



Icebreakers

Commonalities

This activity was shared by author and team building guru, Dr. Jim Cain. For more great ideas to build unity, community, connection and teamwork visit www.teamworkandteamplay.com

- Individual
- Pairs
- Small group
- Whole group

Uses: This activity is one which encourages participants to look for things they have in common with each other. It can also be used to form groups of even numbers.

Resources: None.

Time: 10 minutes.

What to do:

1. Ask participants to raise their hand and find someone in the group to give a 'high five' to. They should now be in pairs.
2. Pairs introduce themselves and look for three things they have in common. These could be unusual events, activities or life experiences, as well as the more obvious such as 'we are both wearing trainers!' Encourage participants to dig deep: For example, if they both like reading, what sort of books do they like? Have they read the same book? Did they both enjoy it?
3. You could take feedback at this point from each pair: they feed back the one most unusual thing they have in common.
4. Two pairs now join up and introduce themselves and this time look for another three things all four of them have in common. Again you may want to take some feedback.
5. Groups of four can join another group of four, and again this new group of eight looks for three things they have in common.

You could continue until all groups become one group, or you may choose to stop at the best point for you.

Points to make:

- We know from research that once we feel we know people a bit better, or feel that we have things in common, we are more likely to treat them well.
- To engage effectively with learning, the emotional centres of our brain need to be settled and not feel threatened. Our brain is naturally wary of strangers, and this activity helps to allay our fears.
- At some level we all have a lot in common. It is easier to deal with our differences if we feel we have things in common.