

Quick Tips

Icebreakers are activities designed to foster interaction among members. They are particularly useful in the initial stages of group development, but can be effective in later stages to challenge assumptions, break up cliques, and deal with problems. There are hundreds of ways to “break the ice”.

Icebreakers...

What do they do?

Introduce members

Create a comfortable environment

Explore thoughts and feelings

Break up cliques

Release tension

Encourage interaction

Acquaint

Kick things off

Evoke laughter, fun

Re-Energize



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Icebreakers



Leader Tips
Leadership Development
Tips for Groups



Office of Campus Life
Richland Community College

LEADership Mastery Program

Ice Breakers

STAGE 1: Getting to Know You!

At this stage, group members know very little about each other. Focus on name and low-risk disclosure.

- **Name Game:** State your name and some bit of information and repeat this information about each person preceding you.
- **Grab Bag:** Pull out an object from a bag and explain how you are similar to it.
- **M&Ms:** Pass around a bag of M&M candies and have everyone take some. Each person must tell one thing about him or herself for each piece of candy taken (can also be done with a role of toilet paper and the number of squares taken.)
- **Make “Do-It-Yourself” Nametags**
- **Inside/Outside:** Use a paper bag and magazines; cut out things describing how others see you (outside) and how you really are (for the inside of bag).
- **Matched Pairs:** Tape the name of one member of a famous pair to each person’s back. Participants have to find their “mate” by asking only yes/no questions.
- **People Bingo:** Make bingo cards with titled squares like “has lived in a foreign country” and find people who fit each description.

STAGE 2: Getting to Really Know You!

The group may experience hostility as relationships are formed and group roles are established. Focus on getting to know what each member is feeling.

- **Continuum:** State a value and have participants share where they are on a scale of 1-10 (e.g., “Honesty is important; or “This group is my #1 priority” 1=disagree, 10=Agree). Be careful to make sure group members don’t judge each others answers as right/wrong or good/bad.
- **Social Activities**
- **Group Consensus Activities:** Consult the many books listing activities e.g., *Quicksilver* by Butler, or *Silverbullets* by Rohnke.
- **Gift Game:** Have each member tell what gift he/she would give each member.
- **Set Group Goals and Expectations**

STAGE 3: Beginning to Work

Group moves toward cooperation and better communication

- **Personal Shields / Coat of Arms**
- **Positive Bombardment:** One member sits in the middle of the circle while other members say positive things about him or her.
- **Pat on the Back:** Members write positive things about other members on post it notes and put them on the each other’s backs.
- **Group Consensus Activities**



STAGE 4: Working Together!

The group focuses on problem-solving, interdependence, and reaching goals.

- **Murder Mystery Exercises, etc.:** The group has to work together to find the solution.
- **Role-Playing:** Members take on roles other than their own (leader, follower, tension-breaker, etc.) and work together to reach a goal.
- **Group Self-Diagnosis and Evaluation**
- **Nonverbal Problem Solving:** (broken squares, puzzles, etc.)
- **“I Wish I Could...”:** members share skills they wish to develop and how others in the group can provide support.

For more Icebreaker activities, please visit the Office of Campus Life, C133.

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