

USD CASA

Center for Awareness, Service, and Action

Breaking The Ice

Icebreakers and acquaintanceship exercises are important when groups come together each year and when bringing in new members. They can be excellent devices to help people feel more comfortable with themselves, with others and feel more "at home" in a group.

They also break up the "cliques", by inviting people to form random groupings and helping individuals meet others in a non-threatening and fun way. When used to set a tone for the time a group will be together, members are encouraged to feel comfortable and this can relieve tension.

Icebreakers, figuratively, break the ice when a group just forms or reforms after a break.

Icebreakers are an effective method to initiate a new member orientation. A few examples are:

ICEBREAKERS

1. Human scavenger hunt.

Find someone who: is a graduate student
owns cross country skis
has been to Europe
wears contacts
(make up your own...be creative!)

2. Hometown.

Members tell where they are from and information about their hometown.

3. Name games.

Why or how the member received his/her name.
Share name and hobby; members try to memorize information.

4. Knots.

Form a circle by placing hands in the middle of the circle. Grab someone else's hands (not on either side of you), and without letting go, try to untangle the "knot."

Examples Of Getting Acquainted Exercises: The following exercise will encourage stronger ties, which are important when working together.

1. Dyads.

Members form groups of two and find out information about each other. Possible questions to use:

1. Who do you think is the most important person who has lived in the past 100 years?
2. What is the best movie that you have seen recently?
3. What is the title of the last book that you have read?
4. If you could be any animal other than human, what would you be?
5. If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go?
6. What is your favorite sport?
7. One adjective to describe me is
8. The emotion I find most difficult to control is....

2. Crest or Coat of Arms.

Members create their own "Coat of Arms" by filling in information about themselves using words or drawings.

Information can include:

- Significant Life Event
- Hobbies
- Favorite Heroes
- Family Members
- Five or Ten Year Goals
- What they can bring to the organization
- What they want to receive from the organization

3. Forced Choice.

Ask members to stand in the middle of the room and have them move to either side to indicate their choice. Have them find a partner on the side they have chosen and discuss reasons for their choice.

Are you:

1. More like a Cadillac than a Volkswagen?
2. More of a saver than a spender?
3. More like New York than Colorado?
4. More yes than no?
5. More like a student than a teacher?
6. More here than there?
7. More religious than non-religious?
8. More like the present than the future?
9. More like a file cabinet than a liquor chest?
10. More intuitive than rational?
11. More like a tortoise than a hare?
12. More like an electric typewriter than a quill pen?
13. More like a roller skate than a pogo stick?
14. More like a bubbling brook than a placid lake?
15. More like a gourmet restaurant than a McDonald