

Training games, icebreakers and energisers

Introduction

Introduction

This guide offers a diverse range of games and exercises to cover all training scenarios.

The games in this guide have been organised alphabetically. As well as the instructions, information about each game covers the following:

Type and purpose of game

Is it an icebreaker or energiser? Can the game be used in a team-building capacity, to form sub-groups, to illustrate effective communication and listening or to review learning objectives at the end of a session? Each explanation contains a brief summary as to what the purpose of the game is.

Learning styles and preferences

In order to help you plan your training session as effectively as possible, we have referenced which learning styles and preferences would get the most out of the game.

Remember it is important to try and cater for a range of learning styles, don't just stick to one!

The learning styles are:

- Activist
- Pragmatist
- Theorist
- Reflector

We have also noted which games are best for auditory, visual or kinesthetic learning.

Group size and timing

Some games will work wonderfully with a large number of participants and fail dismally when there are only a few participants. With this in mind, an indication as to the most appropriate number of delegates to be involved in a game will help you to select which games to use.

An estimation of the timing needed to carry out a game is also important information when planning your session.

Materials

Don't forget to get any materials ready in advance for any games that you plan to use. Familiarise yourself completely with all the materials needed to ensure that you will be properly prepared when the time comes.

What type of game do I need?

Consider what game you need carefully before integrating it into your session. What message are you trying to convey? Does the game highlight this message sufficiently? Make sure you do not leave your trainees wondering why they have done an exercise.

Everything in the training, including the games, should fit together to form a complete session. Make sure that the game links to the learning objectives of the session. Don't just choose a random game that has no specific meaning.

Consider the following when selecting an energiser:

- Energisers, as the name suggests, are used to revitalise and awaken trainees. Ideally they can be integrated into training after a large amount of information has been delivered, or after a meal when participants may be feeling sluggish and tired.
- Energisers are also a fantastic way to switch attention from one topic to a completely different one. As a trainer it is important to be perceptive to the mood of the group, and adapt accordingly. If you notice the group is somewhat unresponsive, a short sharp energiser can do wonders in lifting the mood of the group. Such a game does not have to take a lot of time out of your session. Sometimes the shorter games can be the most efficient.
- When you prepare your training, analyse the structure of the session. Highlight areas where large chunks of information are being conveyed. Be sure to include some energisers or attention

Consider the following when selecting an ice-breaker:

- Icebreakers help to set the scene, relax the environment and engage your participants, as well as creating the first impression for your entire session. Successful use of icebreakers can grab the attention of your trainees and assist them in full participation.
- Learning is largely a social activity that can often place the delegate in an exposed position. Icebreakers give participants the opportunity to find out a little more about each other thereby creating a degree of familiarity before starting on the main session objectives. By doing this, delegates are more likely to be in a mindful state and open to learning.
- Choose your icebreaker carefully. Consider your environment, group dynamics and the topic of your training, as these should all link together to create a holistic training session. Remember that the right choice can make for a session filled with impact and meaning.

Consider the following when selecting a review or closing game:

- It is important to remember that review is an essential part to any training session. Without a review, very little of the information you have imparted would be remembered. The use of games in the closing of your session can be an excellent way to go over what has been learnt.
- Ultimately, closers should be fun, interactive and lively. Trainees should leave on a high, feeling motivated and encouraged by the session they have just experienced. An effective closing game helps participants to summarise what they have learnt and take away vital information. If the game is effective, it can act as a future trigger for trainees trying to remember the core details of the session.
- Closers do not need to be long. Often a shorter game can have more impact. The game should be logical, with clear meaning

and purpose. Essentially such games are purely a summation of what has already been covered. New points do not need to be highlighted at this stage.

Explanation

It is important to inform the group as to why you are using a particular game. Is it an energiser or an icebreaker? Are you setting a scene or reviewing what has been learnt? Those who have preference to the pragmatic learning style will appreciate knowing why they are playing the game.

Games should always have a clear and definite purpose. The meaning of the game should always be explained to your trainees, either before or after the game has been played. A concise briefing beforehand, and a logical debriefing afterwards helps to keep trainees informed, and this in turn will maintain their level of interest.

Timings

While many games can be meaningfully ended early – and all games can be abandoned – this is rarely a satisfactory option, and may annoy some in the group. If it is important, mention to the group how long you expect the game to last. This ensures that everyone is prepared for what is to come. And don't forget that the number of participants will affect the length of time it takes to run a game as the larger the number, the longer the game will take.

Resource and space

Before the game begins, ensure you have all the resources you may need to play the game. Do you need overhead projectors or flip charts? Not all games are suited to every training environment. It is best to view your available space before deciding on the games that you are to play. Should this not be possible, ensure you have some back-up games – in case the ones you have chosen are not suitable. Also make sure that the environment is safe for the activities you plan to carry out. Double-check everything before you begin your session.

Keep the briefing brief...

Many trainers have a tendency to give too much detail in the explanation, often because they wish to point participants in the right direction. However, any advice about how the game should be played undermines the purpose in playing it – i.e. players learn by doing rather than listening. In your briefing, you should aim to tell the players everything about the mechanics of the game, but nothing about the strategy.

...and don't skip the debriefing

Different players will have different experiences of the game – some may have had different roles, and some will have been more effective than others. Participants should be allowed a chance to discuss their own experiences so as to encourage a holistic learning experience for the entire group.

Keep to the rules

The person you are trying to help will invariably recognise what you are doing and feel even worse. They will not be able to tell if any improvement in their position is a result of their own efforts or because of your assistance. Remember that the benefit of running training is that it transfers the power from the trainer to the participants, and this should include the power to make mistakes. As a trainer you should simply monitor the game. If you feel someone is not coping, find an effective yet subtle way to end the game.

Access requirements

As a trainer, it is essential that you start any session by highlighting that delegates can let you know at any time whether any exercise or game is unsuitable for them owing to access limitations. Whilst you would hopefully have knowledge of any such issues from booking forms, never presume that this is the case. And, don't forget that access requirements are not always visible. Always provide the opportunity for people to sit out. It is essential to be prepared to play a different game with no notice, should you find yourself in this situation. Remember that not all games suit all scenarios. Whilst Winking Murders avoids mobility restrictions, this would not be suitable for a delegate who is visually impaired. Should you find yourself in this situation, it may also be

worth having a quiet word with the person concerned. If this is approached from the right angle, they may be able to suggest some new games.

Include different learning styles

Keep foremost in your mind the fact that everyone likes to learn differently. The learning styles have an important impact on the usefulness of games. Naturally not every game can appeal to all learning styles. However, it is important to ensure that you deliver a balanced training session that will appeal to all the different styles at some point in the delivery.

Enjoy, and happy training!

Icebreakers

Action names

Learning styles and preferences:

- Auditory
- Visual
- Activists
- Theorists

Purpose

To get everybody moving about and energised, as well as introducing one another in an active and memorable way

Group size

Minimum of 5

Timing

5 minutes

Materials

None

Instructions

Gather the group together in a circle. Each member gets a turn to announce their name and a corresponding action. The action must begin with the same alphabetic letter as the first letter of each name. E.g. my name is Jack and I like Jumping. The person announcing this action must actually do the action.

Variation:

So that members of the group remember each other's names, the game can be continued by asking members to announce someone else's name and the corresponding action. This will take place when you have gone around the group at least once. So for example:
" I am Jack and I like Jumping (jump). I am pleased to meet Mary and she likes Marching (march)"

Allow members to randomly choose anyone in the group, but make sure that everyone chooses someone different each time.

Action Line

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Activists
- Pragmatists

Purpose

Highlights the importance of effective communication and how easily we can mis-communicate a message.

Group size

6 upward

Timing

3-6 minutes

Materials

None

Instructions

Ask the group to stand in a line, all facing one direction, looking at the person's back in front of them. Explain that you will begin the game by going to the back of the line and tapping the person on the shoulder. Only that person should turn and watch you perform an action. Once they have witnessed the action, they must tap the next person on the shoulder who will then watch them perform the action as exactly as possible. The procedure should continue up the line. The final person should demonstrate what they saw to the entire group, as well as say what they think the action is.

It is always interesting to note how the final action differs from the first. The person who began the action should re-enact the initial action to show what has changed.

Ideas for the actions are:

- Washing a car
- Cleaning an elephant
- Throwing a ball
- Chopping vegetables

Design a flag

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Activists
- Pragmatists

Purpose

To generate discussion. A good game to get participants to focus on possible issues that may need to be discussed in the session, or to share information about each other.

Group size

3-6

Timing

10 minutes

Materials

Flip chart paper and coloured pens

Instructions

The object of the exercise is to simply design a flag that symbolises their group. They have an allocated amount of time to design a flag that illustrates each person's favourite pastime and what they hope to get out of the training session.

This is a great game for adapting to suit the delegates and what the trainer wants to get from the session. Questions can either be geared to be completely random and geared towards 'breaking the ice', or they can be worded with the intention of the participants to think about the session topics.

Variation:

You could get the participants to design a shield, a coat of arms, or a logo.

Did you catch that name?

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all, but particularly good for Activists

Not suitable for participants with mobility restrictions.

Purpose

An active way for a group to be energised while learning names

Group size

5 upwards

Timing

2-5 minutes

Materials

A small soft ball

Instructions

Assemble the group in a circle. Ask everyone to say their name and where they come from as you go around the circle. Then introduce the ball to the circle. Announce that each person must say their own name first, and then as they throw the ball, call out the person's name to which they are throwing the ball.

E.g. 'My name is Benjamin. I throw to Jessica.' Then Jessica would continue by saying 'Thanks Benjamin, my name is Jessica and I throw to Adrian.'

Ensure that everyone is fully included in this game, and that the group knows each other by the end of the game.

The tutor is able to control the speed of the game, and can also 'up the pace' by making sure that participants don't pause before saying someone's name. It can work well for the tutor to participate in this game.

Famous people

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

Allows participants to mingle with one another, adjusting to their environment and their fellow trainees

Group size

5 -12 people

Timing

10 - 15 minutes

Materials

Paper

Instructions

Before the session begins, write the name of a celebrity or well-known person on sheets of paper. The number of celebrities must correspond to the number of trainees attending. During the session, attach one piece to every person's back, without allowing him or her to see the name printed on it.

It is important to check that everyone is alright with this before proceeding.

The group must then mingle and ask questions of the other participants to try to figure out who their person is. Questions may only be answered with 'Yes' or 'No', Once the trainee correctly guesses their celebrity, they may sit down. Ensure that chosen celebrities are very well known or topical so as to make the game plausible.

Top tip:

Should pair work be needed, and there are an even number of delegates, you may want to think of famous couples. The object of the game would then be to not only find out who you are but to find and sit with the other half to the couple.

How much can you take?

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Reflector

Purpose

To introduce members of the group to one another and allow them to get to know a little more about each other

Group size

5 -12 people

Timing

10 - 15 minutes

Materials

A bag of sweets, or alternatively, a roll of toilet paper!

Instructions

Ask the group to assemble in a circle or a semi-circle. Pass the bag of sweets around the group. Tell them that they make take as many sweets as they like, but they are not to eat them yet!

Once everyone has taken some sweets, inform them that they must now tell the group one thing about themselves for every sweet they have taken. This can be anything from where they live to their favourite food. Go around the circle, allowing each member his or her turn to talk. Either start or finish with yourself. Once they have finished, they may eat their sweets as a reward.

Variation:

The same game can be played using toilet paper. Ask each person to take as many sheets of toilet paper as they choose and then do the same as above.

Top tip:

Avoid using chocolate as they may be more likely to contain traces of nuts and they do not fare well in hot weather.

Interview

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

Introducing members of the group who have never met each other before.

Group size

4 upward, preferably even numbers

Timing

10 – 15 minutes

Materials

None

Instructions

Get the members of the group into pairs. It is probably best to allocate pairs as people are then unlikely to know one another. Ask the pairs to spend a few minutes interviewing one another. They should ask each other a number of questions which you, as the trainer, should announce at the start.

Examples:

- Name
- What do you hope to get out of this event?
- What is your favourite food?
- What did you have for breakfast?
- Where do you come from?
- 3 likes and dislikes
- What is the last song they bought?

After giving each person a few minutes to interview their partner, bring the group back together. Each person must then tell the group the interesting things they have learnt about their partner.

Top tip:

Think of some more questions and try and include one or two which focus the participants on the session and helps to put them in a mindful state.

Moving lines

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Not suitable for delegates with mobility restrictions.

Purpose

Gets participants out of their seats, allowing them to move about learning each other's names in a relaxed environment.

Group size

6 upward

Timing

Varies

Materials

None

Instructions

Lines the groups up in two equal lines, asking them to stand facing each other. Then inform them that they have thirty seconds to introduce themselves to the person facing them and then provide their partner with one other fact about themselves. Explain the delegates have to ask each other about a pre-decided topic.

Examples could be:

- University or college
- Position in the SU
- Favourite holiday destination
- Favourite food

Top tip:

Monitor how many delegates have managed to meet each other. Don't forget that in larger groups it may not be plausible for every person to meet, as this will take too much time. The other factor to consider when running this session with a large group is the noise level, and making yourself heard above the chatter.

Party mix

Learning styles and preferences:

- Auditory
- Kinesthetic
- Visual
- Pragmatist

Purpose

This thinking game provides the opportunity for ice breaking; team building; self-disclosure; energising a long session as well as demonstrating the importance of clear communication.

Group size

6 upward

Timing

6 – 10 minutes

Materials

- Party mix activity sheets 1 and 11 cut into cards, one set of cards per group (can be found in the template section of this pack)

Instructions

This game can be played with a large number of people by dividing them into teams of five to eight. If there is only a small group present, it can be played as a single team.

Put Party mix card piles face down in the middle of each table. Explain that the participants will take turns choosing a Party mix card from the centre of the table. Each participant will then choose a corresponding question card.

For example, a person who chooses a Nut Party Mix card will then choose a Nut Question card. Participants will then answer the questions aloud for group members to hear.

Variation:

Participants could read the questions aloud and ask someone in the group to respond.

People bingo

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

This game is a fantastic way for a large group to meet and get to know something about each other in a limited amount of time.

Group size

Minimum of 10, but the more the better

Timing

10 – 15 minutes

Materials

- Bingo sheets
- Pens

Instructions

Make up some bingo sheets with around 20 boxes and things in each box relating to people's hobbies, lifestyle, and characteristics.

Hand out a bingo card to each person. Ask the group to walk around, finding different people that match the description in each bingo box. They must then ask the person to sign the relevant box. The game continues until someone has a signature in all the boxes on their card. They must then shout 'BINGO!'. The trainer may choose to have a small prize such as a bag of sweets for the winner. Make sure the participants know that they can only have 1 signature from each person present.

Top tips:

You may choose to vary the Bingo cards so that each person has a slightly different card.

If you highlight certain boxes on each card, only asking them to get signatures for those particular boxes, it can speed up the process.

Portraits

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

This is a game allowing people to introduce themselves to one another in a creative way. It does not require movement or a great deal of action.

Group size

6 – 12 people

Timing

5 – 10 minutes

Materials

Flipchart paper and pens

Instructions

Organise the group into pairs. Ensure that the pairs do not know each other beforehand.

Ask the partners to spend 2-3 minutes just talking to one another, getting to know each other. They should find out where they come from, what they do, their hobbies, favourite food, etc. The trainer should time this.

After three minutes, hand out pens and paper to each person. Ask each person to draw a portrait or representation of his or her partner. Remind the group that they are to be as creative as possible, but it isn't an art class and therefore the standard of the drawing is not important. No words should be used in these representations.

After a few more minutes, bring the group back together and ask each person to describe their portrait to the group.

Shields

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

A chance for members of the group to get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Group size

4 upward

Timing

10 – 15 minutes

Materials

Flipchart paper and lots of coloured markers

Instructions

This can be done individually or in pairs. If it is done in pairs, each partner should make a shield for the other.

Ask everyone to draw a large shield on the paper and divide it into four. They must then find out four things about each other, for example:

- Name
- College/University course
- How they would like to be remembered
- Greatest achievement

The group then comes together and each pair explains the shield they have made for themselves or for their partner. These shields can be placed around the room as reminders.

Variations:

Other questions can be used instead. These may relate to the training session that is about to take place.

Other examples could be:

- Position on committee
- What they want to learn today
- Place of birth
- Favourite food/drink

Stranded

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

A fun and easy way to get everyone to learn about each other.

Group size

4 or more

Timing

5 – 10 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Coloured pens

Instructions

Give each member of the group a piece of flip chart paper. Ask them to take a few minutes to draw their own island. Around this island they should write or draw 3 – 5 things they would bring if they were to be stranded on their island and had five minutes to prepare. After five minutes, bring everyone back together. In turn each person should introduce themselves and explain the things they have chosen.

Stranded – the team building version

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

Encouraging team building and communication with this fun ice breaker

Group size

3 upward

Timing

15 minutes team work and 5 minutes debriefing

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Coloured pens
- Copy of the items list from the template section of this guide

Instructions

Having split delegates into equal groups of at least 3 the next step is to set the scene. Explain that:

'After your aircraft crashes, your group is stranded on a forested mountain in appalling winter weather, and over 300 miles from civilisation. You are unaware of your exact whereabouts as radio contact was lost 1 hour before you crashed, which means that the search operation has no idea of your whereabouts either. The plane is about to burst into flames and you have a few moments to gather some items. No mobile phones are working. Your aim is to survive as a group until rescued. From this list, choose 10 items that you would take, after which it and everything inside is destroyed by fire. Items cannot be split.'

The participants are to spend 5 minutes deciding what would be on their individual lists without conferring. The rest of the time will be spent in groups deciding on which items make it onto the group list. Explain there is no 'right' answer. When each group presents their list, generate discussion around the benefits of communication and teamwork.

True or False

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

Relaxes the atmosphere and allows people to get to know each other

Group size

6 upward

Timing

5 – 10 minutes

Materials

- None

Instructions

This game can be played as one big group, or if you have larger numbers, the group can be divided into pairs. Ask each pair to introduce themselves to their partner and then to tell their partner three things about themselves.

One of these things should be untrue. The roles should then be reversed and the other partner should tell three things about themselves. Again one thing should be false.

If the group is large, allow each pair to remain and simply guess the untrue statement of their partner. If the group is smaller, ask everyone to come together. In turn each person should introduce their partner and mention the three things they have learnt about them. They should then tell the group which one they believe is false. Their partner shall indicate if their guess was correct. This should be repeated, allowing everyone in the group the chance to introduce their partners.

What's in a name?

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

To introduce a group that previously not met.

Group size

4 upward

Timing

10 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper and pens

Instructions

Divide the group into pairs, preferably with someone they don't know well. Ask one person to spend 5 minutes interviewing the other person to find out the answers to the following questions:

- What is your FULL name?
- Do you like/dislike your name?
- Who gave you your name?
- Does your name mean anything?
- Do you have any nicknames? (Do you like/dislike these?)
- Do people get your name right?
- What would you like to be called?

The trainer should write these questions up on flip chart or on the presentation to remind people what they need to ask.

After 5 minutes the pairs should swap, so the other person can conduct the interview.

After a further 5 minutes, the group should come together and each pair should introduce one another to the group.

Listen Carefully

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

Effectively demonstrates the need to listen carefully and how people will interpret descriptions differently.

Group size

4 upward

Timing

10 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper and pens

Instructions

Pair up participants. Explain that each pair needs to be sitting back to back. One person from each pair will be the drawer, and the other will be the speaker. Give each speaker a copy of the template for this exercise from the back of this guide explaining that their partners must not see what is on the template. Don't let the speaker see what is on the template either, until you start the exercise.

Once each drawer has paper and a pencil, explain that the speaker has 2 minutes to describe to their partner what is on the paper and they have to draw it.

Once the time is up make sure that everyone stops and then let participants show each other their drawings.

During the debrief highlight how this exercise relied totally on communication and listening skills, as well as how different people had perceived the same image and instructions in many different ways.

Spaghetti & marshmallow sculptures

Learning styles and preferences:

- Kinesthetic
- Visual
- Activists
- Pragmatists

Purpose

A fun exercise for team building, motivation and exhibiting the different roles within a team structure.

Group size

4 – 5 people

Timing

15 - 20 minutes

Materials

- Raw spaghetti
- Marshmallows

(each team will need enough of these materials to build a substantial structure, so ensure you consider this when buying your supplies!)

Instructions

Issue spaghetti (raw) and marshmallows to each group and explain that they have an allocated amount of time to build the highest free-standing structure out of the given materials. Explain that out of the allocated time, teams are to spend the first 5 minutes discussing how this will be achieved and cannot start the building process until the trainer says.

In the debrief, ensure you discuss what they learnt about planning and teamwork, as well as communication.

Variation:

You could ask them to create bridges or animals instead.

Energisers

Airplanes

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

To get the group thinking again and to re-energise them.

Group size

6 upwards

Timing

10 minutes

Materials

Pens and paper

Instructions

Make sure that each delegate has a piece of A4 paper and a pen. Explain that each person is to write a fact about themselves on one side of the paper without discussing this or showing other people in the room. Next, everyone is to make their piece of paper into a paper airplane. Once this is done, get delegates to line up down one side of the room. Explain that, on the count of 3, everyone has to throw their airplane over to the other side of the room. Then delegates need to pick up another airplane, trying to make sure they do not get their own one. Everyone then takes turns reading out the fact in their airplane and trying to guess who this particular statement applies to.

Top tip:

This is a great energiser when a group has started to get to know each other. Don't be tempted to use this on a new group, as it will not work.

Variation:

This exercise can also be adapted to review a session. Ask participants to come up with a question around something that has been covered within the training, and write that in their airplane. Delegates have to answer the question in the airplane they pick up.

Animals

Learning styles and preferences:

- Activists

Purpose

To energise the group, gets everybody moving around. Can also be used to re-organise or re-group delegates.

Group size

6 upwards

Timing

Approximately 5 minutes

Materials

None

Instructions

Ask the group to arrange themselves and their chairs in a circle. Allow them thirty seconds to think of an animal. Once they have done this, go around the group asking everyone to call out their animal. Ensure there is one less chair than there are people. (The number of people may include the trainer). Stand in the middle of the group and call out a characteristic that is common to a number of the chosen animals. If the participants' animal has that characteristic, they must swap seats. The trainer should also find a seat. This will leave one person standing. They must then continue the game by thinking of another characteristic. This can continue for as long as the trainer sees fit.

Variation:

Use types of fruit instead of animals. Allocate fruit names such that three or four people have the same fruit. Names of fruit are then called out, instead of characteristics. Themes can also be introduced instead, e.g.: cars, holidays, objects. Items can then be grouped by adjectives, such as 'all yellow objects', etc.

Alphabet Game 1

Learning styles and preferences:

- Activists

Purpose

This game is an excellent energiser. It works brilliantly to wake the group up after a meal or a heavy session.

Group size

8 upwards

Timing

3 - 5 minutes

Materials

Flipchart paper and pens

Instructions

Before the game begins, write the alphabet on a piece of flip chart paper. Next to each letter write either 'L', 'R' or 'B', representing left, right or both. This may be randomly written, although there should be roughly the same number of each letter.

Explain that as you call out a letter of the alphabet, they should follow with a star-jump type movement, protruding the side of their body that corresponds with the instruction on the flip chart. For instance, if you have written an 'L' next to the letter 'A', participants should stick out their left arm and leg when the tutor shouts the letter 'A'. The letter 'B' stands for both, and so a full star jump should follow.

Top tip:

This game works best if the trainer calls out the letters of the alphabet quickly.

Variation:

If you prefer, use the numbers 1, 2 and 3 instead of L, R and B. The trainer must then explain which number corresponds with which body part.

Bridges

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Not suitable for delegates with restricted mobility.

Purpose

Gets the group up and moving and helps them to get to know one another, too.

Group size

5 - 10 people

Timing

2 - 5 minutes

Materials

Masking tape or similar

Instructions

Arrange a line of tape on the floor in a line. Ask the group to stand on the line all facing one direction.

Ask them to arrange themselves in alphabetical order without stepping off the line.

Variation:

You can also ask the group to arrange themselves according to:

- Height
- Shoe size
- Birthday
- Miles travelled to venue

Top tip:

To demonstrate non-verbal communication, you could ask the group to arrange themselves without speaking.

Fizz Buzz

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

To get the group thinking and bring them back into a mindful state. Excellent after lunch or a long break.

Group size

5 – 15 people

Timing

10 minutes or more

Materials

None

Instructions

Ask the group to assemble in a seated circle. The participants then begin to count around the circle in a consecutive order. After a short time replace the number 3, and any multiple of it (3, 6, 9, 12, etc) with the word 'fizz'. After a few more minutes suggest that 5 and its multiples are replaced by the word 'buzz'. Multiples of both 3 and 5 are then replaced by 'Fizz-Buzz' (15, 30, etc). If someone forgets to replace the relevant number with the word, the count begins again.

Variation:

If the group finds this particularly easy you can increase confusion by reversing the order every time someone says 'Fizz-Buzz'.

Giants, Wizards, Elves

Learning styles and preferences:

- Auditory
- Activists
- Pragmatists

Purpose

This is a great game to get really get people activated.

Group size

20 or more

Timing

10 – 20 minutes

Materials

None

Instructions

Divide the group into two smaller groups. Each group separates to opposing sides of the space and elects a captain. Explain to them that they are to decide as a group whether to be Giants, Wizards or Elves. They are not to let the other team know. Also explain that:

- Giants catch Wizards
- Wizards catch Elves
- Elves catch Giants

Trainer need to then explain to the group that they need to get into 'character' and make the following noises throughout the game:

- Giants are to roar
- Wizards are to repeat 'shebang' (imagine Harry Potter!)
- Elves are to make small 'mi mi mi' noises

The two teams then form a line and begin to approach each other. When they are near to one another, and on your count of three, each team must shout who they are. The predominating team must then chase the other team to their side of the room. Whoever they manage to catch then joins their team.

'Koosh' ball mania

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all, particularly good for physical learning and for Activists

Purpose

A number of small games using a ball to energise and revitalise a group

Group size

4 upward

Timing

Varies

Materials

A number of small balls or 'koosh' balls

Instructions

Give a ball to each member of the group and ask them to sit quietly and play with it. Ask them to think creatively about:

- If I was the president, what would I use the ball for?
- If I was a doctor, what would I use it for?

Allow the members to tell the group their creative ideas.

Explain that the use of the ball stimulates nerve-endings that increase messages to the brain.

Variations:

Hide the koosh balls beforehand. Arrange the group into two teams, explaining that they are to find balls of a specific colour. The first team to find all the balls in their colour wins.

Play some music and get delegates to throw the ball around the room. When the music stops, the person holding the ball must shout out a concept they have learnt from the training session.

Number groups

Learning styles and preferences:

- Activists

Purpose

Energising way of starting a session

Group size

Works best for larger groups of at least 10 or more

Timing

5 – 10 minutes

Materials

- None

Instructions

Ask the group to spread around the room. The trainer then calls out numbers and the participants must form groups containing that number of people. Since this is an energising game, numbers should be called quickly and participants must move quickly around the room.

If a person cannot find a group, they are out and should either sit down, or they may be asked to call the numbers. This is a good way of keeping everyone included.

Variation:

Calling out sums can increase difficulty. For example, 'form groups of six minus three'.

Spider

Learning styles and preferences:

- Activists
- Pragmatists

Purpose

Energise the group, allowing them a chance to move about. Good team-building exercise.

Group size

8 upward

Timing

2 - 5 minutes

Materials

- None

Instructions

Ask the group to make a circle. Everyone should place their hands in the centre of the circle and take hold of another participant's hand. Every person should join both hands with other random hands.

Once this is done, the group must figure out how to untangle themselves without letting go of each other's hands. Ultimately the circle will be reformed once they have completely untangled themselves.

Variation:

This game can be effectively used to highlight training sessions on either leadership or communication.

Ask a volunteer from the group to leave the room. The remaining group must then entangle themselves in the same way as mentioned above.

The volunteer then returns to the group with the sole responsibility of untangling them. No one else must speak or act without his instruction. This is an effective way to demonstrate the need for clear explanations.

Wink murder

Learning styles and preferences:

- All suited

Purpose

This game is fun and interactive. Great for occasions when the participants' concentration is fading.

Group size

8 upward

Timing

3 - 5 minutes

Materials

- None

Instructions

Ask the group for a volunteer. The volunteer is the detective. They must leave the room while the murderer is chosen.

Ask the rest of the group to close their eyes, explaining that you, the trainer, will choose a murderer by tapping them on the shoulder. The murderer will then have to "kill" other members of the group by winking at them. When all trainees' eyes are shut, walk quietly around the group and pick a murderer. Once chosen, call the detective back into the room. S/he must observe the group, and try to work out who the winking murderer might be.

Depending on the size of the group, you may allow the detective up to three guesses to figure out who it might be.

Review or closing games

Alphabet game 2

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

To energise the group and create active minds

Group size

Any number

Timing

5 minutes

Materials

None or flipchart paper and pens

Instructions

Go around the group. Each person has to name something in the room that corresponds with a letter of the alphabet, starting with the letter 'A', and then working sequentially around the group. Participants will have more than one chance to think of something as you go through the entire alphabet. If you decide to make it more complicated, you could go backwards through the alphabet.

Variation:

This game can work exceptionally well as a review. In this case, participants must think of relevant words relating to the training they have just received. Again these phrases must correspond to the letter of the alphabet on which they are on.

Top tip:

It may work well to get the team to write the alphabet on flipchart paper. This way it can be pinned up around the room as a further reminder.

A – Z Review

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Theorists
- Reflectors

Purpose

To encourage reflection on the session and what has been learnt

Group size

4 upward

Timing

10 minutes

Materials

Flipchart paper and pens

Instructions

The trainer needs to prepare by writing the alphabet down the left hand side of pieces of flip chart paper with approximately 5 letters on each page. These are then placed around the room where they are accessible for all participants. The group then have a fixed amount of time to go around the room and write something about the training session that starts with that particular letter of the alphabet, and to continue doing this until there is something next to each letter.

Training tip:

Participants are expected, and will need to be creative with their responses for certain letters in the alphabet.

I am...

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Reflectors

Purpose

A chance for the group to reflect upon themselves and the training day they have just received.

Group size

4 – 10 people

Timing

5 minutes

Materials

Cards with phrases

Instructions

Cards should be prepared beforehand. Write one word on each card to describe how a person might be feeling. There should be sufficient cards for each individual to have two.

Describing words may be:

- Happy or Sad
- Tired or Alert
- Hungry
- Motivated
- Excited
- Open-minded
- Inspired
- Learnt a lot
- Cross
- Passionate

These words can be specific to the training that you have just delivered.

Lay the cards on the floor and ask each participant to pick a couple that best describe how they are feeling. Allow some time for the group to exchange cards, until everyone is satisfied with what they have chosen. In turn, each individual should explain their choice.

Little bit dicey

Learning styles and preferences:

- Activists
- Pragmatists
- Theorists
- Visual
- Kinesthetic

Purpose

A fun, relaxing way to review the session and establish what has been learnt

Group size

8 – 16 people

Timing

10 - 15 minutes

Materials

- A large dice
- 2 sides 'miss a go'
- Flip chart paper and pens
- Pre-prepared question
- 'Board game' floor layout: cut out squares and number up to 10/15 depending on number of questions to be asked

Instructions

Split the group into teams of 4 or more. Tell them they will play against each other. The object of the game is to be the first team to the end of the 'board'.

- One team member must be the scribe, writing the answers on the flip chart paper.
- Another member must be the board piece, moving along the board.
- The other members answer the questions.
- The trainer is the question master.
- The team members take turns throwing the dice.

The number on the dice is the number of moves the 'piece' can make on the board *if* the team answer the question correctly. Ask questions on the subject you have been training. The scribe needs to write down the answers given by the team. These can then be displayed on the wall after the game.

Skills Pictionary

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Activists
- Pragmatists
- Reflectors

Purpose

To review the training session and get trainees to identify triggers in remembering what they have learnt.

Group size

6 – 12 people

Timing

10 - 15 minutes

Materials

Index cards or post-it notes

Instructions

Before the game begins, write various skills or concepts onto index cards/post-its. To begin the game, divide the group into two teams. The teams will then compete by drawing a card from the pack and drawing the skill or concept onto flip chart. The team who is drawing is not allowed to speak. The other team must guess the skill. Further excitement can be added to this game by only allowing the guessing team a minute to work out the answer. The trainer can add up the scores and award a small prize at the end.

Snakes & Ladders

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Activists
- Reflectors

Purpose

A fun yet reflective way to review what has been learnt in a session.

Group size

2 – 4 people. If there are more, sub-groups should be created.

Timing

10 - 15 minutes

Materials

- Snakes & Ladders board - created by the trainer.
- Dice
- Counter pieces for the number of participants

Instructions

The board must be created beforehand. It should be designed such that the ladders represent a positive aspect learnt during the session (possibly even an action point that trainees will take with them). The snakes will represent negative aspects, or issues that may place a barrier in the way of achieving ones goals. For instance, in a training on time management, a ladder may be an action point like 'make lists', whilst the snake may be a barrier such as 'long telephone calls'. These positive and negative aspects should be written down the length of the ladders and snakes respectively.

The game continues as normal. Participants throw the dice and move their counter piece along the board by the correct number of spaces. They go up ladders when they land on them, and down snakes. The first to reach the end is the winner.

The real world

Learning styles and preferences:

- Visual
- Kinesthetic
- Pragmatic
- Reflector

Purpose

Allow the group to reflect on what they have learnt, and display it in a meaningful way. This is particularly good for communication training.

Group size

3 – 4 participants in each group

Timing

10 - 15 minutes

Materials

Flipchart paper and pens

Instructions

Form small groups and distribute paper and markers to each group. Have them draw a large square, and divide it into four quadrants, which will be four frames of a comic strip called 'The Real World'. (An example of a cartoon is in the 'template' section.)

Ask each group to think of a real work-related situation that could be addressed with material from the training program. Or you can provide them with a problem scenario relating to the training session. Instruct them to create a dialogue between some characters that reflects skills they have already learned. This will require them to draw cartoon characters in the four frames. Tell them not to worry about the quality of their artwork! Ask each group to display their products, and explain what is illustrated.

The following questions can be discussed when debriefing the game:

- What skills do you think you have acquired through the session?
- Which ones are potentially most useful?
- What situations are they most applicable to?
- What are the barriers to their use?

University challenge

Learning styles and preferences:

- Suitable for all

Purpose

To effectively review learning objectives in a fun and competitive manner.

Group size

4 – 10, divided into 2 teams

Timing

20 minutes

Materials

Flipchart paper and pens

Instructions

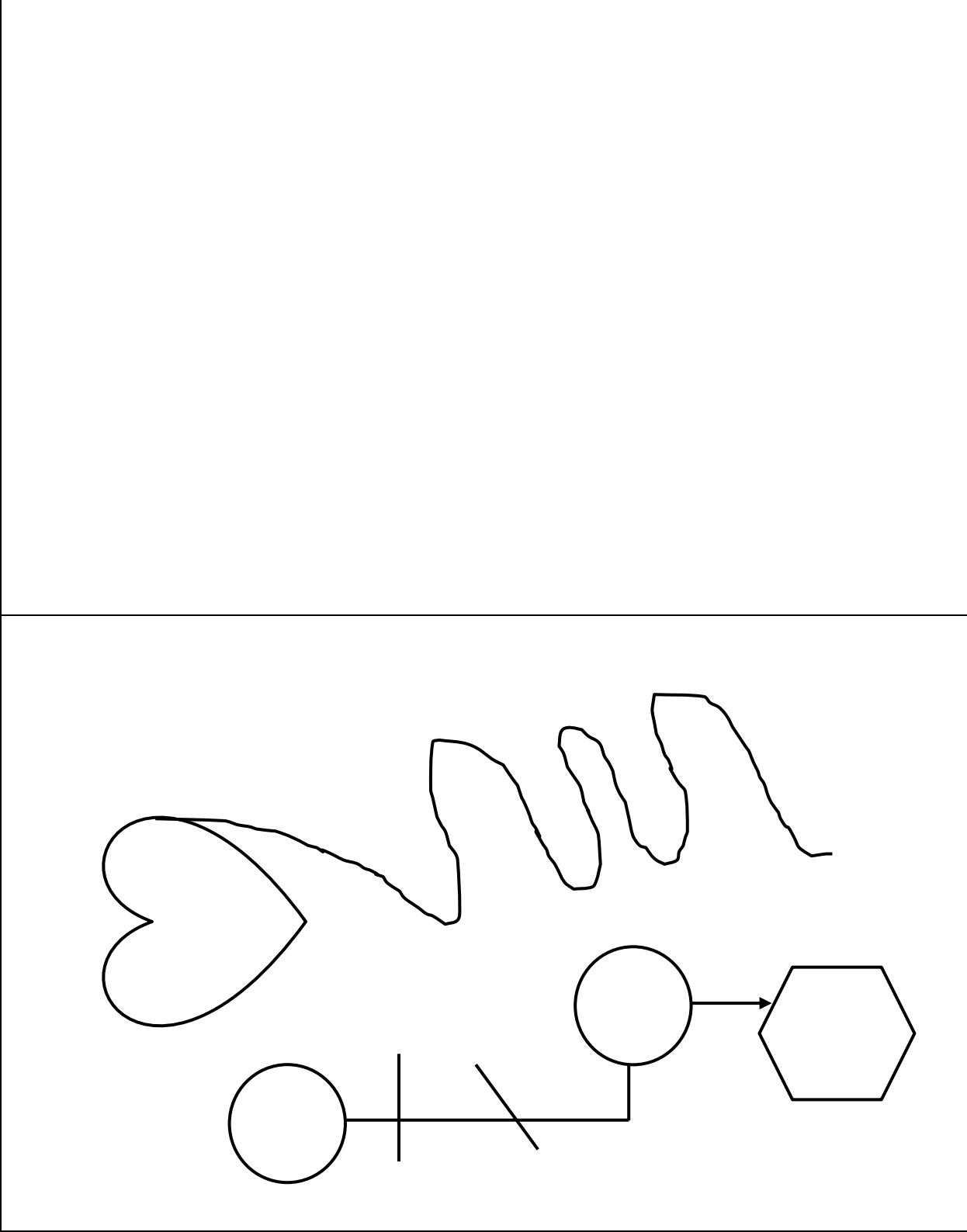
Divide the participants into 2 equal teams. Explain that they have 10 minutes to come up with 4 questions regarding the session content. They can be as hard as possible, but must be something that has been covered in the session.

Each team needs to elect a team captain who will read out their questions and will give the team answer to all questions that are asked.

The trainer will take on the role of the judge and score keeper. Be warned – it is almost inevitable that there will be some squabbling regarding questions and answers, so we advise you to make it clear that 'the judge's decision is final!'

Templates & Resources

Listen carefully



Party Mix – sheet 1

Pretzels	Pretzels
Peanuts	Peanuts
Crisps	Crisps

Party Mix – sheet 2

<p>Pretzel</p> <p>Would you rather ride an elephant or a camel? Why?</p>	<p>Peanuts</p> <p>What was your childhood nickname? Why?</p>	<p>Crisps</p> <p>Who has most inspired you in life? Why?</p>
<p>Pretzel</p> <p>Would you rather shave your head or pierce your nose? Why?</p>	<p>Peanut</p> <p>What was the ugliest thing your parents made you wear as a child? Why?</p>	<p>Crisps</p> <p>Is there other intelligent life in the universe?</p>
<p>Pretzel</p> <p>Would you rather live forever or never grow up?</p>	<p>Peanuts</p> <p>What was your most embarrassing moment?</p>	<p>Crisps</p> <p>Whom would you most like to be stranded on an island with? Why?</p>
<p>Pretzel</p> <p>Would you rather spend a week stranded in the jungle or on a boat? Why?</p>	<p>Peanuts</p> <p>What was your best Halloween costume?</p>	<p>Crisps</p> <p>What is the true definition of success?</p>
<p>Pretzel</p> <p>Would you rather eat a monkey's brains or a pig's eye?</p>	<p>Peanuts</p> <p>What was the best April Fool's joke you have heard of?</p>	<p>Crisps</p> <p>What historical person could teach you the most? Why?</p>
<p>Pretzel</p> <p>Would you rather bungee jump off a bridge or go over a waterfall in a kayak? Why?</p>	<p>Peanuts</p> <p>Describe your worst haircut.</p>	<p>Crisps</p> <p>What is the reason for human existence on earth?</p>

NASA Project

You are the NASA selection committee responsible for choosing a team of eight individuals to travel to a new planet and set up a new society there. You have been given a shortlist of seventeen candidates from which to choose the eight. Consider your decision carefully - the trip is so expensive that it can only be made once every 25 years. Once in place, candidates are not expected to return to earth.

You have 20 minutes.

1. John Stuart. John, a geneticist, is 48 years old. He is asthmatic and has a slight weight problem. He is single and a practising Buddhist. He has a good understanding of electronics. Homosexual.
2. Alan Puncheon. Alan is a 19 year old Caucasian mechanic. He dropped out of school at the age of 16, but attended a six-month mechanic school and has been in work continuously since then.
3. Meg Kavanagh. age 50, is a retired nurse. Mother of three, she is widely read and a keen gardener. She is fond of animals and is now a dog breeder.
4. Richard Dunford, age 42, is a headmaster of a local school. He is fit and healthy and a practising Christian. He is divorced. Hobbies include cricket and tennis.
5. John Pascal is a 28 year old Caucasian Church of England minister.
6. Charles Ponham, age 44. Caucasian. Leading Conservative politician. Ex-army officer. Due to publish a book on social interaction. Married, no children.
7. Anne Scott, age 37. Jewish. Degree in Conservation. As a young woman she worked in the Brazilian rainforest and the Arctic tundra on conservation projects. One son, David.
8. David Scott, age 9. Attends school for children with learning disabilities. Only child.
9. Jean Riley, age 34. Irish origin. Roman Catholic. Nutritionist. Healthy. Married. One child, age 4 weeks.
10. Lisa Riley, 4 weeks old.
11. John Ryder, age 14. Caucasian. Good footballer and in excellent physical condition. Usually finishes top in his class.
12. Mrs. Hussar, age 49. Pakistani origin. Mother of five. Homemaker. Devout Muslim. Vegetarian.
13. Emily Imshad, age 56. Experienced pilot. Degree in engineering. Overweight. Married to Dr. Imshad
14. Randolph Winston, age 23. West Indian origin. Sings in a well-known reggae group. Just completed a SAS survival course.
15. Jim Cotton, age 41. Has been in prison for violence and robbery for most of the past seven years. A qualified carpenter and plumber.
16. Sister Clare, age 40. Mexican origin. Missionary Sister and teacher in kindergarten school. Plays piano, violin and sings. Has diabetes.
17. Mr. Bartlett. Policeman with degree in sociology and politics. Homosexual.

Stranded – the team building version

Participants' optional items when stranded on a desert island.

- Pack of 6 boxes x 50 matches
- 1 crate of beer (12 litres in total)
- 1 crate of bottled spring water (12 litres in total)
- Clockwork transistor radio
- Box of 36 x 50g chocolate bars
- Short hand-held axe
- 20m of 200kg nylon rope
- Bag of 12 mixed daily newspapers
- Bag of 20 fresh apples
- Inflatable 4 person life-raft
- Notebook and pencil
- Whistle
- Box of 50 night-light 6hr candles
- Large full aerosol can of insect killer spray
- Tri-band mobile phone with infrared port and battery half-charged
- Small toolbox containing a hammer, screwdriver set, adjustable wrench, hacksaw, pen-knife
- Small basic first-aid kit containing plasters, bandages, antiseptic ointment, small pair of scissors and pain-killer tablets
- Gift hamper containing half-bottle champagne, large tin of luxury biscuits, box of 6 mince pies, 50g tin of caviar without a ring pull, a 300g tin of ham without a ring pull, 500g Christmas pudding
- Travelling games compendium containing chess, backgammon and draughts
- Box of size 8 women's promotional pink 'Barbie' branded fleece-lined tracksuits (quantity is half of each group/team size)
- Laptop computer with infrared port, modem, unknown software and data, and unknown battery life
- Roll of polythene sheeting (3m x 2m)
- 1 bottle of brandy
- Box of distress signal flares
- Gallon container full of fresh water
- Shovel
- Hand-gun with magazine of 20 rounds
- Box of 24 x 20g bags of peanuts
- Box of tissues
- Electronic calculator
- Compass
- Sewing kit
- Torch with a set of spare batteries
- Bag of 6 large blankets
- Small half-full can of air freshener

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