

Ice Breaker & Team Building Activities

Activity: Ball Toss

Time Needed: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity Goal: To have the group begin to get to know each other by learning each others names and to increase group interaction skills.

Equipment: Five balls of any kind, preferably soft (e.g. foam rubber, small bean bags, etc.).

Activity Steps:

1. Have the group form a large circle.
2. The leader will say his/her name and toss one ball to another person and say, "Hi, _____!", saying that person's name. That person will then say, "Thank you, _____!", saying the name of the person who just tossed the ball to them. Then, the person who just received the ball will toss the ball to another person, repeating the "Hi, _____!" and "Thank you, _____!" phrases. This process will continue until everyone has caught the ball. Each person should only receive the ball once. After the last person catches the ball, they should throw it back to the leader.
3. The leader will start the activity again by throwing the ball to the same person as before, and the cycle begins again. This time, the leader can add two, three, four, or all five balls until the group can toss all of the balls at the same time to one another.

Processing Topics:

- Group Support
- Trust
- Cooperation
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Planning
- Following Directions
- Paying Attention

Activity: Ball Touch

Time Needed: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity Goal: To develop individual and group initiative skills and to begin to recognize problem-solving skills.

Equipment: Five balls of any kind.

Activity Steps:

1. Have the group form a large circle.
2. Place all five balls on the ground in front of the group.
3. Instruct the group members that their task is to see how fast all of the group members can touch all five balls. The balls must be touched in the same order by all the participants (i.e., if the first person touches the red ball, then the yellow ball, then the green ball, then all other group member must touch the each ball in the same order).
4. After the group has completed the task, ask them if they are satisfied with their time. Ask the group if they feel they can improve on their time. Let them try, again and again, etc.
5. Focus on problem-solving skills, as well as individual and group initiative and the group setting limits upon itself.

Processing Topics:

- Group Support
- Cooperation
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Individual & Group Initiative
- Goal-Setting
- Planning
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Handling Stress
- Conflict Resolution

Activity: Tube Pass

Time Needed: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity Goal: To foster appropriate group interaction, group cooperation skills, and awareness of personal limits.

Equipment: Bicycle Inner Tube (or some other object that can be tied in a circle with the ability to stretch slightly – e.g., sheet, elastic band, etc.)

Activity Steps:

1. The leader instructs the participants to join hands and to form a circle.
2. The leader breaks the circle at one point and places the tube over the participant's arm. Hands are rejoined.
3. The leader instructs the group to pass the tube around the circle and return it to the starting point without breaking hand contact.
4. To increase the challenge, the leader can tie the tube in half, thus decreasing the size of the tube.
5. Different limits can be placed upon group members to increase the challenge and group interaction patterns. Examples include blindfolding some of the participants, muting participants, or having some participants sit on the floor and not use their legs, etc.

Processing Topics:

- Group Support
- Trust
- Cooperation
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Individual & Group Initiative
- Goal-Setting
- Planning
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Handling Stress
- Conflict Resolution
- Personal Boundaries

Activity: Non-Elimination Musical Chairs

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Activity Goal: To promote cooperation rather than competition.

Equipment: Chairs for each student, speakers (e.g., phone, laptop, iPad, etc.), and music

Activity Steps:

1. Play musical chairs with participants, removing chairs each time the music stops. But instead of eliminating people, more and more participants must team up together by sitting on parts of chairs or on each other to keep everyone in the game.
2. As the game progresses, participants do not need to be sitting on the chair, but they must at least be touching the chair.
At the end of the game, all participants should be touching one chair.

Processing Topics:

- Group Support
- Trust
- Cooperation
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Following Directions
- Planning
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Handling Stress
- Conflict Resolution
- Personal Boundaries

Activity: Machines

Time Needed: 30 – 45 minutes (**can be adapted for shorter time*)

Activity Goal: To practice group decision-making skills and promote cooperation.

Equipment: None

Activity Steps:

1. Divide the participants into groups of four to five people per group.
2. Explain to each group that they will be choosing a machine, appliance, or other moving object that they will act out, using only their bodies. They are not allowed to use props or to make noises. Each member of the group must have a part in the machine. The machine or other object must have some type of movement that the group will act out for the other teams. The job for the other teams is to guess what machine is being portrayed.
3. Give the groups about 10 minutes to decide what machine, appliance, or vehicle they will portray and to plan how they will act it out.
4. After groups have completed their planning, each group demonstrates their machine while the other groups try to guess what their machine is.
5. After all groups are finished, ask participants:
 - How did the planning process go?
 - Was it difficult or easy to organize your group?
 - Did a leader emerge in the group?
 - How successful do you think your machine demonstration was?

Processing Topics:

- Group Support
- Trust
- Cooperation
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Following Directions
- Planning
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Conflict Resolution

Activity: Four-up

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Activity Goal: To learn to carefully pay attention to others' actions and to develop cooperation skills.

Equipment: None

Activity Steps:

1. Have everyone sit in a large circle.
2. Tell participants that everyone can stand up whenever they want to, but they cannot remain standing for more than five seconds at a time before they must sit down again. Then, they can get right back up again if they want to.
3. The object of the activity is to have exactly four people standing at all times.
4. Participants are not allowed to talk, point, or give other participants directions during the activity.
5. After the activity, discuss how well participants cooperated, difficulties they encountered, and suggestions for improvement.

Processing Topics:

- Group Support
- Trust
- Cooperation
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Following Directions
- Planning
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Handling Stress
- Conflict Resolution