Icebreaker Ideas!

Using Ice breakers Successfully....

Using ice breakers successfully is similar to being able to tell a good story: you need to know your audience, delivery is everything, and good stories build up intensity as they go along. And props never hurt if you have them...

1. **Know your audience.** Before deciding which activities to use, assess the group for the following: age, familiarity with one another, purpose of the group/gathering, and consideration of physical abilities.

2. **Build in intensity.** A general rule of thumb is to start with activities with limited movement, minimal physical contact, and with simple rules, and slowly increase each of those. You can always tell how things are going by the level of conversation and laughter.

3. **Be very flexible.** As with most games, you can change the rules to suit the group.

4. **Participate enthusiastically.** The whole point of games and ice breakers is to help participants break down barriers, learn something about the others in the group, and most of all... have fun! Be sure to play an active role in the game, as it is important that participants learn something about you as well.

5. **Use fun props.** Whenever possible, use props in such as stuffed animals or other objects that create laughter or interest by themselves. If you don’t have any, don’t worry, the activities are fun enough, fun props are just a bonus!

6. **Change your routine.** When you learn a new game, you present it with contagious enthusiasm. When an activity seems stale while you are presenting it, it’s time to change your routine and learn a new game to become enthusiastic about.
Tag Match Maker

*Equipment:* a name tag for each person, pens

*Instructions:* Put your name in the centre of your card. In the upper left corner write 2 things that you like to do. In the upper right corner write your 2 favourite singers or groups. In the lower left corner write your 2 favourite animals. In the lower right corner write 2 words that describe you.

When everyone finishes, instruct them to walk amongst the group for a few minutes. Without talking, tell them to read the upper left corner of the other group members' cards. When time is up (5 minutes), they are to find one or two people who are most like them and talk for a few minutes. When time is up (5 minutes), they are to mix up again reading the upper right corner of the other group members' cards. They then find the one or two people most like them and visit. Repeat with the lower left corner and lower right corner information. To make sure everyone visits with several people, you could implement a rule that no two people can be in the same group more than once.

Silent Interviews

*Equipment:* none

*Instructions:*

1. Divide the group into pairs - try to mix the group into pairs who don't know each other well.

2. Ask the participants to introduce themselves to their partner.

3. Instruct the group that from this point forward, speaking is not allowed. This includes whispering, mouthing words, and making sounds, too!

4. Inform the group that they must tell their partner 3 things about themselves without speaking, similar to a charades game. These things can not be physical characteristics.

5. Once all of the partners have finished miming to each other, call everyone back into a circle.

6. Ask for each pair to verbally introduce their partner to the group, as well as the three things that they learned (or think they learned!).

Scattergories

*Equipment:* none

*Instructions:* This is a great ice breaker to get people moving and interacting and help them learn more about each other. The facilitator calls out two choices to a question, such as "Would you choose a chocolate ice cream or vanilla ice cream?" Participants would then divide themselves by joining with everyone who shared their choice. Don’t give them any instructions on how to do this, tell them they will need to figure out how to get themselves into these groups. You can continue to ask as many interesting questions as you like in this fashion, or you can change the way participants divide themselves by asking open ended questions. For example, "What is your favourite pizza topping?" Participants would then need to call out and find all of the other participants who shared their choice. The facilitator then asks each of the little clusters to shout out their choice proudly and loudly.
I Like....

*Equipment:* Chairs (however this game can be done by standing in a circle)

*Instructions:* All players sit in a circle on chairs (or stand). Remove one chair from the circle and invite one player to make a comment such as “I like people who like going to the beach”. Any player that also likes going to the beach has to swap chairs. If you are not using chairs the player must swap positions in the circle with another person who also likes going to the beach. One player will miss out on a chair (or be the last person to make it back into the circle) so then they call our another “I like....” And they then try to find a chair to sit on or a place in the circle. This is repeated.

Ball Toss

*Equipment:* A set of soft toys, balls etc. enough for the group

*Instructions:* All players stand in a circle. One player calls the name of another and throws them a ball/toy. This player calls another name and throws the ball/toy to that player in the circle. No player is to receive the ball/toy more than once. When all players have had the ball/toy, it is returned to the first player. The game is repeated with two balls/toys where the first ball/toy follows the second ball/toy around the circle. Continue adding balls/toys and see how many you can keep going at once! If a ball/toy falls on the floor it’s out!

The Line Up Game

*Equipment:* A list of ‘line-up’ options to call out

*Instructions:* Organise participants into groups (divide your group up evenly into lines). Tell participants that The Line Up Game is a competition! That you will give the group an instruction to line up in a particular way and that each line needs to arrange themselves in the line as quickly as possible. When the group has lined up correctly, they need to let the facilitator know by clapping, sitting or raising a hand. Do a practice round and instruct the group to line up by height. Begin the activity. After each line up, identify the winner of that round.

Some possible line up options include:
- Line up in order of shoe size
- Line up in order by the number of siblings you have
- Line up in order of your birthday (day, month or year)
- Line up in order alphabetically by your first name
- Line up in order of height
- Line up in order alphabetically by your favourite colour
- Line up in order of your house number

The options are endless! You can also instruct the group to arrange themselves in silence for a twist!!
Icebreaker Considerations!

Does it suit the age/gender/abilities of participants?

Does it suit the size of the group?

Will it work in or at the venue?

Does it meet the aims of the session?

Have you learnt the rules?

Will it exclude anyone?

Have you got all the equipment you need?

Have you got a back-up game?

Practice!

Icebreaker Tips!

Make sure you explain the game slowly and clearly

Make sure you go through all the rules

Demonstrate anything that needs extra explaining

Ask if anyone has any questions about the game

Look to make sure everyone is involved

Be prepared to change the activity if needed