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Team Builders & Icebreakers: Techniques for Success

2008 / 2009

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



*Florida High School/High Tech Team Builders & Icebreakers:
Techniques for Success, 2008/2009 Edition*

This Florida HS/HT *Team Builders & Icebreakers* manual was compiled by The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities. The Able Trust is a 501c3 public-private partnership foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be the leader in providing Floridians with disabilities fair employment opportunities through fundraising, grant programs, public awareness, and education. Since its establishment The Able Trust has awarded over \$22 million in grants to individuals and nonprofit agencies for employment-related purposes. Its programs enable over 2,000 Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.

The Florida High School/High Tech Program thanks all of the partners who have worked so diligently and passionately over the past twelve years to provide high quality transition services to Florida youth with disabilities. The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth has identified five Guideposts for Success based on what research tells us that all youth need to transition to adulthood successfully. Each activity in the *Team Builders & Icebreakers* manual is based on one or more of the five Guideposts for Success and is intended to provide ideas for *supplemental* workshop activities and not to replace the use of activities in the *National HS/HT Program Manual* nor the *Florida HS/HT Activity Guide* (formerly the *Florida HS/HT Sample Curriculum*).

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SECTION I:
ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES

NETWORKING BINGO

SET UP: Networking is a great icebreaker at the very beginning of a training session or after lunch. As people trickle into the room, hand out the form. This activity allows a trainer to start the program on time and still integrate latecomers. The exercise can help get the day off to a good start with groups as small as 10 or as large as 150. To get the best response, modify the categories on the form to fit the group you are working with.

DEBRIEFING: Keep it fun and simple. One way is to form a large circle. Call out a category. The people who share that category run to the center of the circle and give each other high fives. You can ask the group that has to prove their category to sing the theme song to *Casablanca*, do a few steps of ballroom dancing, or show you the holes in their socks.

[Networking Bingo activity sheet located on following page.]

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

NETWORKING BINGO ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

If a person matches an item, ask him or her to initial it. The first five items must be initialed by 5 different people! If the item says "PROVE" then the person has to prove it before you have him or her initial the item. The object of the exercise is to get all of the items initialed by someone in the group!

Played in a band	Can hum theme song to Casablanca {PROVE}	Has an often mispronounced name {PROVE}	Has been on TV
Has a tattoo	Has been paid to sing	Is a twin	Speaks two or more languages
Drives a truck	Has been to four or more continents	Has SCUBA dived	Knows ballroom dancing {PROVE}
Has won an award	Is wearing a sock with a hole in it {PROVE}	Ran a 10K	Has met a president of the USA
Has acted in a play	Owens an iPod	Has taken a hot air balloon ride	Knows a good joke {PROVE}
Has hiked the Appalachian Trail (or parts of it)	Rides a motorcycle	Goes camping	Is an internet "junky"

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

HAVE YOU EVER?

The group forms a large circle. Have each group member mark their place with a small object. (Cup, hat, keys). While everyone is marking their spots the leader is standing in the center of the circle. Consequently there is one less spot than there are people. If you are indoors with a small group have people pull chairs in a circle.

Explain that this is a game like musical chairs. Instead of music, however, we will use questions. The person in the center will ask a question starting with "Have you ever...?" An example is, "Have you ever gone kayaking?"

If you have, you must exchange places with someone from another part of the circle who has also been kayaking. You cannot change places with someone to the immediate right or left of you. Only ask about something you have done yourself. Don't ask "Have you been to Moscow?" unless you've been there.

When the first question is popped, people trade places leisurely. But it quickly becomes evident that the person who moves the slowest does not have a place to go except the center of the circle. That person steps to the center of the circle and asks the next question and the fun begins as people dash to find another spot in the circle.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

TAKE A WALK

Ask players to walk around the room. From time to time, call out a particular emotion or character type and have the players change their walk to show the new emotion or character. Encourage players to exaggerate, making their movements and expressions as big as possible. Tell them that anyone watching should be able to guess right away what emotion or character was called out. Help players notice how their movements change instinctively when they act out different emotions. Point out that their hands clench when they are “angry” or that they take smaller steps when they are afraid. Once players get the hand of it, speed up the game to give them practice changing emotions and characters quickly. Don’t forget to debrief at the end of the exercise!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

WHAT IS IT?

Divide the class into small groups and have each group sit in a small circle. Hand one player in each circle an “invisible” ball. Ask the player to decide how big and how heavy the ball is, using facial expression and body language to show this as the group members pass the ball around the circle.

After the ball has rounded the circle, hand the first player an “invisible” lump of clay. Ask the player to mold the clay into an object, silently acting out how to use the object, and then passing the object to the next player in the circle. The next player takes the object, uses it for a different purpose, and then mashes up the clay. Then the player sculpts a new objects and the activity goes so forth around the circle.

Encourage players to make increasingly unusual objects after the obvious ideas have been used up. Make sure that they are all using the objects in an effective manner.

Let your players experiment with the game to see what they come up with. This game is great for developing the communication skills of body language and gestures. Don't forget to debrief!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

BARNYARD SYMPHONY

In this game, you are the conductor of an animal orchestra. Have players stand in a line and give each one a different animal to play, as suggested by the audience. Whenever you point to a player, he must make the sound of his animal. Like a conductor, you can use your other hand to adjust the sound: Move your palm up in a big expansive gesture to mean louder...move your palm down in a smaller, inward gesture to mean softer. Hold your hand open to sustain the sound, and cut it short by closing your fingertips together. The idea is to create a little musical number featuring the sounds of the players' favorite animals.

Variations: Assign emotions instead of animal sounds. Or combine the games so that you have "emotional animals" to work with. (A neurotic chicken, an angry cow, and such!)

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

COMMON GROUND

Form equal sized teams of 3-6 players. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil. Tell teams their challenge is to list everything they can think of that all team members have in common.

For example, attending the same school, prefer the same kind of music, have the same brand of tennis shoes. The only rule is they cannot list similar body parts, i.e. "We all have two arms, etc."

Tell teams they have three minutes to create their lists, so they need to work quickly. To add to the excitement, tell the teams when they have 1 minute left, thirty seconds, and so forth.

When time is up, find out which team has the longest list and ask them to read the similarities they listed. Then ask teams whose similarities have not already been read aloud to read some of theirs.

Discussion:

- How easy was it to discover something in common with another group member?
- How can similarities draw us closer together?
- How can our differences draw us closer together?

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

PASS THE BEANS

The goal of this game is for students to learn about each other and to discover that each person has unique experiences and talents to bring to the group. Form small groups of five people each. Ask members of each group to sit in a circle. Give each person 15 beans (dried). Explain that group members are to try to collect beans by describing their abilities and talents or unique experiences. For example, a person might tell about running in a 15K race, winning an art contest when she was four, or being able to wiggle their ears or recite a famous poem. Remind participants that everything they say must be true!

How to collect beans: After someone shares a unique activity or ability, each group member who hasn't done that activity or doesn't have that ability must give that person ONE BEAN. Have group members take turns listing their unique experience and abilities until every one has shared 10 traits.

Ask participants to report how many beans they have collected. Ask for the person with the most beans to report on different unique activities or abilities mentioned by their group members.

Discussion:

- How easy was it to list things no one else had done?
- If you could choose one of the activities you heard that was done, which one would it be?
- How can our unique experiences make our group stronger?
- How can our shared experiences make our group stronger?

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

PERSONAL TREASURES

Have the group divide themselves onto two sides of the room. On one side, the “pack rats” will gather. On the other side, the “neat freaks” or “throw it out types” will gather. Once divided, each group member will introduce themselves by saying their name, and describing one object they own that they would NEVER throw out!

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

AFFIRMATION BINGO

Group Member: During the workshop today, try to complete as many of the small tasks listed on this “BINGO” card! Place a checkmark in the box after completing a task. We will tally up your scores at the end of the day.

Thank someone for something specific.	Compliment someone else’s hairstyle.	Recite a few lines of a nice poem or song.	Answer someone’s questions about something.	Tell a funny joke.
Give someone a shoulder rub.	Say “I’m glad you are here!”	Share something you have with you (gum, etc.)	Laugh a joke someone makes (even if it’s not funny.)	Ask “How are you?” and really listen to the answer.
Compliment someone on their cooking.	List three good things about someone.	Tell someone you care.	Say “You are loved!”	Share an encouraging thought or story with someone.
Tell someone what he or she adds to the group.	Smile at someone.	Tell someone he or she is wonderful!	Applaud someone who does something nice for you!	Compliment someone’s taste in something (music, art, movies, etc.)
Ask someone about their children.	State a positive wish for someone.	Compliment someone.	Offer someone a chair to sit in.	Offer someone something to drink.

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

EYE CONTACT

Everyone moves around the room, doing whatever they want, until the leader says “FREEZE.” At that moment, each player makes eye contact with another player, even one who is far across the room – and holds it. When everyone has made eye contact, the leader releases the group members to go over and meet the other player they are looking at.

If students already know each other for the most part, assign them the task of finding out something interesting and unique about the person they are matched with. Then, have group members report interesting facts back to the large group.

Adapted from: Sobel, Jeffrey. 1983. *Everybody Wins: Non-competitive Games for Young Children*. Walker & Company: New York.

GROUP THUMB WRESTLING

Thumb wrestling has been a sport for a very long time and is basically competitive. But when a circle of players wrestles with two partners at the same time, within a circle of other wrestlers, it comes out to be cooperative. It really doesn't matter who wins, everyone is having so much fun!

Any number of players can participate. As they stand in a circle, every other player with crossed arms, each holding both neighbors hands in the transitional thumb wrestling position. Now, at start, everyone wrestles! But warn players to be careful of that thumb on the other side of you!

Be sure to recognize the two individuals who are still thumb wrestling after everyone else has been pinned!

Adapted from: Sobel, Jeffrey. 1983. *Everybody Wins: Non-competitive Games for Young Children*. Walker & Company: New York.

PASS THE MASK

With everyone sitting in a circle, one player turns to the next, looks right into his or her eyes, and makes the silliest funny-face he can muster. The second player attempts to make the same face and pass it to the next player and so on around the circle. At the same time, the first player has turned to the person on his other side and has made a different funny face or “mask” and that face is passed in the other direction. Continue until both masks have reached the first player again, or until laughter has stopped the game!

Adapted from: Sobel, Jeffrey. 1983. *Everybody Wins: Non-competitive Games for Young Children*. Walker & Company: New York.

PAPER HANDSHAKE

Here is an effective way to stimulate friendliness, have a lot of fun, get everyone acquainted in an informal way, and put the participants in a party mood.

As each person arrives, the leader presents him with a paper lunch bag and a rubber band and instructs him to place it over his right hand and secure it with a rubber band. Players move around the room greeting and shaking hands with as many others as possible.

A prize is awarded to the first person to wear out his or her paper bag – not by tearing but by shaking hands!

Adapted from: Robb, Mary K. *Making Teen Parties Click*. 1968. Stackpole Books.

CONNECTING CIRCLE

This is a good activity to facilitate group cohesiveness and relationship building, active listening skills, and memory skills. The group members are asked to sit in a large circle. The group leader explains that one way to help remember someone's name is by associating it with something about them. An example can be given: "My name is Phyllis Vita and I love to cook Italian food." The leader then introduces him or herself and states a personal hobby or special interest in the preceding format. The participants are asked to take turns doing the same, and then repeat the name and hobby of the group member who preceded them. This is continued until the entire group has been introduced and each member has stated a special interest.

If a group participant cannot remember all the names and/or special interests of the preceding group members, he or she should be encouraged to ask each participant their name and special interest. This exercise can be a lot of fun but can also create anxiety for participants with a short attention span or poor memory skills. Be sure to create a supportive atmosphere.

Adapted from: *Group Exercises for Enhancing Social Skills and Self Esteem*. 1996. Professional Resource Exchange, Inc. Sarasota, Florida.

DIVERSITY BINGO

The object of this game is for each participant to meet as many people in the room as possible, while learning about and celebrating others' uniqueness. In a timed setting, each participant is to locate another person in the room who can "sign off" on one of the boxes below. Ready? Set? Have fun!

A person over 60 years of age.	A person born and raised on a farm.	A person with a southern accent.	A person who speaks more than one language.	A person who has a disability.
A person who is Catholic.	A person who is a naturalized citizen.	A person of Latino heritage.	A woman.	A person who is left handed.
A person who is from a military family.	A person with red hair.	A person from another country.	A person who has an out of state driver's license.	A person with African ancestry.
A man.	A person with Native North American heritage.	A person with European heritage.	A person raised by a single parent.	A person who is over six feet tall.
A person who is a proud aunt or uncle.	A person who is a vegetarian.	A person of Asian heritage.	A person who is Jewish.	A person who is a proud grandparent.

Source: Anonymous.

GROUP JUGGLE

This exercise is an engaging way to learn the names of team members. The group stands in a large group circle. A bean bag, Kush ball, or similar device that is soft and throwable is tossed around from person to person till a sequence is established.

Everyone gets the ball once. Only the first person to toss the ball gets it twice. The person about to toss the ball calls out his or her name and the name of the person the ball is going to. After the first round ask the team if they think they can toss the ball in exactly the same sequence. Some doubt will be expressed, but it will become apparent that the task is easily done if each person can remember who they tossed the ball to.

Send the ball on another round. The fun starts as more balls, rubber frogs, and plastic doll heads are tossed into the fray. As bric a brac fills the air, the biggest challenge becomes catching a ball between bursts of laughter!

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

TONGUE TWISTERS

As group members arrive, assign them a tongue twister to perform for the group.

Just print these out and cut them into strips to pass out. A great icebreaker!

Source: Anonymous.

Levels of Difficulty with Tongue Twisters

1. SLOW--pace yourself
 2. REGULAR--normal talking speed
 3. FAST--speed up
 4. FAST THREE--say drill three times in a row at fast speed
- Sinful Caesar sipped his snifter, seized his knees and sneezed.
 - Would Wheeler woo Wanda if Woody snoozed woozily?
 - Double bubble gum bubbles double.
 - Miss Smith dismisseth us.
 - Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?
 - Gray geese grazing gaily into Greece.
 - The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick.
 - Old oily Ollie oils old oily autos.
 - This is a zither.
 - Tree twigs. (6)
 - The seething sea ceaseth seething.
 - Lemon liniment. (6)
 - Elisabeth lisps lengthy lessons.
 - Cows graze in groves on grass which grows in grooves in groves.
 - The sixth specific statistic.
 - Rubber baby buggy bumpers.

- Around the rising, rugged rock, the rural rascal ran to win the rural race.
- Moses supposes his toeses are roses, but Moses supposes erroneously.
For nobody's toeses are posies or roses as Moses supposes his toeses to be.
- A tutor who tooted the flute tried to tutor two tooters to toot. Said the two to the tutor, "Is it harder to toot, or to tutor two tooters to toot?"
- A sick sparrow sang six sad spring songs sitting sheltering under a squat shrub.
- A purely rural duel truly plural is better than a purely plural duel truly rural.
- A single solid silver sifter sifts sifted sugar.
- A shiftily snake is selling snake-skin slippers.
- A ship saileth south soon.
- A stewed sow's snout, a sow's snout stewed.
- A shooting suit that's suitable for shooting should be made of a suiting that is suitable. If not made of a suiting that is suitable, then that shooting suit's not suitable for shooting.
- Down the slippery slide they slide sitting slightly sideways; slipping swiftly see them skid on holidays and Fridays.
- Lillith listlessly lisps.
- Mrs. Snelling is selling six sick six-shilling sheep.
- An aluminum animal ambulance ambled aimlessly around Allen Avenue.
- Saul saws logs for see-saws.
- Red leather, yellow leather.

FAVORITE T-SHIRT

Ask attendees to bring (or wear) their favorite T-shirt to the meeting. Once all participants have arrived, ask each person to show the shirt to the group and explain how the T-shirt best resembles their personality or reveals something unique about their experiences.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

PERSONAL BINGO

The host will need to do a little homework before the meeting to find out a few tidbits about each participant (favorite hobbies, books, vacation spots, number of children, favorite foods, etc). Prepare a bingo card (duplicate the card for all attendees to have the same one) with one tid-bit for each square, and instruct the participants to mingle with the group to identify the person for each square. As the information is uncovered, they ask the participant to sign their corresponding square. Keep moving among the guests until all squares are filled. Rules: only open-ended questions may be used. First person who fills card wins a prize.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

SAY CHEESE PLEASE

As each participant arrives, take their picture with a Polaroid type camera and hang their photo on a piece of easel paper in the entrance area of the meeting room in groups of two or three photos (depending on the size of your meeting - you may have only 2 per group or more if the group is large). Use your creativity and decorate the easel paper to extend a "Warm Welcome" and set the tone of the meeting. Once all participants have arrived, ask them to find their partner(s) from the photo display on the easel and spend about 5 - 10 minutes getting to know the person(s). Then have them introduce their partner(s) to the rest of the group and share something they discovered that they have in common.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

FAMOUS PEOPLE AND PLACES

As each participant arrives, tape a 3 x 5 index card on their back with the name of a famous person or city. They must circulate in the room and ask questions that can **ONLY** be answered with a YES or NO to identify clues that will help them find out the name of the person or city on their index card. **EXAMPLES:** Paris, Madonna, Santa Claus, John Wayne, Washington D.C.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

SENSUOUS SAM AND INQUIRING IDA

Ask each participant to choose an adjective that begins with the first letter of their first name and one that really matches their personality. Have them introduce themselves just as they wrote it on the card and allow time for others to ask questions.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

DREAM VACATION

Ask participants to introduce themselves and describe details of the ideal, perfect dream vacation.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

FAVORITE ANIMAL

As the guests arrive, and before you write their names on a name card, ask them to tell you their favorite animal and three adjectives to describe the animal. As they tell you, write the three adjectives on a name tag **BEFORE** their name (omit the name of the animal). Ask them to mingle with the crowd, sharing why these adjectives best describe their own personality.

EXAMPLE: “Loyal, cuddly, playful Dan.”

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

BIRTHDAY PARTNER

Have participants mingle in the group and identify the person whose birth date (not year - just month and date) is closest to their own. Find out two things they have in common.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

LONG LOST RELATIVE

As a group, 1) ask each person to turn to the person on their right and greet him/her as if they really didn't want to be there. Yeah, you know what I mean - you can't wait to get out of here! Then everyone (simultaneously to create lots of fun and excitement) turn to the same person and greet him/her as if (s)he is a long lost, deeply loved relative who has just returned home and you're about to see the person for the first time in years! In fact, you thought you may never see this person again until this very moment. Okay, now ask everyone (again simultaneously) to turn to the same person and greet him/her as if this person just told you that you won the state lottery for 50 million dollars and you have the **ONLY** winning ticket!

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

SPEED NETWORKING

This is a great greeting and departure for a large group who will be attending a seminar for more than one day together and the chances of meeting everyone in the room is almost impossible. Form two parallel lines, one facing the other and on each turn, have the people take one step to the right, allowing them to meet each new person as the lines continues to move very slowly. After each turn, the person at the end of the line, runs to the other end of the line (north end of one line, and south end of the other line to avoid the same people networking twice.)

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

FROZEN TEES

Materials: Plastic storage bag, freezer and large size T- shirts

For each team, you'll need one T- shirt and one plastic storage bag. Place one nicely folded clean T-shirt in each bag; then pour in about 2 cups of water and freeze all of them overnight. If this wasn't done where the event is taking place bring the T-shirt in a cooler filled with ice to keep them frozen. Instruct the teams that they'll be playing an "Ice Breaker" game. Then hand out the bagged T-shirts to each team.

Object: On "Go" the teams will do whatever it takes to get their T-shirts thawed out so that one person from their team can put the T-shirt on! Teams will get creative in their attempts to win. They could run the shirts underwater, put them in the microwave and even pounded the ice out of them. The first team to come back with one person in the T-shirt is the winner.

Adapted from: http://www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm. Lindsay Scheel, Fun-Attic, Inc.

SCAVENGER HUNT

Required: Pencil and paper

Make a list of things for teams to look for through their wallets, purses, and possibly things that are on their person. Divide into teams by tables, pairs, individuals or whatever seems best. Here is a list of ideas of what they can look for but modify the list to your liking. Do not list where they might find these items.

1975 Penny
\$2 bill
\$100 bill
Red ribbon
Hologram
A bird
Pick a few states (from the new quarters) (Delaware, Michigan, Florida)
Pearl
Black sock
Roman numeral
Susan B. Anthony dollar
Picture of a tree
Tic Tac
Paper clip
Measuring tape
Ruler
Peppermint candy
Toothpick
M&M
Tums
Thermometer
White button
Pink nail polish
Screw driver
Body Piercing
Tweezers
Mirror
Ankle bracelet
Red hair
Raisin
Triangle
Charge receipt over \$200

Make a list and copy off the list for each team. Have them check off which items they have: The team with the most checked off wins! At the end, ask them who had some of the extremely odd items, or what creative ways they presented some of the hard to locate items, i.e. there are holograms on credit cards, and Roman numerals on watches.

Adapted from: http://www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm.

NEW AND GOOD

Ask participants to mingle for 15 to 20 minutes, but as they do so, when they meet a new person, ask them to share something “new and good” that happened to them in the last week. This is a quick and energizing icebreaker which can help the facilitator stress the positive aspects of new experiences.

Adapted from: Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC, New York, NY)

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Each participant receives one index card and writes two true statements and one lie about him/herself. The facilitator collects the cards and standing in front of the group selects one card at random to read to the group. The group guesses aloud who wrote that card. If after several guesses, the author is not identified, he is asked to reveal his identity. The facilitator reads another card and the process continues until all the cards are read and their authors identified.

This game helps people get to know each other both personally and professionally. It is also fun to see what people come up with for their "lie!" (The facilitator should also participate.)

Adapted from: Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC, New York, NY)

CAN YOU GUESS?

Materials: Scrap paper, pens, and a paper bag

[This activity works better with groups who are not meeting for the first time.]

Have participants sit in a circle. Give participants a piece of paper and ask them to write one “little known fact” about themselves that the rest of the group doesn’t know. Ask them to fold the paper in two. Collect the papers in the bag. Have a volunteer read one of the papers aloud and try to guess the author’s identity, as well as provide a reason for the guess. If the volunteer guesses correctly, he passes the bag to his right and the process repeats. If he guesses incorrectly, the facilitator gives everyone a chance to guess. If no one guesses correctly, then the author of the secret must reveal who he or she is.

Adapted from: Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC, New York, NY)

THE 4 C's

NAME: _____

**Name a cartoon character, a color, a car, and a type of cuisine (food)
that best describes your personality and why!**

Cartoon Character: _____

WHY? _____

Color: _____

WHY? _____

Car: _____

WHY? _____

Cuisine: _____

WHY? _____

Source: Anonymous.

SECTION II:
TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES

MIRROR IMAGE

Partners stand in front of each other. Partners maintain eye contact for about a minute. Leader announces that the first partner will lead off with a simple movement and the second partner will mirror the same movement. Then, the second partner leads as the first partner follows his movement. The group leader now suggests a new set of movements that may be more difficult to follow. Partners repeat as above with the new set of movements. Continue this exercise until participants are obviously enjoying it. This exercise develops trust, openness, relaxation, and a sense of security.

Source: Anonymous.

MAKING A MACHINE

Group stands in a circle. One person is instructed to begin a **movement** and a **sound**. Second person touches first, and begins a *different* movement and sound. Then, the third person begins yet a different movement and sound, and so on until the entire unit is touching and making different sounds and movements at the same time.

If one person is not touching, he is like a loose screw, and the machine is broken or not whole.

Purpose: Fun way to illustrate team efforts and systems theory (weak link).

Source: Anonymous.

TEAM DRAWING

Materials: Timekeeping device for facilitator, markers, paper

Time: 30 Minutes – 1 hour

Purpose: Promote teamwork. Learn about different ways of approaching a project, & open-mindedness to others' goals and ideas for projects. The collaborative drawing process is about communicating ideas through alternative modes and building a sense of trust and boundaries between partners and a mutual respect of others' ideas. The goal of this particular workshop activity is to stimulate students to share their ideas for a community service project, however leaders can adapt the activity to any topic.

Setup: Markers on table. Each student is given a piece of plain paper preprinted with a topic related to the focus areas of the workshop ("Spirit of Community," "Our Community's Challenges," "Gaps in Services" "Community Service," "Volunteer Florida/Americorps," "High School/High Tech," "Volunteering," "Service Learning," "Civic Responsibility," "Disability Awareness & Inclusion," "Our Group's Priorities," "Youth Leadership," "Work Skills Development," "Job Shadowing," "Furthering Opportunities," "Taking Action.") ***These topics can be changed according to the theme of your workshop.***

Facilitator announces that this will be a timed activity. When "time" begins, each student will begin the activity by using lines, shapes, colors, symbols, pictures and/or words to represent the topic area (listed above) on his/her sheet of paper.

At two minute intervals, Facilitator announces that it is time to "swap" artists, and the students will pass their drawings to the person on their right...and so on, until ideally, each partner will have drawn on each drawing at least once. Silence should be encouraged during the activity as the focus is communicating through the art. During the activity, if drawers ask questions about technique, the best response is usually "It's your choice." If participants say they can't draw, ask them to try to participate by using lines and shapes and color. Tell them this is not a test of artistic prowess and skill, but a test of traits related to getting to know each other, working together, and planning a project.

Conclusion: When the final "time" is called, drawing should cease, and group members are then asked to verbally communicate with the large group about the drawing in their hand. Students do this by holding up the artwork and communicating the concept behind the drawing and how it relates to the assigned topic area. As each speaker reports back to the large group on the drawing, they will display their drawings on the wall or on a table. Reflection can take place throughout the workshop because viewing the artwork of others can stimulate ideas for group members. Keep flipchart paper or a notebook handy, in order to keep a list of students' ideas for their community service project.

Source: Anonymous.

PASS THE HOOP

You remember the phrase “Passing the Buck.” Well, this activity offers and opportunity to pass the hoop. Instead of one person jumping through a hoop, why not make it a team effort?

The group stands in a circle, holding hands. One hula hoop is sent around the circle counterclockwise. Another hula hoop, starting from the other side of the circle is passed clockwise. Passing the hoop from one person to the next without breaking the circle takes teamwork because only arms and bodies are used, not hands or fingers.

As people step through the hoops, laughter builds until it overflows when the two hoops meet!

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

TRANSFORMERS

Have the teams come together so that they can see you and each other and still maintain some space between each other. Ask each team to form the letter “H”. After a minute or two of milling around, the team members will figure out how to arrange themselves in the shape of that letter. Lead the teams in applauding each others’ success and introduce the next task for each team to do in turn.

- Form a zipper, sipping and unzipping
- Arrange yourselves in the shape of a helicopter
- Become a cannon ball fired from a cannon

The ingenuity and speed that teams can display in this activity can be surprising and inspiring!

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

ANIMAL NAME – SOUND – MOTION

After the teams have loosened up and gained some experience working together, this activity provides a fun way to build a group identity. Each team should caucus for a few minutes and come up with an animal name, sound, and motion that the members will all do as a team. Each member can act like the chosen animal or work with the other team members to form the shape of the animal. When teams have their totems, they present what they came up with to the entire group. Along with a good laugh or two, the results provide identities that the teams can refer to throughout the rest of the training.

You'll have teams that bark like dogs, roar like lions, or hiss like snakes. The popular eagle totem is expressed by people flapping their arms and making bird-like cries. As corny as all this may seem, the teams actually enjoy the exercise and often adopt the animal names for the rest of the training!

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

BALLOONS

Activities using balloons can provide lots of fun and lots of laughs. Have the group form a circle. Have each person blow up two or three balloons.

Teambuilding Ideas: Toss them out into the circle and have the group keep them up in the air. Have the group keep them off of the ground without using their hands! Try passing the balloons around the circle, again without using hands. Provide one balloon for each person, without using hands or forearms, the group finds a way to keep all the balloons off the ground. Have the group pop all the balloons by squeezing them between bodies with no hands or fingernails allowed.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

BIRTHDAY LINEUP

Without talking or using obvious hand signs or making any kind of noise as a signal, the team must line up by birthday month (not specific birth date). January is at the head of the line, with December at the end. When the team has lined up, have them call off their birthdays giving only month and day. Be prepared to be impressed with how close they come to the right order. And now everyone knows who has a birthday coming up. Happy birthday!

Other versions of this game have people lining up by height or chose size with their eyes closed. Or you can ask each person to call out the name of an animal without repeating any of the names other people have chosen. Have people line up, eyes closed, by size with the smallest animal first in line, making only the sound that an animal would make.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

MULTISENSORY TRUST WALK

The theme for this activity is building trust. The task at hand is leading a “blind” (blindfolded) person non-verbally.

The name for the activity is actually a misnomer, since we are taking away one of the senses. However, it is amazing how this heightens the blindfolded person’s other senses such as touch and smell. The group is paired into teams of two. One member is blindfolded and is taken for a walk by his partner.

Signals are worked out between the partners before the blindfold is put on. After the blindfold there is no talking. Encourage people to request the specific behaviors and nonverbal communication that will enable them to trust their partner. Some people want to be guided by hand claps without being touched. Others may want to be guided in the prescribed fashion – a step behind and to the side of the blind person with a hand on his upper arm.

The person who can see carefully leads his partner around obstacles, stopping to let him feel what is in front of him. Doing the walk without talking deepens the uniqueness of the experience. If you want to be creative, use some rope and tables that the pairs have to crawl over or under.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

TALKING BEHIND YOUR BACK

Materials: Piece of paper, washable markers, tape, pencils

Each person writes his/her name on a piece of paper lightly in pencil; then help one another tape the piece of paper on each persons back (NAME NOT SHOWING). Using (washable) markers, each person must go around the room and write something about that person on their back. (Participants need to be instructed that the comment must be positive - funny is okay too, but keeping the messages positive is essential.) The leader then removes all the papers and lays them out for everyone to view. How well do you think you know yourself or what others think about you? What would they say behind YOUR back? After reading them, participants may predict which one they think may have been on their back. Then, everyone can turn them over and find their own, and hopefully keep it, feeling great about what others had to say about them “behind their back”.

Adapted from: http://www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm, by Charla Lindsey.

TINY TEACH

The theme of this activity is learning something from a peer. The task will be for team members to teach another person something new.

Ask the team members to pair up. Ask them to teach each other something that will take only a few minutes to learn. The lesson could be a skill, like how to use a blade of grass as a whistle, or it could be intellectual knowledge, like a motto in Latin. After they teach each other ask the pairs to demonstrate to the group what they learned.

Knowledge has been considered power since the time of the Greeks. In some organizations some people try to gain power by hoarding knowledge. In a healthy organization, people are willing to share their knowledge and expertise freely. People realize that the more they learn from each other the more productive they are as a team.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

FOUR CORNERS

The theme of this activity is appreciating different styles. The task will be to go stand near the word you relate most to. Set up will include four different poster boards or flip charts with one of the following words written on each of them (or any words you choose that fit the theme of your workshop):

- STRUCTURE
- RELATIONSHIPS
- MEANING
- ACTION

Ask the participants to go stand near the word that they most relate to. When everyone has selected a word, ask each group to discuss among themselves why they chose the word they did and how that word relates to the way they prefer to work. After several minutes of discussion, ask each team member to report what they came up with.

The workshop theme can be altered by changing the four words. You can also use this as an icebreaker, by putting funny or interesting words/phrases on the posters.

Discussion: If your group has taken a personality or learning styles assessment, it may be apparent that the four words relate to four different ways of relating to the world. For some people, order and structure are important parts of how they live their lives. As a reflection of this inclination, they often choose careers in organizations like the armed forces. For others, developing and maintaining relationships is their primary focus. Frequently they choose careers in areas such as sales or training. There are people who make analyzing and understanding the nature of things a priority. They are attracted to fields like engineering and science. Others with a just-do-it attitude are more focused on action. People who build things or drive race cars can have this orientation.

The four words can stimulate a useful discussion about the different ways people approach work. As a reflection activity, ask some of the following questions:

- Was anyone surprised by the preferences expressed by the other groups?
- Which group would your group work best with and why?
- Which group do you find the most challenging to work with and why?
- What made you choose the word you did?
- How does this choice reflect the way you work or deal with others?
- What questions would you like to ask the other groups to help you better understand the way they think?

It is tempting to think that others are just an imperfect version of ourselves. But people are different, in ways we can't explain or predict, because that is who

they are. Each of our minds works differently. When you try to understand where the other person is coming from, it is easier not to take our differences so personally.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

BACK TO BACK

Pads of paper, felt tip pens, copies of drawing on next page (or you can make up your own...best to keep it simple.)

The themes of this activity are coaching for results, listening, describing details, and following instructions. The task at hand is to draw a picture like your partner is holding without being able to see it.

Ask team members to pair up and sit back to back in chairs. One member is given a pad and pen, and the other member is given a piece of paper with a figure drawn on it. (See figure on next page.) The person with the figure drawing is the coach who guides his partner in drawing the figure without letting him see the original.

Rules: The language the coach uses can include symbols and metaphors but not a geometrical description of the figures. For example, do not use the words "square" or "circle" as you explain how to draw the figure. Instead use "box" or "shaped like an orange."

When the time is up (1 minute – 5 minutes, depending on your group) let the pairs compare the drawing to the original figure and discuss the results. If appropriate, have the pairs switch roles and try their hand at a new drawing.

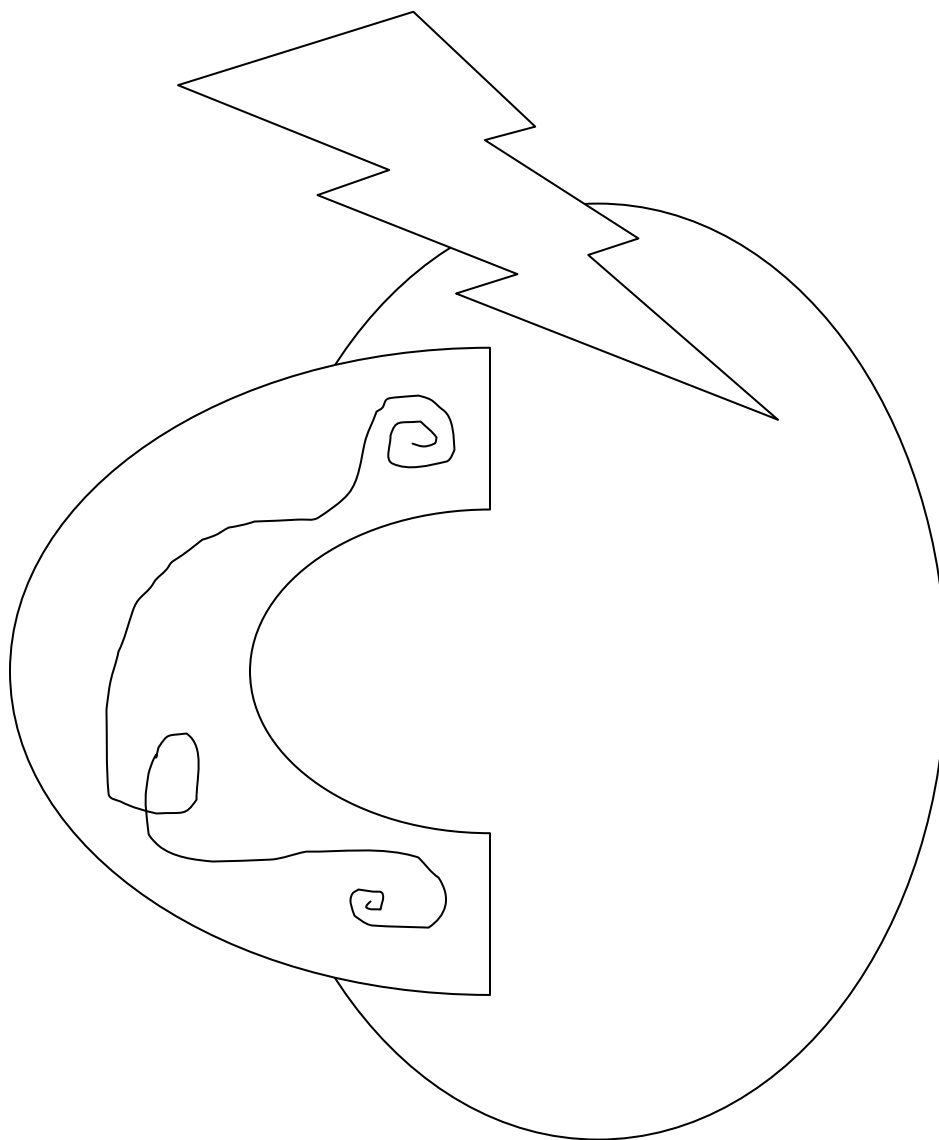
Discussion: Use this exercise to emphasize some of the challenges in communicating a vision. The difference between what one person says and what the other person hears is graphically and often dramatically represented. The exercise also brings out the challenge of giving good directions. No matter how clear they are to the giver, if the directions are not clear or are misinterpreted by the person receiving them, the results will be something other than what was desired. Being concise and checking for understanding are two of the keys to success. Good coaches know the importance of giving step by step direction and encouragement.

- What did your partner say that helped you draw the figure?
- What did you tell your partner that helped you get the information you needed to draw the figure?
- Is there a situation at work or school where communication is critical yet it's not possible to do it face to face?
- When giving instructions, how can you make sure you get the results you want?
- When giving instructions to an employee, how do you check for understanding?
- What are the characteristics of a good coach?

Some pairs will do well, some wont. Since people tend to compare themselves with others, the pairs that had trouble reproducing the drawing may feel a bit disheartened. This is a good time to focus on the lessons learned. If the pairs who came up short learned something, then they had significant success no matter what their drawings looked like.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

BACK TO BACK DRAWING



GROUP GROPE

The theme of this activity is team productivity. The task is to find 3 objects as a group while blindfolded.

Materials: Masking tape, 3 small objects or toys, blindfolds for all group members.

Ask the team to form a compact group. Show them the objects that it will be their job to find. Ask them to step a little closer and to put on their blindfolds. (Each object is about the size, shape, and texture of something that can be held in one hand.) Let them know before they put on their blindfolds that you will be running masking tape around the group several times. Tell the team that the 3 objects they were just shown are within 30 feet of their location.

Inform the team that without breaking the masking tape or removing the blindfolds, their job is to find the objects and identify what they are (for example, a tennis ball, a plastic dinosaur, etc.) The trainer should act as a timekeeper for the group and should only allow 10-15 minutes for this activity. Keep urging the team to move as quickly as possible without breaking the tape.

Precautions: Conduct this activity in an area where the ground is level and is free of debris, holes and rocks. Indoors is fine in a very large room. Remind individuals along the outside of the group to keep their hands up (so they don't wander into anything). They are the "bumpers" for the rest of the group.

By leaving the taped circle, the team can form a line and quickly sweep the area to find the objects. You may have to repeat the rule about "not breaking the tape" a few times before people realize they can actually leave the group by going under/over the tape but not breaking it. At some point, most groups realize that they do not all have to stay bunched up inside the tape. Notice how assumptions drive how the group attempts to complete the task. At some point, the lightbulb will go off and the team will attempt to remove the tape without breaking it.

Discussion

- Discuss how deadlines and time pressures affect the problem-solving process.
- Were different ideas considered by the group members, or did the group slowly grope its way around the area.
- Were rules followed that were never stated? Where did these rules come from? (Assumptions).
- Did the group realize that not breaking the tape did not mean they had to put up with an uncomfortable situation?
- How often do our assumptions determine how we organize ourselves to perform a task?

- What assumptions do you make at school or home that are keeping you from performing at your best?

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

BLIND OBJECT ASSEMBLY

Equipment:

12-20 large LEGO blocks

150' rope or roll of surveyor tape to form a 15' – 20' circle on the floor

6 noisemakers

A diagram of the assembled blocks by color, size, and position

Set Up:

This is an activity designed for about 10 people. Two sets of large plastic building blocks are placed inside a circle marked off with rope. Ask those who are willing to work wearing blindfolds to step inside the circle. Even up the groups so that the number of people inside and outside the circle are about the same. Ask everyone to study the assembled blocks. They cannot take notes or draw a sketch. After they have committed the arrangement of blocks to memory, ask the people inside the circle to put on their blindfolds. Disassemble the blocks and scatter them around the circle. With limited help from their sighted teammates, it is up to the blindfolded people to put the blocks together in the original order.

Conditions:

When the planning time is up and the blindfolds go on, the people outside the circle can communicate with the people inside the circle only by using noisemakers. The blindfolded people can talk to each other and ask questions of the people outside of the circle. The sighted people cannot touch anything inside the circle. Once the blocks are disassembled the sighted people cannot talk to each other except at a designated area away from the circle. No one may take notes or draw a sketch. Allow the team ten minutes to plan, and 15 minutes to reassemble the blocks.

Discussion:

When time is up, the team members take off their blindfolds and are given the diagram of the original assembly. Allow the team to self evaluate their own performance first. Their success level (similar to other areas in life) is relative to how well they organized themselves. The ability to deal with ambiguity is an essential trait in today's ever changing world. This activity is a starting point for a discussion about how we can best strengthen and utilize this trait.

- Did the team break the task down into subtasks?
- Did anyone inside the circle have a partner outside the circle? How did they work together?
- Did the members who finished one subtask help others who were not finished?

- Were the communication signals understood by everyone on the team?
- Was there competition among team members?
- How difficult was it to ask the right question so you could come up with the answer you needed?

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

STAR WARS

Lay out rope circles of 1 – 3 feet in diameter on the ground (for now, there should be enough rope circles to equal one per participant). Tell the group they are going to play “Star Wars”, a problem solving game. Tell them there are only 2 rules to the game:

- Put your two feet entirely in a circle.
- When the leader says “Change!”, move to another circle and put your two feet entirely in it.

Begin the game, sending participants to a circle. After each time you say “Change!”, casually pick up one or two of the rope circles while unoccupied. As the number of circles decreases, the speed at which people dash around will increase. (If team members fight with you for the rope circles, invoke the third rule that “no one will fight the trainer for rope circles.”)

When the last circle or two are left, people will be struggling to cram their feet into it. As you feel so inspired, repeat the rules and repeat that this is a problem solving initiative. At some point the light bulb will go off and that person will sit down with their feet in someone else’s circle. Others will follow and the problem is solved. Sit down with them, putting your feet in a circle, and let the debriefing begin.

Discussion

- What assumptions did you make when you first heard the rules?
- Did you unconsciously make up rules that were not there? How did that limit your options? (Some people will try to jump from circle to circle, assuming their feet cannot touch the ground.)
- Before you could increase your options, what did you have to do? Were you ever afraid to look foolish?
- Did anyone think of requesting a time out for brainstorming? Did you take a personal time out for brainstorming? (Often the pressure of the task holds us hostage to doing things the same way over and over.)
- Did each person approach the problem on his own or was there an effort made to use the team approach?
- What assumptions caused you problems? Can that happen at work or school?
- How did the breakthrough finally occur?

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

EGG DROP

The theme of this activity is to promote team spirit through competition. The task is to build a device that will allow an egg to drop safely from a specified height.

- The group is divided into sub teams of 4 or more members each. The teams are given the task of building a protective device that will allow an egg to drop safely to the ground from a specified height. Before the sub teams launch their eggs, they each give a marketing presentation on their devices to the entire group. Designate a common meeting place for the teams. They cannot visit each other's workstations, but they can meet at this place to confer with each other.

Conditions:

- The drop zone is an area marked out on grass or carpet.
- The height of the drop zone is specified by the trainer (may we recommend 10 – 20 feet.)
- Each team gives its presentation and then drops its egg to applause or groans, depending on the results.
- The categories for the applause by the large group are best marketing presentation, most innovative design, and successful operation.
- Time – 40 minutes.
- Straws, masking tape, raw eggs

Debriefing:

This activity gives team members the chance to have some fun working together in a small group. Look at the impact of competition versus collaboration on the task.

- What was the original goal?
- Did that goal change for some of the teams?
- Did that change result in competition or collaboration?
- How did that affect the outcome of the project?

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The theme of this activity is overcoming barriers to communication.

Divide the room in half with some type of barrier so the teams cannot see each other. Both teams are provided with a supply of building materials. Brief each team separately. Without talking to each other, except at a designated site outside the room, the two teams must construct two halves of a bridge that meets when the divider is removed.

The two groups will self-evaluate the resulting span between them by using the following criteria (or you can ask the students to come up with their own criteria/values):

- Alignment
- Stretch
- Ingenuity of design
- Beauty

Suggested equipment:

- LEGO's
- Paper
- Cardboard
- Wood
- Sticks
- Tape
- Paper plates
- Cups

Time:

- 45 minutes

Conditions:

- The bases of the initial bridge spans must be behind the tape that is several feet from the barrier.
- Each team can communicate with the other team only at a meeting site designated by the trainer. Team members should not look at the other teams work while in route to that site.
- No more than two representatives from a team may go to the meeting site at the same time.
- The length, width, and height of the bridge are up to the builders.
- One volunteer from each team should be designated as an "observer." This volunteer's job is to watch how the teams operate both internally and with each other. They make no comments or suggestions. As insiders, they will often have valuable observations and insights that the trainer, an outsider, may have missed.

Debriefing:

- How successful were the teams, based on the criteria/values?
- To what extent did the team cooperate?
- How did that level of cooperation or the lack of it affect the outcome of the project?
- How effective was communication between the two groups?
- How did the level of communication or miscommunication affect the outcome?

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

ACADEMY AWARDS

The theme of this activity is teambuilding through a creative process. Each team will create a 2-3 minute video or live performed skit on a given topic. The time frame is 2-4 hours or you can break this workshop into 2 or more mini-workshops.

Each team is supplied access to a video camera (optional), assorted props and a film topic. The topic can be a commercial about your HS/HT program, for example. Or the commercial could be an ad promoting personal characteristics of success, employability skills, a certain bill or law the group supports, etc. Be creative! The film could also be in the style of a classic genre, such as the good guys against the bad guys, superhero, etc. The more opportunity there is to ham it up, the better! Each team must script its film, assign roles, film the script, and turn in the final product in the allotted time. (If video cameras are not available, the students can create skits to be performed in front of the rest of the large group.) There will no doubt be a roomful of laughs that everyone can enjoy. Although the activity could be debriefed, it is best done as a team spirit exercise!

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

ONE WORD STORY

Players stand side by side in a line and take turns telling a story about a topic chosen by you. However, each player will only speak one word in turn. For example, player one says, "Once." Player two says, "upon." Player three says "a." Player four says "time." And so on. Once you get to the end of the line, begin again at the start of the line. Stop the story when it has reached a satisfying ending.

Remind the players to always listen so they will be ready. Encourage them to be quick. This will help them to work together more efficiently as a team. Tell them to "sell" their word, make it sound important in the story. Don't be afraid to put in a strange word, if it fits! Try not to have too much of a story planned in your mind, because you will only have one word to get it going.

Debriefing:

This is a great warm up game to teach players that they have to work together to reach a goal because no one person can be in control. Ask each player what he or she originally thought would happen in the story. Have team members debrief by drawing an illustration of the story. Compare drawings and interpretations of the group story (Paper, colored pencils, markers.)

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

BUS STOP

Players will act out a scene at a bus stop. Each player is given a moment to make up his own character and motive (the reason why his character has come to the bus stop.) The point of the game is to see how the different types of characters react to each other.

Make sure the character types are genuine and the interactions are true to the story that develops. Encourage the players to focus on creating a scene that goes somewhere interesting, rather than just showing off wacky characterizations. Encourage the players not to break concentration or change the character's motivation.

For groups without much experience creating characters, you can give the players the character you want them to play, and have them draw the different characters from a hat. (Idea: you could use this activity as a disability sensitivity training re: transportation issues.)

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

HITCH HIKER

Create a “car” setting by placing 4 chairs (2 in front, 2 in behind) in front of the large group (on the “stage”). Invite four players to get into the car and give them all the same character type to play (rock musicians for example). The players should begin acting a scene as that character type, until another player approaches with her thumb in the air, asking to hitch a ride. The driver pulls over to pick up the hitchhiker.

Now there is a clockwise rotation of players: The driver leaves the car, and the player behind him moves up to the driver’s seat. The other person in the back seat moves over behind the driver. And the front passenger moves to the vacant back seat, making room for the hitchhiker in the front passenger seat. When the hitchhiker sits down, she begins acting out a completely new character type. The other three players must instantly match the new character type, and play it until the next hitchhiker comes along.

Encourage the players to play characters that are in the same *category* as the hitchhiker’s, not the exact same person with the exact same movements. For instance, if the new category is a pirate captain, the rest of the players could be pirates or ship mates, cabin boy, and perhaps a pirate about to mutiny.

Make sure the hitchhiker doesn’t just come in and say “I’m a...” The idea is for the hitchhiker to play the character so well that he doesn’t have to say what it is. The other players should also just become the character type adopted by the hitchhiker without having to say what they think it is out loud.

This game is a favorite with audiences, but to make it work, remind your players that their characters have to be really big!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

IMPROV OLYMPICS

The audience or leader suggests a basic household chore or occupation and the players present it as if it were an Olympic event! Two players should be the commentators for the event. They set up the scene by describing the competition and introducing the other players, who play the contestants, a coach, or whatever is needed to complete the scene. You can also have judges scoring the events and post event interviews with the athletes! Students who are familiar with sports television will have an easier time with this game. Encourage the sportscasters and athletes to work together to shape the event/skit. Give them a few seconds before starting to decide as a group what type of event they want to run: power, speed, synchronized. You can adapt the game by playing the commentator yourself. Be creative!

Make sure everyone knows what type of competition this is: a test of strength, a race, a synchronized sport?

Several gimmicks work well in this game. The most common is having a tragedy take place during the event and watching the players overcome it.

For instance, in a synchronized dishwashing competition, one athlete might accidentally drop a plate, which smashes on her foot causing her pain, forcing her teammate to pretend to drop a plate on his foot and hop round faking pain to match his partner. Often the commentators will review some of the event using slow motion. This works well and gives the audience a chance to see “just what went wrong.”

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

PUZZLE PIECE SEARCH

Required: Precut puzzle pieces and open table

You can do this with a pre-made puzzle or use a large unwanted poster and cut into several pieces depending on the number of players. Hide pieces throughout play area while players are out of the room. Have a card table or work area where the puzzle can be reassembled. When a player finds a piece they are to bring it to the table to fit it together with the other pieces. (When a player locates a piece, here or she may win a prize.) Once they have found where that piece goes they are off searching for another piece of the puzzle.

At the end, have the players think about all those pieces, each one a different shape, size and color but they all come together to become one big picture.

Adapted from: http://www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm.

STUNT DOUBLE

Invite two group members to the front of the room and have the audience suggest an everyday activity for them to do in a scene, perhaps 'cleaning the house.' The players should silently think up lots of reasons how everyday activities can be extremely dangerous (for example, a monster in the closet, a man-eating vacuum, exploding socks in the drawer, etc.)

Explain that because these tasks are so dangerous the players have decided to hire a professional Hollywood stunt person (a third player) to do all the hard parts!

Within the act, the players set up the dangerous aspect. "I want to clean the refrigerator, but I just remembered I put a 600-pound Bengal tiger in there!" Then they call out, "Stunt Double!" This signals the stunt double to come onstage and act out the dangerous task. When the stunt double is done, she leaves and the original players return, continuing the scene seamlessly, acting as if they survived the ordeal heroically and in true Hollywood fashion, taking all the credit.

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

HELPING HANDS

Set up a table with supplies for a messy project.

Ideas:

- Decorating a cake
- Making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Folding a paper airplane
- Bandaging a wound

Invite three group members to the table to complete the messy project. However, one person will be the “body”, one person will be the “hands”, and one person will be the “customer”, the person who the task is being done for, i.e. the bride awaiting her wedding cake, the hungry boy watching his PB&J sandwich being prepared, the 4 year old wanting a paper airplane, or the wounded patient.

First, the body player stands at the table and puts his hands behind his back. The hands player stands behind him and puts her arms through the body players bent elbows, creating the illusion that the hands player’s arms belong to the body player’s body. The two players must work together to maintain the illusion. The body player must justify what the hands are doing, i.e. watch, nod, made comments. The reverse is also true, if the body starts talking about something, the hand gestures need to match this! Make sure the hand gestures are big and expressive. The straight man can even set up funny bits for the body and hands to do. “Oh, I don’t like grape jelly, I want orange marmalade.” His comments often make him the target for the messy aspects of the scene.

The audience loves the silliness of this game!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

THE ORACLE

Line up three to four players one behind the other, facing the audience at center stage. The player in the back of the line should stand, the middle person should kneel, and the front person should sit cross legged on the floor. Now you have heads on heads, like a totem pole. This is the "Oracle" and it can answer any questions asked of it.

Invite questions from the audience, and the members of the Oracle should answer the questions in the style of the One Word Story activity (Page ?), with each player adding one word to the answer until it is done!

For the Oracle players: Listen carefully to the question asked and try to make sure your response answers the questions in some way. Use your arms to give the Oracle the feeling of being a larger than life mystical creature. Move your arms when speaking and then drop arms when finished. This not only looks cool, but it lets the audience know when you are done with a question.

Be ready for lots of laughs!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

CAREER OBJECTIVES

Bring a group of four players to the front of the class and assign each of them a different career character to play (see list below).

- Astronaut
- Used Car Salesman
- Pirate
- Librarian
- Chef
- Cosmetologist
- Doctor
- Lawyer
- Television News Broadcaster
- Meteorologist
- Etc.

Then, give the group a problem they must overcome or a goal they must accomplish as a group. Some ideas are:

- Ending World Hunger
- Going Green
- Preventing vandalism in the neighborhood
- Fighting discrimination
- Electing the best president
- Working against sweatshop labor
- Fighting terrorism
- Reducing the cost of fuel, promoting alternative energy
- Picketing for higher wages
- Ending the war

Once the activity begins, each character has to use his individual talents to make it happen. Encourage the student to be the character (don't be normal!) – Exaggerate your characterization. At the same time, work with the other players. Watch what they are doing and interact with them to develop a scene. The interest lies in seeing the characters doing activities they wouldn't ordinarily be involved in.

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

CAREER SWAP

Ask the group to suggest different occupations and write the suggestions on a flip chart. Ask for two - four student volunteers, and choose an occupation from the list, and have the students act out as workers doing those jobs. After about 1 – 2 minutes of acting the part, you will say “FREEZE” and the characters will stop and freeze in the positions they are in. When you call “FREEZE,” you will follow it with a new occupation. No matter what physical position they are in, students must immediately switch to acting out the new job. They will have to justify why they would be in those positions, using reasons that make sense with the new job.

For instance, players might be coal miners digging, and then have to switch to fashion models. They could explain that they are bent over to adjust their designer shoes...etc.

Discussion:

- What did you like?
- What was your favorite occupation displayed?
- Who had the best ideas to justify the positions they were in when switching to a new career?

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

SHOPPING MALL

Like the game on the previous page (Career Swap), this game will have participants freezing and changing mid-act.

Have the group call out their favorite store in the mall. Write these on a flip chart. Try to get a diverse list of stores (i.e. not all department stores or not all electronic stores). Choose 4 group members. The group members are instructed to begin acting out a scene in the first store on the list. Some group members will work in the store, some will be shopping, some will be children, sales reps, etc. As the scene goes on, (2 – 4 minutes) call out the name of another store on the list. The players are instantly transported to the new store, no matter what position they are in or what they are saying or what they are about to buy! Remember, going from Radio Shack to Victoria's Secret is always fun! Encourage students to have big body gestures and speak clearly. Have fun!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

THE RETURN DEPARTMENT

You need five players, one very talented actor to play a store clerk, and four volunteers to play unsatisfied customers. Send the customers out of earshot, and ask the audience to suggest four products that a person might return to a store because they are defective.

Fun examples:

A set of dentures

A toilet seat, etc.

Anything goes!

Announce the first product to the audience and the store clerk, and then bring the first customer back “onstage” to begin the scene.

The customer is bringing the products back to the return department. The clerk at the return department asks the customer to explain how the product is defective. This will be difficult, because the acting customer, doesn't know what product the audience chose! The task is for the customer to guess what product he is returning while playing out the scene. The clerk asks the customer questions about the product, giving the customer SUBTLE clues about what it is.

Finally, when the customer is able to name the item he wants to return, the clerk gladly takes it back and the skit ends, beginning with a new irritated customer and a new product!

Adapted from: Bedore, Bob. 2004. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults*. Hunter House: Alameda, California.

SILENT TOWER

Participants are divided into groups of four. Each group receives a bag of thirty gumdrops and thirty toothpicks in a bag. Make one extra bag with only 30 gumdrops.

Explain that each group will work together to build as tall a tower as possible. Towers must be free standing. Every group member must contribute to the building effort. Groups have ten minutes to complete their towers.

Here's the catch: There must be no written or verbal communication! All the work must proceed in silence.

First, give the instructions and answer any questions group members may have. Then, hand out bags of materials to each group. Bags must not be opened until you give the signal for silence. When you give the signal for total silence, groups may begin building.

Give 5-minute, three minute, and one minute warnings. After you signal the end of 10 minutes, measure the height of each tower. Then declare a winner and present the extra bag of gumdrops as the Tallest Tower Trophy!

Debriefing:

- What did you like about this activity?
- What didn't you like about this activity?
- How did you work together as a group?
- How could you have improved?
- Were you a leader or a follower? Why?
- How was this game like being a part of a family or other type of group?

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

BLACKOUT MUSICAL CHAIRS

Play this game in a completely dark room, or have your kids play blindfolded. Set up a circle of chairs, all facing out. Place one less chair in the circle than you have kids in the game. Tell them you will be playing “Musical Chairs” but with a twist. Unlike regular musical chairs, this one is played in the dark! Ask kids to form a circle around the circle of chairs and to stand with their arms folded across their chests. When the music starts, kids are to march slowly around the circle in a clockwise direction while maintaining the crossed-arm position. When the music stops, kids will have five seconds to find a chair. Anyone still standing or sitting on someone else when the light comes on after five seconds will be eliminated from the game. After each turn, remove a chair from play as in regular musical chairs.

Debriefing:

- What did you like about this game?
- What did you not like about this game?
- How did it feel to be eliminated from play?
- Can you think of a time in life when you had that feeling?
- How did it feel to be the “last man standing”?

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

ROLL ROLL ROLL YOUR ROLL

Divide students into 4 sitting rows. Urge them to scoot around until there are no large gaps between them and it will be easy to pass along a valuable item that can't be dropped or broken.

Then, give the person on the left end of each row a roll of toilet paper. Explain that teams must unroll the toilet paper as they pass it down the row, making sure NOT to break the paper! They may not toss the roll, they must pass it from one person to the next. In addition, everyone must say their full name while passing the roll.

If the toilet streamer breaks, team members must send the roll back to the first person in the row and start over. When the roll reaches the end of a row, the last person must stand and hold the toilet paper roll above his or her head, all without tearing the paper! Whoever stands first with an empty roll above their heads is the winner!

Play the game until every team has finished unrolling its paper to the end of the row. Then tell the kids that you don't really want to waste the toilet paper so teams are now to race to see which row can roll the paper back up again. Then, you have a second winning team!

Playing music in the background of this activity really enhances it! (Think Chariots of Fire or The Mission Impossible theme song.)

Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders*. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.

GOSSIP

This is a funny game that shows how easily the truth can be twisted. The group sits around in a circle when the first person, starts the game by softly whispering to his neighbor a rather long made-up remark such as “Did you hear about Mary Brown and Suzy Q taking their dogs to the vets the other day for shots?” The receiver of the news repeats the remark to his closest neighbor and the news circulates the room. When the message gets around to the last person in the circle, he or she must stand and deliver the message to the entire group. 99 % chance his message is completely different than the original message. (Have the person who delivered the original message confirm this!)

Adapted from: Robb, Mary K. *Making Teen Parties Click*. 1968. Stackpole Books.

TAKE MY ADVICE

Give each player a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to sit in a circle. Ask each player to write at the top of their paper a difficult problem that needs solving. The problems can be real or made up. Have the players pass their papers to the next player in the circle. Then, have the players read the problem written on the paper and write a short solution under the problem. Solutions can be sincere OR humorous! After everyone has written a solution to the problem, ask the players to fold the papers so that the problem is visible, but the solution is hidden. Once the papers are folded, have the players pass them to the next player in the circle. Have those players write their solutions underneath, again folding before passing. After the papers have been passed 4 times, pass the papers once more. Have the person holding the papers read aloud the problem and all the advice. The participants should get a few laughs and maybe some great advice!

Source: Anonymous.

MEETING THE PRESIDENT

Materials:

- Aluminum foil (enough for each student to have approximately 3 - 5 feet)
- Fuzzy, colorful craft pompoms
- Glue
- Pipe Cleaners (multicolored)

Instruct the group that they will be making a hat to wear if they were going to meet the ultimate leader: THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES! Try not to give more instruction than that and see what the students come up with. Give them 20 minutes to complete the hats.

You will be amazed at the designs and the insight behind the ideas!

Have each student model their hat to the group and explain it's significance. Don't forget to take a group photo of all the wonderful hats!

Source: Florida Youth Leadership Forum.

SECTION III:
WORKSHOP WRAP UP ACTIVITIES

TEAM CHEER

Whenever the team has a “win,” something people did that should be celebrated, gather the group in a circle and lead a cheer. The cheer begins with hands in the circle and a yell that starts low and ends in a high volume outburst. The yell could be the classic “GO TEAM!” ending in an exchange of high fives or a loud drawn out “YES!” done in conjunction with a quick pump of the fist. The best cheers are the ones that emerge spontaneously from a shared experience of success.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

NAME POEM AFFIRMATIONS

Pass out the worksheet on the following page to each group member. Have the group member write the letters of his/her name in the boxes to the left. After each person has written his name, have the group members pass their papers to the person on their right. The task for the person receiving the paper is to write a positive trait poem about the person. Each line will begin with the letters of their name. Allow ten – fifteen minutes for this activity. Have a few group members volunteer to read the name poem they created for their neighbors. Poems are finally presented to the person they are about.

Source: Anonymous.

NAME POEM AFFIRMATIONS

SOLO

When students come to a workshop, they often show up with a lot of outside “baggage.” They also arrive “pre-wired” with accessories now a days: laptops, iPods, video games, cell phones, etc. The workshop, packed with activities, sometimes offers no let-up from everyday life. At a successful workshop, a great deal of learning will have occurred in a short period of time. Sometimes this learning can provide life-changing lessons. Before leaving the place where these wonderful things have happened, a period of quiet for shifting gears and integration can ease the transition.

“Solo” is best saved as one of the last activities. Ask the participants to find a place where they can sit quietly alone and undisturbed for 15-20 minutes. During that time, invite them to reflect on the day (or days) of the program. As them to be aware of any thoughts or images that come to mind.

With so much focus on “doing” there can be a great benefit in shifting to a few minutes of “being.”

When time is called, gather the group back together and allow people to share whatever they care to. For some, the few minutes of quiet has created an opening for profound inspiration, and you will experience a reflection session with a great impact.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

HIGHS & LOWS

Another way of summing up at the end of a conference is to hand out index cards and have the participants jot down:

My low point was...

My high point was...

Have them call out answers & discuss if necessary. This is a great reflective tool as well as an informal workshop evaluation for the event planners!

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

SNAPSHOT

We all take snapshots in our minds of the events that make an impact on us. Put your group in a circle and ask:

- What mental image from the program stands out in your mind?
- If you could make a postcard of that image, who would you send it to?
- What would you write on the back?

Another version of this reflection tool is to actually hand out index cards, pencils and markers. Then, ask the participants to make postcards that address the answers to the above questions. Then, ask volunteers to share. Review and discuss.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

TAKE AWAYS

At the end of a training program, whether it's been one day or one year, it is useful to reflect on what you learned and even more important, what you will do with what you learned.

Go around the group and give each member a turn to speak to one or more of the following questions:

- Name one thing you will do differently when you leave here today.
- What is the most important thing you are going to take away from this experience?
- What will you commit to doing to make sure what you learned and achieved here is not lost?

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

STRENGTHS FEEDBACK

Have the group sit in a circle. Begin by turning to the person on your right and give them positive feedback about something they did during the workshop. Focus the feedback on positive things about the person, especially anything you saw him or her do or say that you appreciated. The person on the receiving end is required to accept the comment by saying no more than "Thank you." Start with the person on your right and go around the circle until everyone has a turn.

An adaptation of this activity is to draw names out of a hat at the BEGINNING of the workshop. At this time, participants are instructed to silently observe the person whose name they drew, looking for positive things. Participants are instructed not to divulge who they are observing. During the closing circle time, the affirmation is stated about the partner who was being observed during the workshop.

Adapted from: Snow, Harrison. 1997. *Indoor/Outdoor Team-building Games for Trainers: Powerful Activities from the World of Adventure-Based Team-Building and Ropes Courses*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

APPENDIX I:
CONVERSATION STARTERS

STORY STARTERS

Compiled by Sally Ash

*Great ice-breaker topics when speaking/working with the elderly,
or for gathering stories for any type of oral history project.

Tell about something you built, designed, or made as a youth.
Tell me about the most special Valentine you ever gave / received.
Tell me about your first date.
Tell me about your first kiss.
Tell me what you did on Valentine's Day when you were in school.
Tell me about your first favorite TV show.
Tell me about family reunions in your childhood.
What was your favorite subject in school?
What was your least favorite subject in school and why?
What is the biggest problem you remember having in school?
Describe a place you enjoyed going alone?
Tell of a place that you discovered or built as a haven for your "gang?"
Tell about your favorite "hang out" in high school?
Tell me about the best pet you ever had.
Tell me about other pets you had.
Tell me about being in a school play or program.
Tell me about a teacher you remember most.
Do you have a good story about feigning sick to get to stay home from school?
Do you have a good story about getting in trouble for swearing?
Tell me about how you spent your Saturdays during the school year.
Tell me about how you spent your Sundays.
What was the naughtiest or meanest thing you remember doing in school?
What were the consequences?
What was your favorite radio program?
What was your favorite movie?
Did kids ever tease you? About what?
Tell me about a difficult school essay / paper you had to write?
When was the first time you had "foreign" food (pizza, tacos)?
Which college did you choose and why?
How did you choose your major?

How did you celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

Did you ever hitch hike? Tell a story about that time.

What is your favorite time of year? Why? Tell me your favorite memories from that time of year.

Describe the household chores you had to do as a child. Describe your indoor and your outdoor chores.

Which chore did you like / dislike the most?

Which bones have you broken and how?

Did you ever need stitches?

Tell about a childhood illness, how was that illness treated when you were a child?

Did you know anyone who had a disability? Talk about your memories of that person.

Tell me about what it was like to visit the dr.

What were some of the nicknames people called you or your friends?

Did you ever play a practical joke or prank on a person? Did someone play one on you?

Do you have a good April Fool's Day story?

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Did you ever make things like kites or paper airplanes? Can you tell me how you made these things?

Have you ever hunted or captured a wild animal?

Did you ever adopt a wild animal?

Did your parents ever find anything you had hidden?

Share a memory of how you participated in religious activities. (I.e. church social activities, services, holidays, etc.)

What are your memories about Easter traditions?

When you played make-believe, what did you pretend?

If you could return to your childhood, what would you do differently?

What was your favorite book as a child?

Did you ever write something that you were really proud of?

What is the biggest physical problem you have had to deal with?

Did you or do you have any superstitions?

Where were your best hid and go seek places to hide?

Tell me about the first time you drove a car?

Did you ever take something that was not yours? What did you do with it?

Did you get caught?

Do you have a story about a time you were surprised?

What was your worst childhood fear?
How much do you remember paying for an ice cream cone or afternoon snack? What was your favorite(s)?
Did you ever have a tree house?
Were you ever bitten by a dog?
Did your mother ever make something for you? Describe it.
Tell a favorite memory of your mother.
Tell about some good advice your mother gave you.
What did your family do for Mother's Day?
Do you remember any childhood songs or rhymes?
Name some popular hit songs from your youth.
What was your favorite singing group or band?
What kind of dances did you do as a youth? Tell about the first dance you ever went to. Show me some dance moves if you are willing.
Tell about a favorite high school dance event, formal, or prom.
Describe the military experience of someone in your family. Share a memory of a war.
Tell me about your graduation exercises or traditions. What year did you graduate from high school, college? How many students were in your graduating class?
How much homework did you have each day?
What has been your proudest moment?
Did you or do you play a musical instrument? What was it like to learn this instrument?
Tell me more about playing the _____ .
Tell me about your closest childhood friend(s).
Do you have anything that you have kept from your childhood? Could you show it to me?
Tell about a strange person that lived in your town.
Did you ever camp out? What was it like?
How did you learn to cook?
Did you ever ride a horse? What was this like for you?
What was your first job? Tell about other jobs you had as a youth.
How much did you get paid?
Were you ever chased by an animal?
Were you ever in a parade? Tell me more about it.
Share a childhood memory about a death that affected you.
Relate your happiest childhood memory.

How did you learn to swim?
Where all did you go swimming?
Tell me a favorite memory about your father.
Tell about some good advice your father gave you.
Did your father ever make a special gift for you?
Did you have a special place in nature that you went to explore?
Did you ever make 'mud pies'?
Did you go barefoot in the summer?
Did you ever injure yourself by stepping on something?
Tell about a bike you had.
Tell me about your very first car.
Did you ever have or make a swing?
Tell about seeing something you thought was very beautiful.
Describe an outside game you played/made up.
Describe an inside game you played/made up.
Did you ever watch fireworks when you were a kid? Tell me about that experience.
Tell me about your Independence Day traditions as a youth.
Do you have a special July 4 that you remember most?
Did you ever go to carnivals or amusement parks? Where?
What kinds of rides and games were there? How much did they cost?
Tell about and State Fair or County Fair experiences.
Tell about going to a circus or a community play.
Tell me about your favorite summertime memories.
Did you go fishing in your childhood? What was your best catch?
What was your favorite candy as a child, and how much did it cost?
What was your favorite snack that you made at home?
Share a memory about going on a picnic?
What party game do you remember was the most fun/popular?
Do you remember a heat wave or drought? What did you do to keep cool?
What was your favorite holiday of the year?
Share a birthday party memory.
Tell about your favorite shoes as a youth.
Share a memory about a power outage. What did you do when the power went out?
Relate a memory involving a flood or big storm/tornado/hurricane.
Relate a memory related to thunder and lightning.
Share a memory about riding in a boat.

Tell about a family vacation trip.
Share the best vacation experience you can recall.
Share the most unpleasant vacation experience you can recall.
Do you have any memories about a river, lake, or beach to share?
Tell a memory about riding on a ferry, bus, train, or plane.
Describe your childhood home and neighborhood.
Share a good piece of advice with me, and a story about how you learned this life lesson.
Tell of an experience climbing a mountain or a big hill.
Tell a memory about having company at your house or of a family party/gathering.
Tell about board/card games you played as a child.
What was your best talent when you were a kid? Were you ever in a talent show or pageant?
Tell me about a time when you got lost.
Did you ever play in the sprinkler or hose? What else did you do to keep cool in the summer?
Tell me about being stung by a bee or wasp, or getting poison ivy.
Did you have any family songs that you liked to sing together?
Tell me about your room when you were a kid, what was it decorated like, etc.?
Share a memory of slumber parties or sleepovers with your friends when you were a kid.
If you ever ran away from home, tell me about it.
Do you remember being REALLY curious about something?
Share a childhood experience with roller skates.
Did you ever get home sick when away from home?
Did you ever make a purchase that you later regretted? Tell me about it.
Tell me about an early experience about sharing something with someone.
Tell me about the first time you shaved. Who taught you?
Tell me about your favorite doll, teddy bear, or other toy.
Tell me about another favorite toy.
Did you have to abide by a curfew as a youth? What happened when you were late?
If you ever had a hero, tell who, tell why.
Describe how you used the phone to call a friend.
Did you ever have a fire in your home or accidentally catch something on fire?

Tell about going to socials or potlucks.

Tell about an incident when you were very angry with your mom or dad.

Tell about an incident when your mom or dad was very angry with you.

Share a memory involving an outhouse.

Do you remember any Labor Day traditions of your youth?

Tell about your school year calendar as a child.

What do you remember about your first day of school?

Tell about a school bully.

What do you remember doing at recess? What happened at recess if you were being punished?

Tell about the playground equipment at your grade school.

Did your parents ever make you wear something stupid to school?

Tell about who you thought was the smartest kid in school and why.

Tell about who you thought was the 'dumbest' kid in school and why?

Tell about the naughtiest kid in school and why.

Tell about a teacher's pet.

Name all the schools that you went to.

What was your most embarrassing school moment?

Name the grade school teachers you remember.

Name the Middle School teachers you recall.

Name the high school teachers that were the most influential.

Were you ever in a fight at school? Tell me about it.

Tell me about your best/worst report card.

Did you have a hero? Who/why?

Who was the best teacher you ever had, and what made that teacher so good?

What were your school colors/mascot? Did you participate in school spirit activities/sports?

What did your high school cheerleaders wear? Can you remember any of your high school cheers?

What did your school do to celebrate Homecoming?

Do you have a Homecoming dance story?

Other stories about high school extracurricular activities?

Tell a story about a time you dressed up in a costume.

Did you ever have a good friend that did something 'bad' to you?

Do you remember your school's custodian?

What is the worst trick you remember a student playing on a teacher?

What is the worst thing a teacher did to a student?

Tell about your school cafeteria lunches? Did you eat them or take your lunch? If so, what did you take?

Did you ever have a lunchbox? What did it look like?

Did you ever have a crush on a teacher?

Do you have any special memories about raking and burning leaves, or mowing the lawn?

If you ever played in the leaves, tell about it.

Did you get an allowance? How much? What did you spend it on? Did you have to earn it?

What teacher did you dislike the most and why?

Relate a story about a mouse/other animal in your house.

How did you get to and from school?

Do you have a good in-school pants-wetting story?

Tell about pulling or losing a baby tooth? Were you visited by the tooth fairy?

Did you ever lose something that was really important to you?

Was anything ever stolen from you? Did you get it back?

Did you ever lose or break something that belonged to someone else?

Where did you shop for your school clothes?

Tell of a favorite autumn memory.

Did you ever pick apples or other fruit?

What is the farthest you ever remember running or walking?

Share a memory about being very scared.

What was the first movie you ever saw in the theatre? How old were you?

Who were you with? How much did it cost?

What did people do at Halloween when you were younger?

Do you have a special Halloween memory?

Did you ever tell ghost stories?

Do you remember any local ghost stories or legends that were told to you?

Do you remember a haunted house story that you can tell me?

What is the strangest thing you ever saw in the sky?

When you were a child, how did you keep your house warm/cool?

Who was the President when you were born? Do you have any memories related to the Presidents of your country(s)?

At what age did you vote for the first time, and who did you vote for? Do you remember why?

Did you ever see a President, a Vice-President, or a former President in person?

When on road trips, what car games did you play to pass the time?
Tell me about a favorite watch that you had.
What was your most prized possession as a child?
Do you have a story about standing against odds for something you really believed in?
Did you ever feel hatred towards another person? How did you overcome that feeling? Tell me about it.
Tell me about the best birthday present you ever received.
Was an injustice ever done to you? Tell me about it.
Tell me about your most memorable birthday cake.
Do you ever have a recurring dream? What is it?
Did you ever use tobacco products? How/why did you stop?
Tell about someone who had a major influence over your life.
What were you doing when John F. Kennedy was assassinated?
Share a memory about school being cancelled due to the weather.
Tell about Thanksgiving traditions in your family when you were younger.
What foods were on your Thanksgiving table?
Share your favorite Thanksgiving memory.
Do you have any snow or ice-skating memories to share?
What hobbies or collections have you had? Do you still have them?
Did your mom or dad have a favorite remedy for what ailed you? What was it?
Did anyone from your school or community grow up to be famous?
Did you ever have a bad experience with a hair cut or permanent wave?
How much did a haircut cost when you were a kid?
Who was your favorite movie star and why?
Were you ever in a life-threatening situation that you can tell me more about?
Do you have a childhood photo you can show me?
Do you have any knowledge of how/why your parents named you what they did?
Other family name stories?
Do you have a Pearl Harbor Day memory? Other days from history that you recall?
Tell about your favorite store to browse in as a child.
Were you ever in a church or school holiday pageant/play?
What winter holidays did you celebrate? What were the decorations like?
Where did you get them? Or did you make them?

Were gifts given as a part of your celebrations?
What did you receive from others/Santa, etc.? When did you open presents?
Did grandma or grandpa ever make gifts for you? Tell me more about them.
Tell about the neatest present you remember giving to your mom/dad.
Tell about the best holiday present you ever received.
Tell about the worst holiday present you ever received.
Tell about your experiences with Santa Claus.
Describe the religious services you attended as a part of winter holiday customs.
Tell about holiday celebrations at a relative's house.
Do you remember a best 'Christmas', Chanukah, etc.?
Share other holiday memories.
Do you remember attending weddings or anniversary celebrations of friends or family members? Were you ever in a wedding? Describe those occasions.
Do you have any knowledge of the origin of your family name (last name)?
Did you ever make New Year's resolutions as a youth? Do you remember a specific one? Were you able to keep your resolutions?
What special memories do you have of New Year's Eve or New Year's Day?
Are there other stories you would like to tell me? 😊

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