

Get to Know You Activities

WHICH TOOL TO USE?

There are many great tools that you can use to help team members get to know each other, build a team, and develop trust. While this handout will focus on examples of get to know you activities (“icebreakers”), it is important for you to recognize the different types of activities and tools that you can use to help build up your team.

- **Icebreakers** are activities designed to help people get to know each other; they usually involve sharing names and other background information. Icebreakers can reduce team member anxiety and help foster interaction. They can be used when a group is first forming, and do not require debriefing or conversation afterwards.
- **Teambuilding activities** are higher risk activities that are designed to help groups form bonds and become a team. These activities can be used to challenge a group to learn a skill/lesson, problem solve, or move to the next stage of group development. Debriefing is required.
- **Energizers** are activities used at the beginning or middle of group process to bring focus and energy back to the group. No debriefing is required.
- **Boundary breakers** are activities that help the group develop deeper relationships and trust. Debriefing depends on the type of activity, but most of the time debriefing/discussion is built into the activity instructions.
 - Within what timeframe do we expect responses to email and phone communication?

ICEBREAKER IDEAS AND FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

The activities listed here are a small taste of the icebreakers, teambuilding activities, energizers, and boundary breakers available to groups. For more ideas, perform an online search for any of these terms. The activities listed here can work for many group sizes, but all are ideal for groups of approximately 10-20.

- **Two Truths and a Lie:** Give each individual a piece of scrap paper and instruct them to write three statements about themselves: one of the statements should be false while two should be true. Explain that the goal is to fool people about which one is the lie. Allow 5 minutes to write statement; then have each person read the three statements and have the group guess the lie.
- **Questions:** The leader asks a series of questions ranging from shallow to deep. For instance, "What is your favorite color?" would obviously be a shallow question, but "What do you like least about your parents?" would be a deeper one.
- **Toilet Paper:** Pass a roll of toilet paper and tell the participants to take as many squares as they want. When everyone has some, participants have to say something good about themselves. If a person has three squares, they say three things; if they have ten squares, they say ten things.

- **Meet me at the Train:** Give each participant an index card and have them write three (true) facts about themselves that are not obvious about their physical appearance. They should NOT write their names on the cards. When everyone is done, collect the cards, mix them up, and hand one to each participant. They should make sure they do not have their own card.
 - Instruct participants to find the owner of the card that they possess. While searching for the owner of the card they can only ask yes or no questions.
 - Explain that once the participant has found their match, they need to ask questions about the statements so that they have enough information and detail to introduce and present one fact about their partner.
 - “The Train” is created by each person standing next to their match in a long line or circle depending on space. Each person will be standing next to the person they will be introducing. Eventually, it will look like a train of people.

