



Nottingham Trent University

Icebreakers Guide

NTU Icebreakers Guide

Dear Colleague

Please find attached a guide to 24 different icebreakers to facilitate with your students. They are divided into two sections and intended to give you another tool for your teaching toolkit/ arrow for your quiver (please insert your own metaphor).

The sections are

- **Getting to Know You**
- These are usually short exercises intended to help students say one another's names out loud and find out a little about one another. These are useful near the very start of an induction programme when students are perhaps a little reluctant to speak to one another.
- **Team Challenges**
- These exercises are slightly different and are intended to encourage students to work with one another on a task. The tasks are usually physical in nature giving an easy point to focus on.

Some issues about using icebreakers

An ice-breaker is a short activity designed to encourage participants to talk to one another and to share some limited information about themselves. Ice-breakers can be as simple as asking students to turn to one another and introduce themselves to the people sat next to them, or they can be complex lengthy activities where students can find a lot out about each other. Ideally there ought to be a fun aspect to the activities in order to provide participants with some shared history that they can discuss later and, where possible, a relevance to the taught course/ university experience.

Why are they useful?

For some students, finding themselves in a year group with up to 250 other students is not a problem; they'll have already started to make friends in their hall/ house, in the Union of Students, or in bars, pubs and nightclubs around Nottingham. For many though, it's a frightening challenge.

"I felt isolated and the unhappiest I have ever felt." - Interview with a student who withdrew from their degree course (Ozga & Sukhnandan pg 34 (2001))

Ice-breakers are a gentle way of ensuring that ALL students start to talk to one another and find out the names of the people they will be studying with.

Research in the School of Art & Design during the 2003 – 2004 academic year identified what students wanted from their induction to the University. The three main factors were:

1. Will I make any friends?

2. Who will I be working with?
3. Who will I be living with?

Ice-breakers are one of the tools teaching staff can use to help students to answer the first two questions. It would be overstating the case to claim that ice-breakers are all that is required to enable students to develop friendships, but they are one technique teaching staff can use to engender an environment in which such friendships can blossom.

When are ice-breakers useful?

Icebreakers are potentially at their most useful with groups of students coming together for the first time. The most obvious use is during the Welcome Week, but there are also benefits in facilitating ice-breakers at the start of subsequent years and at the start of group projects. A minority of students won't have learnt the names of their peers by the end of the first year; perhaps because it is embarrassing to ask other students their names once the initial induction window has closed. The occasional use of ice-breakers throughout the year may help such students to feel less isolated from their peers.

Tips for facilitating ice-breakers

"I'm sorry, but it says here that we've got to do an ice-breaker now."

Ice-breakers are relatively-active, energetic activities. Lecturers need to congruently communicate this in the way they facilitate the activity. If you hate the idea of doing ice-breakers, then it's probably worth swapping this particular task with a colleague.

Programme teams should try to ensure that they are using a range of different icebreakers with their student groups. Even the best icebreaker starts to grate if overused. There are twenty four ice-breakers in this guide and an internet search will quickly turn up hundreds of activities for use.

Try to link the ice-breakers into the course. This does not necessarily mean cataloguing the learning outcomes for each activity, but if the relevance of the ice-breakers can be introduced to the group, and links made to future learning, students are likely to engage more fully.

Rehearse the ice-breaker. Most of the ice-breakers are extremely easy to facilitate, being essentially structured discussions, however some are more complex and these will require some preparation. If you would like to discuss how each ice-breaker works, please feel free to contact Ed Foster, ext 88203

Health & Safety

There is an element of risk with some of these activities (there's marginally more activity than asking students to sit at their desks), but it's very minimal. You'll need to look at the instructions and think through any issues raised. Please don't hesitate to contact Ed Foster if you have any concerns.

Complete List of Icebreakers

1. Juggling Balls
2. Line Outs
3. Stripper
4. Human Bingo
5. Three of a kind
6. Corners
7. 2 truths, 1 lie
8. Coat of arms
8. Coat of arms
9. Trauma, trivia, joy
10. Most tenuous claim to fame
11. Balloons
12. Paper Aeroplanes
13. Postcards
14. Group Map
15. The M&M Game
15. The M&M Game
17. Lego Tower
18. Paper Tower
19. Keyboard
20. Toxic Waste
21. Newspaper Fashion
22. Trust Levitation
23. Shepherd
24. Egg Drop

Getting to Know You

1. Juggling Balls

Time – 5 – 10 mins | **Suggested max. participants** – 25 – 30

Equipment required – 3 juggling balls (£ couple from ToysR'us), name badges

Activity level – Participants will be throwing & catching, and need to be able speak and hear one another's names

Explanation

This ice-breaker generates a lot of energy and usually plenty of laughs.

Get the participants into a circle, ask them to write out / put on name badges.

Explain that they will be passing the juggling ball around the group by making eye contact with another person calling their name and then throwing the ball to them. (You might want to emphasise underarm only.

Pass the ball around the group from one person to the next and ask each person to say their name aloud and one fact about themselves.

When the ball comes back to you, pick someone out, make eye contact, call their name, then throw them the juggling ball.

Once they start to get the hang of it introduce the second juggling ball and then the third. As facilitator watch to make sure that everyone gets a go.

Variations & Your Notes

Team challenge variation. (You need a watch/ timer)

Once they have tried it out and got used to the exercise, collect the ball and explain that this time you are going to set them a challenge. Each person in the group will catch the ball from one person, then throw it to another so that everyone in the circle will have touched the ball once. (You throw to Pete, who throws to Jane, who throws to Sunita, who throws to Lucy, until the ball comes back to you)

Tell the group to remember the order and explain that they are going to do it again in the same order and you are going to time it. Time it once, then give them the chance to go faster. People tend to get very fired up at the chance to shave a few seconds off their time.

Stripper Variation

Do the Stripper ice-breaker and then give the group the chance to do this exercise using their stripper names.

2. Line Outs

Time – 10 mins

Suggested max. participants – 25 – 30

Equipment required – none

Activity level – People will need to be able to move around and sort themselves into a line

Explanation

The group will form themselves into a continuous line based upon criteria you set.

Examples include

First name – Andrew to Zoë

Height – Shortest to tallest

Shoe size – Smallest to largest

Birthday (probably best not to use age)

Hand size

Zodiac Signs

The furthest they've ever travelled

Variations & Your Notes

Ask the group to do the exercise without speaking

Ask the group to do it stood on chairs – be very careful about checking the chairs are okay and talking to the group about taking care.

If you use the shortest to tallest line out, it is possible to go get the group to sit on one another's knees. (Too complex to explain, email ed.foster@ntu.ac.uk for details.)

3 Stripper	
Time – 5 - 10 mins	Suggested max. participants – 20 (gets a bit boring with many more names (consider breaking the group into 2 smaller teams if any larger than this))
Equipment required – OHP/ flipchart	
Activity level – Very limited, people need to arrange themselves into a circle	
<p>Explanation</p> <p>Explain to the group that this exercise may prove useful should their academic career not work out the way they expected. This exercise will work out what their stage name might be should they ever choose to take up the career of being a stripper. (I'm not sure if Careers have any relevant information)</p> <p>The formula is very simple Your first name – name of your first ever pet Your surname – your Mum's maiden name Give the group a moment or two to work it out and then ask each participant to explain their name in turn</p> <p>Obviously this has some potential to offend, I've never found this to be the case, but you might want to use this once you know the group</p>	
<p>Variations & Your Notes</p> <p>Juggling Balls Works well if you then use some juggling balls and have the group do the juggling balls icebreaker using their stripper names. This might be a good activity for second year groups who already know one another.</p> <p>Pen Name Essentially the same exercise, but usually a little less embarrassing</p> <p>First name – your middle name Surname – the first ever street you lived on</p>	

4. Human Bingo

Time – 20 mins

Suggested participants – 20 - 150

Equipment required – A copy of the Human Bingo grid per participant (SEE APPENDIX 1) and one on acetate, participants need pens. A prize would be excellent

Activity level – People will be walking around talking to one another

Explanation

Hand out the Human Bingo Grid to everyone in the group. On the handout are 20 boxes; in each of the boxes is a heading. They must speak to other people in the room, find someone who meets the heading for each box. For example, one of the headings is **“Left Handed”** they must find someone in the room who is left handed and write their name in the box. NB it must be a different person for every box. Some of the boxes have an asterisk, in these instances the person must actually demonstrate that they can do what is asked for. For example **“Roll their tongue”** the person must actually roll their tongue.

The first person back to the front with all their boxes filled in is the winner. Read out the headings and check that the answers are genuine. With large groups have prizes for second and third place to keep the exercise going a little longer.

The grid is located in appendix 1

Variations & Your Notes

5. Three of a kind

Time – 10 mins

Suggested max. participants – 10 + (works better with larger groups)

Equipment required – participants will need pen and paper, two prizes

Activity level – participants will need to be able to move around and talk to one another

Explanation

Explain to the group that they must find three different people in the room that they share something in common. These factors must not be:

Something visible – e.g. both men, both have heads

Connected to their programme

Connected to living in Nottingham

The first person back to the front with all three things written down wins a prize.

Give one out for the most outlandish/ freaky thing that two people have in common.

Variations & Your Notes

6. Corners	
Time – 10 - 30 mins	Suggested max. participants – 25 – 30
Equipment required – OHP/ Flipchart, Signs with Agree Strongly, Agree, Disagree, Disagree Strongly written on	
Activity level – participants must be able to move around to the corners of the room	
<p>Explanation</p> <p>This is a potentially contentious and challenging icebreaker, manage it carefully. The basic idea is for the facilitator to read out a series of contentious statements and for the group to arrange themselves into four corners of the room based upon how they feel about the issue. The corners will be either:</p> <p>Agree Strongly Agree Disagree Disagree Strongly</p> <p>Once into their corner, the group must come up with 2 reasons why they feel as they do about the particular issue. Each group has the chance to then explain their reasoning and invite others to join them, give people the chance to change their minds if one group puts forward a particularly good argument.</p> <p>Possible issues include</p> <p>All drugs should be legalised Euthanasia is wrong Designer babies are a good thing The UK should have a policy of zero immigration The Death Penalty should be reinstated for murder The War on terror is just Britain should join the Euro UK foreign policy is racist As graduates earn considerably more than non-graduates, tuition fees should be doubled Multi-culturalism is a bad thing</p> <p>Clearly, there is the potential for this exercise to alienate some people. I would recommend starting it with some discussion about respecting one another's points of view.</p>	
<p>Variations & Your Notes</p> <p>Have only two options – agree and disagree</p>	

7. 2 truths, 1 lie

Time – 10 – 20 mins

Suggested max. participants – 10 +

Equipment required – participants require pen and paper

Activity level – people will be sitting working in groups of 6 - 8

Explanation

Split the group into syndicate teams of 6 – 8.

Each person must write down three statements about themselves; two of them are true, one is a lie.

Each person then reads out their statements and the group has to work out which are true and which are lies. The group may ask one question.

This exercise would work well with students who already know one another.

Variations & Your Notes

8. Coat of arms

Time – 30 mins

Suggested max. participants – up to 30

Equipment required – flipchart pens, flipchart paper, blue tac

Activity level – Participants will need space to draw and wall space to hang their masterpieces on

Explanation

Each participant gets a sheet of flipchart paper and a flipchart pen. They are going to create their own unique coat of arms. They need to write their name at the top of the paper, draw a shield, divide it into quarters and leave space for a motto underneath

In each quarter they will need to draw something that represents them:

1. Personal Achievement
2. Family
3. Interests/ hobbies
4. Personal ambition

They will also need to devise a personal motto, (use of Latin is optional)

Put all the flipchart sheets up on the wall and turn the room into an art gallery. Give people a few minutes to look at what other people have drawn.

Variations & Your Notes

If coats of arms are a little militaristic, participants could devise pub signs, or simply divide the page into 4.

This might be a good idea to use before starting to discuss progress files.

9. Trauma, trivia, joy

Time – 15 mins

Suggested participants – multiples of groups of 8

Equipment required – none

Activity level – People will be sitting in groups of about 8 talking to one another

Explanation

Split the group into syndicate teams of approximately 8.

Each person must think about:

One **trauma** in their life right now (an anxiety, rather than a deep personal issue)

One **joy** in their life at the moment

One piece of **trivia** that they have come across recently (Big Brother gossip, pointless science, football fact etc)

Variations & Your Notes

10. Most tenuous claim to fame

Time – 15 mins

Suggested max. participants – multiples of groups of 8

Equipment required – perhaps some prizes

Activity level – Participants will sit in groups talking to one another

Explanation

It would be interesting to see how much the supposed celeb-rification of our society has reached the students. Get the group to discuss any links to famous people that they have. Each subgroup must choose the most tenuous link to someone famous, i.e. there is a link to a genuinely famous person, but it's frankly rubbish, or the famous person is definitely a C list celebrity.

Let each group explain their links to the rich and famous. The whole group then votes on the most tenuous claim to fame, i.e. there is a link to a genuinely famous person, but it's frankly rubbish, or the famous person is definitely a C list celebrity.

So if one of the participants plays 5-a-side with David Beckham all well and good, but if a participant's cousin once went out with a girl who's brother once played 5-a-side with David Beckham, all the better. To give you an example, I once managed a student whose boyfriend went to school with the man who played Darth Maul in Star Wars: the Phantom Menace.

Variations & Your Notes

11. Balloons

Time – 30 mins +
(depends on group
size)

Suggested max. participants – multiples of groups of 8,
needs at least 20, will work with very large groups

Equipment required – 1 balloon per person, paper & pens, flipchart paper & pens

Activity level – Participants will inflate balloons, throw them around the room, catch them and then work in small groups

Explanation

Give each participant a post card sized piece of paper, and ask them to write down one anxiety that they have about starting at University. On the other side ask them to write one thing that they are looking forwards to.

Hand out the balloons. Ask the students to put their paper into the balloons then inflate and tie them. Now get everyone together in the middle of the room, throw the balloons into the air, waft them about for a few moments and then have the participants catch the balloons.

Split the participants into teams of 8. They then burst the balloons and read the comments people have made about what they are looking forward to. Then working in groups they explore ways of dealing with the anxieties that students have written down.

Feedback solutions at the end, perhaps offering additional reassurance and support as you do so.

Variations & Your Notes

12. Paper Aeroplanes

Time – 20 mins

Suggested participants – 20 +

Equipment required – Paper Aeroplane templates, lots of different coloured paper

Activity level – Participants will make paper aeroplanes, throw them into the air, catch a plane and then work in pairs

Explanation

This exercise is a good way of randomly pairing up participants; it works well with very large groups. People will throw and then catch a paper aeroplane and then find the other person in the group with the matching plane. The planes will have different animals on them: elephants, zebras, cats etc. You will need to photocopy the planes onto different coloured paper and make sure that you have two of each.

For example the two participants who catch the blue aeroplane with an elephant on it sit down together, so will the pair who catch the green penguins, etc.

Therefore, make sure that you produce enough pairs of coloured aeroplanes for all the participants in your group. As they enter the venue, give everyone a paper aeroplane. Ask them to follow the instructions, fold the plane and when everyone is ready all the planes are thrown into the air and caught. Participants will need to find the other person that caught the same plane as themselves, then sit down and answer the questions on the plane.

Written on the plane are some instructions:

Please find out about the person you are sat with.

- Where do they come from and why did they choose Nottingham Trent?
- What have they enjoyed most so far about being at University?
- What are they most looking forward to about being at University?
- What are they most nervous about?

Health & Safety Warning

There is a theoretical risk of hitting someone in the eye. Warn the group to throw the planes into the air, not at people and to be careful. (If you have enough safety glasses to spare, handing them out might add to the event's comic value)

Variations & Your Notes

13. Postcards

Time – 20 mins

Suggested max. participants – Will work with any size group

Equipment required – 1 postcard per participant. The cost of postage. (The Union of Students is usually sent hundreds of free promotional postcards at the start of the year, if you contact the Executive Committee, they ought to have some available)

Activity level – People are writing in small groups

Explanation

Hand out a postcard to each person. Explain that they are going to write themselves a post card. Working in pairs they will need to discuss:

One goal that I will achieve by Christmas.

They will write this onto the postcard, address it to themselves and then pass it back to the facilitator. In turn, the facilitator will post these cards out at the start of the last week of term so they can review their success.

Variations & Your Notes

14. Group Map

Time – 10 - 15 mins

Suggested participants – up to 30

Equipment required – none

Activity level – Participants will need to position themselves around the room

Explanation

The facilitator stands in the centre of the room explaining that the whole room is a map of the world, with Nottingham in the centre. The facilitator will need to indicate which way is North, South, East and West. The group must arrange themselves in the room relative to Nottingham. If you have no international students, just use the UK.

The facilitator will go round the group and ask them to shout out:

Their name

Where they are from

One detail about their hometown

Variations & Your Notes

You could then ask the group to reposition themselves according to where they would like to live in the world and why.

15. The M&M Game

Time – 20 mins

Suggested participants – Up to 20 (slightly smaller would be better)

Equipment required – Big bag of M&Ms

Activity level – Participants will take some sweets from the facilitator and then talk to the whole group

Explanation

Explain that this exercise has two parts: firstly you are going to give out some M&Ms (or other similar sweets to the group) once you have finished, you will explain what the second part is. The participants cannot eat the M&Ms until you give them permission and can take as many as they like.

Once you have passed out the sweets, explain the second part.

For each sweet that participants have taken, they must tell the group one piece of information about themselves.

Then they can eat the sweets.

Variations & Your Notes

You could specify the information they give based on the colour of the sweets.

E.g. Red – one thing about their school, blue – their family etc

I've seen the exercise suggested, but students take sheets of toilet paper instead (apparently it still works)

16. Genie

Time 20 mins

Suggested participants – 15

Equipment required – Flipchart/ whiteboard

Activity level –group discussion

Explanation

The facilitator explains the scenario to the group:

You are walking along a beach and come across an old lamp washed up on the shore. You pick it up, give it a rub and out pops a genie, offering you three (conditional) wishes. The wishes are:

- You will live for another 10 years, but one random person in the world will lose 10 years from their life. Do you take it?
- You have the power to change one thing about world – what would that be?
- You develop super hero powers; (flight, speed, firing webs from your fingers etc) what would that be?

Variations & Your Notes

Team Challenges

17. Lego Tower

Time – 30 mins

Suggested participants – multiples of teams of 6

Equipment required – Lego for each team, tape measure, handouts with instructions

Activity level – discussion, experimenting with Lego and then building a tower out of Lego

Explanation

This is quite a well-known team work game. Each team receives a sheet explaining the parameters for the exercise and a selection of Lego. Their target is to build a tower out of Lego. There are three sets of factors they must consider:

How long they will spend

How high the tower will be

How many bricks they will use

The team who builds the tallest tower using the fewest bricks in the shortest time will win. They have 20 minutes to plan how they are to build the tower. During this time they can make mock-ups. Each team must then write down how tall they expect the tower to be and how many bricks they are going to use.

Ask them to dismantle any mock-ups they have made, put all the Lego back in the boxes. Then give them the instruction to start. Measure the height of the towers, check that the number of bricks each group have claimed to use looks about right and declare one team the winner.

Variations & Your Notes

Some people have come across the tower exercise before, one effective variation is to ask the teams to make a bridge that the smallest person in their team can pass underneath.

18. Paper Tower

Time – 30 mins

Suggested participants – teams of about 6 - 8

Equipment required – Lots of newspaper sellotape, string, tape measure

Activity level – Mainly group discussion and testing. The whole team will make a tower out of paper at the end of the exercise

Explanation

Split the group into teams. Explain that each team will have 20 minutes to build a paper tower. The tower must be free-standing (i.e. not hanging from the ceiling) and constructed only out of newspaper, sellotape and string.

Hand out the same amount of newspaper, string and sellotape to the groups.

At the end of the exercise, measure the tallest tower and let the group have great fun knocking one another's towers down.

Variations & Your Notes

Don't give the teams any tape or string.

19. Keyboard

Time – 30 mins

Suggested participants – teams of about 8 (you will need one facilitator per team)

Equipment required – 10m of rope, numbered sheets of A4: 1 – 40, masking tape optional

Activity level – An active exercise. Participants are likely to be throwing themselves around at high speed.

Explanation

Make the rope into a circle and lay it out on the floor. Now place each of the numbered sheets of paper on the floor within the circle, put them down randomly.

Explain to the participants that the scenario is:

“You are a team of elite computer scientists involved in some top secret research. The super-computer you are working on has crashed and you are needed to reboot it. On the floor in front of you is the keyboard. It must be started by pressing each key in the correct numeric sequence, i.e. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 etc. There are two additional security measures:

1. Only 1 person is allowed on the keyboard at any one time (i.e. within the circle of rope)
2. Each team member must take his or her turn in order. For example person A must step on key number 1, then 9, then 17 etc.”

If any part of two people are on the keyboard at the same time the team has to go back to the start. If anyone pressed the keys out of sequence, the team has to go back to the start, even if their toe just catches the wrong key as they cross the circle.

You will have 3 attempts and will be timed.”

Teams are usually very keen to get faster. On the first attempt it usually takes 45 seconds – 1 minute. After 3 attempts, most teams will get down to under 30 seconds.

Health & Safety

I have done this exercise several times with no problem, but you will need to emphasise the importance of being careful. If the team at any point appears to be out of control, stop the exercise and ask them to start again.

There is a small risk of the keys sliding. Always do this exercise in a carpeted room, not on linoleum or another slippery surface; I usually tape the keys to the floor. Ask the group to check the suitability of their footwear, if they are wearing heels suggest they do the exercise barefoot.

If anyone doesn't want to, or feel confident that they can take part in pressing the keys, there is a potential role for someone to call out the numbers.

Variations & Your Notes

20. Toxic Waste

Time – 45 mins

Suggested participants – teams of about 8

Equipment required – 2 paint kettles per group (take the handles off for the exercise), 6 two-metre lengths of bungee cord, water, food colouring/ ink to dye water, 6 metre length of rope. (The B&Q Depot on the way to Clifton has paint kettles, bungee cord and rope)

Activity level – Mainly group discussion, brainstorms and experimentation, at the end some of the team be involved in a dextrous exercise.

Explanation

Make the rope into a circle. Put it down on the floor and put the two paint kettles in the middle. Fill one with water and food colouring.

Explain to the group that

“You have arrived at the scene of an industrial accident. In one bucket is toxic waste. It is so dangerous that it is corroding the bucket and needs moving into the other more suitable receptacle. Anyone who steps over the boundary marked by the rope will receive a fatal dose of toxins. Therefore, you cannot cross the rope circle.

All you have to move the bucket are these 6 lengths of cord. You must empty the liquid from one bucket to the other. You must not spill any liquid.”

Although at first, this exercise seems impossible, there is at least one solution. The best method is to coil one of the bungee cords into a loop that will fit tightly around the kettle. Then loop the other cords through it so that the group can expand the first loop. Then with team members on all sides of the rope circle put the bungee cord loop over the top of the paint kettle. From here, the team ought to then be able to lift the bucket and pour the liquid into the second kettle.

This exercise really ought to be done outside.

Variations & Your Notes

21. Newspaper Fashion

Time – 30 mins

Suggested participants – teams of about 6 – 8

Equipment required – Lots of loo roll, sellotape

Activity level – Mainly group discussion & brainstorms, ending with loo roll haute couture and modelling

Explanation

Give each team a loo roll and explain that they have 15 minutes to design and make a:

- dress
- skirt
- jacket
- suit
- hat
- swimming costume
- etc

One person will model it and the others will have to give a commentary on their groundbreaking fashion statement.

Variations & Your Notes

When I've done this activity with art & design students I often extend the activity by asking the students to pick

- a location for a dream photo shoot and theme
- the perfect model
- 3 records (can we still call them records?) to play to support the mood

I've come across suggestions to do this with loo roll. It might be a quicker activity to do

22. Trust Levitation

Time – 20 mins

Suggested participants – teams of about 8

Equipment required – none

Activity level – Fairly physical, participants will be lifted into the air during the exercise

Explanation

This is a trust exercise, the purpose is to show participants in a very physical way what it is like to have to rely totally on other people. On one level this is a slightly more serious exercise than some of the others on these pages.

Start the exercise by asking the participants to stand in a circle facing inwards. They must be tightly in together, shoulder to shoulder. One person stands in the middle. The person in the middle will stand with their arms crossed and hands touching their own shoulders. They will need to keep themselves upright and lean against the circle of people stood around them, those in the circle will carefully pass the person in the centre around. After 30 seconds – 1 minute the group will lift the person up over their heads and take them for a short walk, (ca. 10 metres) then put them down again gently.

People should be able to opt out of this exercise if they want. You ought to discourage it, but should let them do so. You may wish to warn participants before the event to bring loose, comfortable clothing.

Remind participants to lift from their legs not their backs. There ought to be enough people to be able to lift without any strain, but emphasise being careful.

This activity would be better done outside, preferably in a grassy, more private area.

Variations & Your Notes

23. Shepherd

Time – 20 - 30 mins

Suggested participants – teams of about 8

Equipment required – blindfold per participant, whistle, rope, chairs, you really need a large room, ideally two rooms would be better, or quiet space in a corridor

Activity level – Initially groups will be involved in planning discussions. They will be walking blindfolded whilst listening to instructions given to them via a whistle.

Explanation

Explain to the group.

“In this exercise, one of you will be the shepherd, the remainder will be sheep. The shepherd will guide the sheep into the pen by issuing instructions via the whistle. The sheep will be blindfolded. Once the exercise starts the shepherd is the only person who can communicate, and then only via the whistle.”

The group then has 15 minutes to discuss how they will communicate.

Whilst the group is discussing, set up the sheep pen by putting 4 chairs in a square and closing off three sides with rope, let the group see the pen and where the entrance is. Towards the end of the planning time, move the group away from the pen (preferably into another room). Then change the location of the pen, or at the very least the entrance to it.

When the group have finished discussing the sheep put their blindfolds on and the activity starts. As facilitator walk closely to the sheep and if they look like they are going to walk into a wall etc instruct them to stop yourself.

Participants tend to follow their memory as much as the instructions, which is why the facilitator needs to move the pen.

Don't put time pressure on this exercise, participants need to be able to take their time and walk carefully.

Variations & Your Notes

24. Egg Drop	
Time – 30 mins	Suggested participants – teams of about 6, will work with very large groups providing you have a large balcony/ first floor window.
Equipment required – newspaper, string, sellotape, 1 egg per team (+ a few spares just to be on the safe side). First floor window/ balcony over a hard surface that you have access to.	
Activity level – Group discussion, planning followed by construction of device to protect an egg	
<p>Explanation</p> <p>Explain to the teams that they are going to drop an egg out of the window onto the floor below without the egg breaking.</p> <p>Each team can protect their egg using newspaper, string and sellotape. They have 20 minutes to design a device to protect their egg.</p> <p>Once they have built their devices, send some people down to where the eggs will be dropped, their job is to prevent innocent bystanders being knocked out by the eggs. To ensure consistency it's best if the facilitator drops the eggs themselves. With very large groups let everyone drop their eggs at once.</p> <p>Take a look at the eggs, those that haven't broken are the winners.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <p>Apparently, eggs straight out of the fridge tend to be quite brittle when handled, so try to let them come up to room temperature before the exercise starts. Parachutes are the best way to slow the fall of the egg (although it still needs wrapping up in some way)</p>	
<p>Variations & Your Notes</p> <p>Charge points for the equipment the participants use, therefore putting pressure on to succeed in the challenge at the same time as using as few resources as possible.</p> <p>Each sheet of paper = 20 points 10cm of sellotape = 20 points 10cm of string = 20 points</p> <p>The number of broken eggs massively increases when you put this additional pressure on, there's probably an interesting lesson here.</p>	

Appendices

1. Human Bingo Grid

Human Bingo

This ice-breaker is an extremely quick way to get to know one another, you will probably have spoken to everyone else in the room by the time you finish it. The idea of the exercise is to put a different person's name in each of the boxes in the grid below. You must put a different person's name in each box. For the boxes marked with an * the person must demonstrate that they can. Therefore, make sure that if someone says they can roll their tongue, you see actually see them doing it.

Is left handed	Can say hello in 5 languages *	Has met Royalty	Can sing a Westlife chorus *
Has children	Can quote 3 lines from Star Wars *	Has NOT seen a Harry Potter film	Has hitch-hiked more than 100 miles at once
Is wearing contact lenses *	Is a teetotaler	Can repeat 'Toy Boat' 5 times fast *	Has been in a prison cell
Has a tattoo*	Has gone bungee jumping or parachuting	Can recite 6 lines from Shakespeare *	Has the same favourite colour as yourself
Has drunk a pint in less than 10 seconds	Can roll their tongue	Has been abroad this year.	Has been mistaken for a TV personality (Who?)