

# Teambuilding

Building a strong team that knows one another is absolutely critical to having a successful organization. Think back to those groups that you've been a part of, the ones that have been most successful have most likely been those that everyone feels included, appreciated, respected, and cared for. Teambuilding is an important aspect of that. Take the time during the beginning of every semester and also when you have new members joining the group to do some group development activities. Whether in the form of icebreakers or advanced teambuilding activities, it will give you new insight into your group and allow you the opportunity to make people feel welcomed and involved.

## Benefits of Icebreakers

- Establishes friendly informal climate for the formal learning to follow.
- Puts participants at ease and in a more positive frame of mind.
- Helps to break up any cliques that may be existent with the group.
- Creates a non-threatening environment and promotes laughter which helps any existing tensions decrease.
- Facilitates the getting-acquainted process and enhances honest communication.
- Encourages self-disclosure and self-discovery.

## Icebreaker Examples

**Human Knot:** Form a circle and grab someone's hand that is not standing next to you. Then try to untangle the knot without letting go of each other's hands.

**Human bingo:** Create a "bingo" board that has characteristics of each member in the group. Have everyone go around talking to one another trying to find out which characteristics belong to each member. Try and get bingo or blackout to win!

**Honey I Love You:** Have everyone sit in a circle with one person in the middle. That member must walk up to other members saying "Honey, I love you. Will you please, please smile?" The object is to make the other person laugh by saying those words. The chosen person must respond "Honey, I love you but I just can't smile." If the chosen person laughs, they go to the middle. If not the person in the middle must try again with a different member.

**Two Truths and a Lie:** Group members take turns revealing three things about themselves. Two of the facts are true and one is a lie. Everyone else must vote on which they think is the lie.

**Blanket Drop:** Break the group members into two teams. Have teams line up facing each other. A neutral group member holds up a blanket and each team chooses a member to stand in front of it. When the blanket is dropped, the first person to identify the other by name is the winner. By winning, you capture the other player for your respective side. The objective is to get all members onto one side.

**Shoe Toss:** Individuals take off one shoe and throw it in the middle of the room. Each person retrieves a shoe and attempts to find the owner then pairs start a conversation.

Icebreakers provide a great way for new people to meet. New members in a group or organization may feel out of place or uncomfortable. Icebreakers are a great way as a leader to help integrate these new members. They also are great for groups that are already established, but could use an enhancement to their group cohesion. When a group is closer and feels more positive about each other and the goals of the group, the organization is much more productive and fun! Below are some examples of icebreakers. If you want to see more, stop by the Office of Student Engagement for some books full of fun activities!

Members of the Office of Student Engagement (OSE) staff are available to assist you with any questions you have regarding leadership issues. The OSE is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m.—5 p.m. For more information, please contact the office at 410.337.6124.