3 – 2 – 1.

Ask the group what it sounded like: Rain?

You can explain to the group that if they can make it rain, anything is possible.

Make My Day

OBJECTIVE

To enhance closeness, team-building, and positive feelings within the group.

MATERIALS

- Plain white sheets of paper
- A variety of coloured markers
- Masking tape
- A room with enough space in which to move around



STEPS

- Tape a sheet of paper to each person's back.
- Let each participant choose a marker.
- Ask people to circulate through the room, stopping only to write a compliment or some encouraging words on everyone else's back.
- Once all participants have written their compliments the sheets are taken off and each person reads their own sheet to him- or herself.
- The sheets are a nice way of saying goodbye at the end of an event or training.
- You can also reflect and discuss the process of writing messages:
 - How easy was it to cooperate when several people are writing and being written-on at the same time?
 - How did it feel to have someone writing on your back?
 - What feelings arose when you read your own sheet?

Variation on the game

- ★ Ask everyone to write their name on a separate coloured A4 sheet and tape them to the walls in the room. Toward the end of the training, ask each participant to write anonymously a positive comment about each of their fellow trainees on their respective cards before the group breaks up. Put each card in an envelope and make sure each person takes their card home as a reminder of the training, and the group of which they were an important part. Tell them to open it only once they are back at home.

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Rini Widayati
Zakiyah Widowati
Asih Gitari
Amy Azizah
Akbar Zaelani
Bagus Baruno
Fanny Oktaria Lestari
Herianto, S. Pi

Dedi Hertono
Ahmad Harianto
A.A. Gede Putra
Sri Wahyuningsih

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Spice up your training!

Re-energise tired participants and concentrate their attention on your objectives!

This booklet contains 30 simple and enjoyable icebreakers, energisers, and team building exercises that you can use to enliven sessions, engage trainees, and keep your training course running smoothly and effectively.

All games are set out in simple steps, and each includes a checklist of required materials. With the right amount of imagination, you can easily adapt every game to suit almost any training need. Some of the exercises are presented with suggested variations - but there's no limit to how you can use them to your advantage!

Have fun!

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