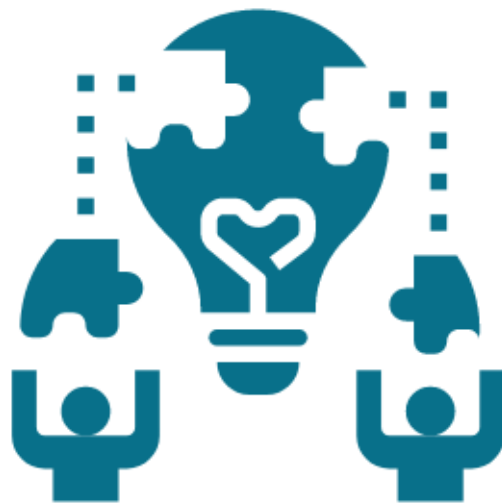


21 Virtual Ice-Breakers



Training
Designer's
Club



“Design isn’t just what it looks and feels like. Design is how it works” – Steve Jobs

Introduction

Time is short in virtual training sessions, but that doesn’t mean we should do away with the social niceties, like running ice-breakers.

Even in a virtual environment, ice-breakers still play a vital role. They 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 virtual training sessions. The Training Designer’s Club does not take credit for these exercises. They have been sourced over many years from experience, websites and through our community.

Please feel free to use them to enhance your own events



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1. Initial Introductions

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, using their initial.
Timing	30 seconds per person.
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.
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. 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.
Instructions	Ask each person to introduce themselves, and state what their dream job would be, and why. A variation could be ideal holiday or similar.
Learning Points	None. Helps people to relax as subject is quite trivial.



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4. Guess Who

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, disclose some personal information, and get delegates talking.
Timing	Around 15 minutes.
Instructions	Use slide annotation or whiteboard and 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. 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.
Learning Points	None, but is a great way to get people used to using whiteboard or annotation.

5. Desert Island Discs

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
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.



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6. Bingo

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	10-15 minutes.
Instructions	Prepare a slide with a table on it, (around 20 cells) with a fact in each e.g. has a dog, been to Las Vegas, can speak 2 languages etc. Ask delegates to use the STAMP annotation tool to highlight ONE of the boxes that includes a fact about them. Ideally NOT one that has already been selected.
Learning Points	None. Good quick introduction and can also provide a good introduction to using the annotation tool.

7. The 4 C’s

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



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8. Alphabet

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Instructions	<p>Ask each delegate to share one thing about themselves that starts with a specific letter of the alphabet. The first person starts with A, the second B and so on. It can be anything – they support Arsenal, went to Austria on holiday etc. To keep it pacy, it may be a good idea to put up a slide with names on so people can see who is next.</p> <p>Either stop when everyone has contributed OR when you complete the alphabet!</p>
Learning Points	None.

9. Room 101

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate – one sentence explanation – no discussion!!
Instructions	Ask each person to Introduce themselves and then state what thing they 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.



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10. Either/Or

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates energised and introduced to each other.
Timing	10 minutes.
Instructions	Set up a series of polls in advance – or prepare some slides that can be annotated. Ask delegates to vote on the questions which should along the lines of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curry or Chinese?• Sun or Snow?• Dog or cat?• Wine or beer?• Eat in or dine out?• etc.
Learning Points	None. Light hearted way for people make simple contributions and practice using tools.

11. Object of Desire

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	Personal Object
Instructions	Ask each delegate to share a personal object from the room they are in or their home (e.g. an ornament, stuffed toy, mug) and say a little about how they got it and why they like it.
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions.



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12. My View

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Instructions	Ask each delegate to take a photo through the window of the room they are and to share that (by holding it up to the camera) and explain what it is.
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions.

13. Picture This

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Instructions	Prepare a slide with around 20 pictures on it – all different (see www.pixabay.com for a good royalty-free selection). Ask each delegate to use the stamp annotation tool to mark a picture that particularly appeals to them, or represents how they feel. Briefly discuss the choices people have made.
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions, and opportunity to try using the annotation tool.

14. Fill the Blank

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Instructions	Prepare a slide with a sentence on it with a gap in the sentence they have to fill e.g. “If I had a super-power it would be _____ because _____” You can prepare 2 or three sentences to mix things up a little.
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions, and opportunity for people to get to know each other a little better.



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15. Top Trumps

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves.
Timing	10-15 minutes.
Instructions	<p>Prepare a series of questions and ask delegates to put their answer in chat. All questions should have a numerical answer. E,g:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What house number do you live at?• How many pets do you have?• How many times have you moved house?• How many siblings do you have?• How many times have you seen your favourite movie/been to see your favourite band? <p>Pick out one answer each round to discuss briefly – make sure you move it around.</p>
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions, and opportunity for people to get to know each other a little better.

16. Love and Hate (or Like/Dislike)

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Instructions	<p>Prepare a number of categories and put them on a slide. E.g. food, TV programme, place, sport. Ask each person to share one example from that category that they love and one that they don’t. e.g. for food, I love cheese and hate bananas.</p>
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions, and opportunity for people to get to know each other a little better.



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17. Humble Beginnings

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, disclose some personal information, and get delegates talking.
Timing	Around 15 minutes.
Instructions	Use slide annotation or whiteboard and ask each person to write down their very first job. Delegates try to guess whose job fits with who. Discuss each very briefly. Not good for school leavers!
Learning Points	None, but is a great way to get people used to using whiteboard or annotation.

18. In Common with

Overview	Risk-free way of getting delegates to introduce themselves, disclose some personal information, and get delegates talking.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Instructions	You may need to prepare delegates for this one. Ask each person to name a celebrity that they have something in common with. They may have the same birthday, come from the same place, be married to someone with the same name, have been to the same school/university etc.
Learning Points	None, easy and interesting introductions if delegates have time to prepare.

19. Charades

Overview	Visual way of delegates getting to know each other.
Timing	Around 2 minutes per delegate.
Instructions	Works best for smaller groups (due to time taken). Give delegates a category and ask them to mime/do charades to allow other delegates to guess what they are miming. Good categories are things like favourite film, favourite food or sport they enjoy (either watching or playing). Probably works best with delegates who already know each other – at least a little.
Learning Points	None, but a great way to energise people.



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20. Who’s Coming to Dinner?

Overview	Quick and easy introduction exercise.
Timing	Around 1 minutes per delegate.
Instructions	As delegates to share which famous person (living or dead) they would like to invite for dinner, why, and what they would feed them.
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions, and opportunity for people to get to know each other a little better.

21. Quick Draw

Overview	Low-risk way of getting delegates to introduce themselves and disclose some personal information.
Timing	1 minute per delegate.
Equipment Required	Pen and Paper
Instructions	Ask each delegate to spend one minute drawing something that represents an aspect of their life that they are willing to share e.g. they enjoy cycling or baking. Each person to hold their drawing up to the camera in turn and provide a brief explanation.
Learning Points	None. Easy introductions.

I hope that you found this useful.

Sheridan Webb – Founder: The Training Designer’s Club.



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About Me



As an independent Training Designer, I’ve spent the last 25 years focusing on the research and design of bespoke training programmes, and bite-size workshops.

In 2019 I decided to share my expertise by creating the Training Designer’s Club. The free Facebook group is a casual discussion forum open to anyone involved in training design. Our VIP members get more resources, support and value by having access to a resources library, regular virtual meetings (Designer Drop-Ins) to discuss their own design challenges and on-going development via webinars, lunch and learn sessions and on-line courses (charges may apply).

Find out more: www.trainingdesignersclub.co.uk