

Leadersheet

Icebreakers

The primary goal for an icebreaker or a getting acquainted exercise is the development of an environment that is anxiety-reducing and which allows individuals to "break the ice" or get acquainted by having fun. Icebreakers are intended to be tension-reducing rather than providing encounters on a direct interaction basis. Icebreaker exercises should be used with any group that appears to be extremely anxious in the initial stage of development (i.e., first meeting of clubs, program boards, etc.).

Icebreakers should not be used to avoid dealing with anxiety but rather to provide a less threatening environment. A non-threatening environment initiated at the beginning of development may make way for more meaningful interaction and relationships during the life of the group. Here are some things to remember about icebreakers and getting acquainted exercises:

1. They can be excellent devices to help people feel more comfortable with themselves and with others and feel more "at home" in a group.
2. They break up the "cliques," invite people to form random groupings, and help individuals meet others in a non-threatening and fun way.
3. They can be used to set a tone for the time a group will be together, will encourage people to feel "safe" and, hopefully will evoke lots of laughter in releasing tension.

Examples of Icebreakers

1. Human scavenger hunt. Find someone who: is a graduate student, owns cross-country skis, has been to Europe, wears contacts.
2. Hometown. Members tell where they are from and information about their hometown.
3. Name games. Why or how the member got his/her name. Tell name and hobby; members try to memorize information.
4. Knots. Form a circle by placing hands in the middle of the circle, grab someone else's hands (other than the person's on either side of you) and without letting go, try to untangle the "knot."

Examples of Getting Acquainted exercises

Dyads

Members get into groups of two and find out information about each other. Possible questions to use:

- a. Who do you think is the most important person who has lived in the past 100 years?
- b. What is the best movie you have seen recently?
- c. What is the title of the last book you have read?
- d. If you could be any animal other than human, what would you be?
- e. If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go?
- f. What is your favorite sport?
- g. One adjective to describe me is...
- h. The emotion I find difficult to control is...

Crest or Coat of Arms

Members create their own "Coat of Arms" by filling in information about themselves using words or drawings. Information can include:

- a. Hobbies
- b. Hometown
- c. Major
- d. Favorite Emotion
- e. Family Members
- f. Five or Ten Year Goals

Forced Choice

Ask members to stand in the middle of the room and have them move to either side to indicate their choice.

- a. More like a Cadillac or a Volkswagen?
- b. More of a saver or a spender?
- c. More like New York or Colorado?
- d. More yes or no?
- e. More like a student or a teacher?
- f. More here or there?
- g. More religious or non-religious?
- h. More like the present or the future?
- i. More like a file cabinet or a liquor chest?
- j. More intuitive or rational?
- k. More like a tortoise or a hare?
- l. More like an electric typewriter or a quill pen?
- m. More like a roller skate or a pogo stick?
- n. More like a bubbling brook or a placid lake?
- o. More like a gourmet restaurant or a McDonald's?