

ICE-BREAKER EXERCISES



Helping you to create your own bespoke L&D

Introduction

Every live event needs to keep people actively involved. Ice-breakers, play a vital role in live training, yet if done badly, they can have a negative effect on group morale. When running live events, some sort of ice-breaker should always be run, even if people already know each other (if everyone knows each other well, you can combine the ice-breaker with personal objectives).

Be mindful of time though...with large groups ice-breakers can eat into your time, so make sure that you keep them pacy.

Demonstrate what you want people to do by introducing yourself first

Icebreakers are useful for many reasons including:

- Making sure everyone in the room knows who everyone is (which helps to build networks)
- Making the first contribution an 'easy' one (helping to relax people)
- Introducing the topic in a light-hearted way (acting as a mental warm-up before you get stuck into the meaty stuff)
- Helping the trainer to learn names and think about how to mix small groups later in the workshop

Here is a collection of exercises that can be used in a wide range of workshops. Keystone Development and Training Ltd does not take credit for for these exercises. They have been sourced over many years from experience, books and websites.

Please feel free to use them to enhance your own events.

1. Initial Introductions

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, using their initial.
Timing	30 seconds per person.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	Ask each person to introduce themselves, and give a word that can be used to describe them, and something that they like that begins with the same letter (or sound). For example: "I'm John, I'm quite jolly, and I like going to the gym".
Learning Points	None.

2. Truth and Lies

Overview	Fun way of getting delegates to introduce themselves by disclosing information about themselves. Useful for delegates where some people know each other, or they know each other a little.
Timing	1 minute per person.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	Ask each person to introduce themselves, and give two (or three) facts about themselves, one of which must be a lie. The rest of the delegates have to guess which pieces of information are true, and which are lies. For example: "I'm John. When I was 25, I used to be a pub landlord, ran the London marathon, and played golf with Tiger Woods." Which one isn't true?
Learning Points	We don't always know people as well as we think!

3. Quick Draw

Overview	Low-risk and fun way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	Approx. 20 minutes.
Equipment Required	Flipchart paper and pens for each delegate.
Instructions	Ask each person to draw pictures, symbols diagrams etc. to represent themselves to the rest of the group. No words allowed! You can leave the subject completely open, or introduce some restrictions e.g. your career history, as required. Allow delegates around 10 minutes to draw their pictures, and then ask people to talk through them.
Learning Points	None. Good way to illustrate that learning can be fun and unconventional.

4. I am unique

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, disclose some personal information, and get delegates talking.
Timing	Around 15 minutes.
Equipment Required	Paper (cards) and pens.
Instructions	<p>Ask each person to write down one thing that they believe is unique about themselves. Examples may include things like writing poetry, having met a movie star, collecting paintings, writing books and so on.</p> <p>After everyone has written something down, all of the sheets should be collected and shuffled.</p> <p>Read the sheets out one at a time and delegates try to guess whose unique characteristic it is. Points can be awarded for each correct guess. The person with the highest score at the end may be awarded a prize.</p>
Learning Points	None, but could lead to a discussion about first impressions, stereotyping etc.

5. Roll of the Dice

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	Large Dice.
Instructions	Ask each person to shake a dice in turn. They should disclose the number of facts about themselves as indicated on the die, in addition to basic information such as their name a job role.
Learning Points	None.

6. Dream Job

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves. Good for groups where some people know each other.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	Ask each person to introduce themselves, and state what their dream job would be, and why. A variation could be most wanted super-power, or ideal holiday etc.
Learning Points	None. Helps people to relax as subject is quite trivial.

7. Get in Line

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to move around, talk to each other, and find out things about each other.
Timing	Variable. 5-15 minutes.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	<p>Explain that you want delegates to get themselves into the correct order in a line in a number of categories. Use non-sensitive categories such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alphabetical order of surname. • Length of time in career. • Distance travelled to get to work each day. • Number of siblings. • Total number of letters in name. • Etc.
Learning Points	None. Good to mix groups up, and energise people.

8. Desert Island Discs

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	<p>Ask each person to imagine that they are about to be sent to a desert island/isolated somewhere. They are allowed to take 3 things with them. What would they be?</p> <p>You can add restrictions if desired e.g. no people, must include a book, a CD album or a gadget etc.</p> <p>Delegates then share their items with the rest of the group and state why they have chosen them.</p>
Learning Points	None.

9. Circle of Life

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	20-30 minutes.
Equipment Required	Flipchart paper and pens for each person.
Instructions	Ask each person to draw a small circle in the middle of the paper and label it 'ME'. Then, ask them to draw further circles around 'me' and label them with the things that take up their time and/or are important to them. Allow 5 minutes for drawings, and then a minute or two for delegates to discuss them.
Learning Points	None. Good lead into personal effectiveness, coaching or time-management subjects.

10. The 4 C's

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	<p>Ask each person to state 4 things (beginning with C) that describe their personality. The four categories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrity.• Car.• Cuisine.• Colour. <p>Delegates should also provide a brief explanation as to their choices.</p>
Learning Points	None. Fits well with creative workshops.

11. Amalgamation

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, and disclose some personal information. Good for larger groups.
Timing	20-30 minutes.
Equipment Required	Flipchart and pens.
Instructions	<p>Split delegates into groups of around 4. Ask each group to discuss the strengths/preferences they have as individuals.</p> <p>Then ask them to link those strengths together to suggest the perfect business opportunity for them as a group. For example, a group may decide that they would be ideally suited to being rivals to Gordon Ramsey, as one person loves cooking, one person is creative, one person is very detail conscious, and one person is fearless.</p> <p>Groups can state their business, and the attributes, and then ask other delegates to guess which attributes belong to which person.</p>
Learning Points	None. Good for identifying positive attributes.

12. Room 101

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	Ask each person to introduce themselves and then state what thing that would like to get rid of forever, and how that would make their life better. Examples may include celebrities, a specific piece of paperwork, TV programmes etc.
Learning Points	None. Be aware that this can lead to negativity if not properly managed, or run at the start of a workshop that may include some unpopular issues.

13. Same Difference

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates energised and introduced to each other.
Timing	10-15 minutes.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	<p>As delegates to find different numbers of people who have something in common with them in categories provided to them. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find 3 people who watched what you did last night on TV. • Find 2 people who share your favourite food. • Find 5 people who have one music album the same as you. • Find 6 people who enjoy the same type of holiday as you do. • Find one other person who enjoys your favourite author. • Etc.
Learning Points	None. Good to get people talking and moving about.

14. Double Act

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates introduced to each other, and mixing.
Timing	15-20 minutes.
Equipment Required	<p>Pre-prepared cards with names on them (in envelopes or folded so the name isn't immediately known. Names should be half of a famous double-act e.g:</p> <p>Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy.</p> <p>Eric Morcambe, Ernie Wise.</p> <p>John Lennon, Paul McCartney.</p> <p>Del Boy , Rodney</p> <p>Dawn French, Jennifer Saunders.</p> <p>Batman, Robin.</p> <p>Ant & Dec.</p>
Instructions	<p>Ask delegates to find their 'other half, and then interview each other and (in addition to the normal information), ask them to find three things that they have in common.</p> <p>Then each pair should introduce each other to the rest of the group.</p> <p>You can alter the format a little, e.g. by asking each pair to find something that they have in common (not just with each other), but with their double-act too.</p>
Learning Points	None. Good to get people talking and moving about.

15. I went on a training course and I met...

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	<p>Ensure people are sitting in a circle/u-shape. Ask one person to introduce themselves briefly to the rest of the group, and say something interesting about themselves. For example, my name is Phil, I work in IT, and I have a pilot's licence.</p> <p>The next person then repeats this, and adds their own information at the end. E.g. This is Phil, he works in IT and has a pilot's licence. My name is Jan, I work in sales, and I collect Wade figurines.</p> <p>The pattern continues to next person. E.g, This is Phil, he works in IT and has a pilot's licence. This is Jan, she works in sales, and collects Wade figurines. I'm Sonia, I work in HR, and I'm studying Spanish at evening class.</p> <p>Continue until the last person has included everyone else, and introduced themselves.</p>
Learning Points	None. This format can be used for reviewing learning points at the end of a session too.