

QUICK TIPS

Icebreakers

What do they do?

Introduce members

Create a comfortable environment

Explore thoughts & feelings

Break up cliques

Release tension

Encourage interaction

Acquaint each other

Kick things off

Evoke laughter

Re-energize

Share like/dislikes



I C E B R E A K E R S

TIGER BITS is a publication of the Center for Student Involvement. Copies available in the CSI, lower level rm. 014, FHSU Memorial Union, Fort Hays State University 628-4664.



CSI staff offer programs and consultation in these and other areas of personal and organizational leadership.

Information adapted from the Student Organization and Leadership Development Center at The University of Kansas

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Icebreakers are activities designed to foster interaction among members. They are particularly useful in the initial stages of group development, but can be effective in later stages to challenge assumptions, break up cliques, and deal with problems. There are hundreds of ways to "break the ice." Below are just a few ideas.

Stage 1: Forming - Group members know little or nothing about one another.

- Name game - state your name and some bit of information and repeat this for each person preceding you (e.g., name and favorite sport)
- Grab bag - pull out an object from a prepared bag and explain how you are similar to it
- M & Ms - Pass around a bag of M&Ms; for each candy taken, the person must tell something about him/herself (also can be done with roll of toilet paper)
- Inside/Outside - use a paper bag and magazine; cut out things describing how others see you (for the outside of bag), and how you really are (for the inside of bag)
- Win, Lose, or Draw
- Nametags
- Find a twin - find things you have in common with someone (e.g., eye color)
- Matched pairs - tape one of a famous pair to everyone's back and have them find their partner by asking questions to find out who they are
- People bingo - make a sheet like a bingo card (with titled squares like "has lived in a foreign country") and find people who have done these things

Stage 2: Storming - Group may experience hostility in relationships and challenge leadership.

- Continuum game - state a value and ask participants to share where they fall on a 10 pt agree/disagree scale
- Trust falls
- Social activities
- Group consensus activities - bomb shelter, lifeboat, moon crash
- Gift game - have everyone tell what gift they would give to one another
- Headband exercise - role play situation
- Group goal setting and expectations

Stage 3: Norming - Group moves to cooperation and better communication.

- Personal shields or coat of arms
- Hat game - assign kind of hat to someone and explain why
- Values auction
- Positive bombardment or "Pat on the back" exercise - sharing positive comments about one another
- Dipper in the bucket - fill each others' buckets with positive comments

Stage 4: Performing - Group's focus is on problem solving, interdependence, & goal achievement.

- Murder mystery exercise
- Broken squares non-verbal problem solving
- Group self-diagnosis - evaluation
- Plane wreck exercise - role play
- I wish I could... - sharing skills one wishes to develop and how others in the group can provide support

There are many other exercises that can facilitate a group's development at different stages. For more information about icebreakers, visit CSI, 014 Memorial Union.

Also, check out the Tiger Bits on Group Development and Team Building.