

Activity: Stretching

Purpose: Movement, body shift, can be humour

Time: up to trainer

Materials: None.

Instructions: Stand up, reach up as high as you can reach... reach a little further... reach to the left as far as you can go... reach a little further... reach to the right as far as you can... give the person on your right a gentle push... (laugh) shake it out... sit down...

Variations:

- Have group stand up: use body posture to show sad, angry, excited.
- Plant self firmly on the ground with feet shoulder width apart and be as big as can; move like tree in the wind; try to reach the ceiling.
- Do series of stretches, starting from simple (reaching up, reaching down) to more dynamic (small to large arm circles) and moving through areas of body (neck, arms, hips, knees, ankles).
- Invite participants to suggest a stretch and then whole group do it together (do 3 – 5, or could go around whole circle if group not too large).

Movement Activities to Break up the Day

Word list

Have participants line up single file and on a flip chart with marker, to each come up with a word using the letters of the alphabet in order as the first letter of the word, to go with the topic under discussion. Always discussion and laughter with certain letters such as X ('Xcellent) and Z (Zen).

- *Words of encouragement (awesome, beautiful, coping....)
- *Words of coping (able, breathe, calming....)
- *Words of strategies (alliance, breathing, curiosity....)
- *Words for parents/attachment (acknowledge, be present, connect....)
- *Words of communication (alliance, bounce ideas, connect....)

Activity: Word Associations

Purpose: Movement, joining, humour. This can also be used to form new discussion pairs.

Time: 15 mins.

Materials: Papers (one per participant) with words written on them. Tape.

Trainer selects word pairs and writes one word on one piece of paper. For example:
Ham and eggs; Night and day; Ebb and flow; Poo and Piglet; Rock and roll... etc...
Trainer tapes one paper on the back of each participant.

Instructions: Participants need to mingle and find their “partner” based on the words on their back.

Once the pairs are formed, activity can be over, or they are given a few minutes to explore another question trainer puts on slide. This can be at the beginning of day – so learning something about each other; or this can be used to form a pair for a content related discussion.

Variations:

- Could form groups of larger sizes – trainer would need to think of groupings of words with the numbers they want in each group.

Activity: Number Grouping

Purpose: Movement, joining, humour. This can also be used to form new discussion groups.

Time: 5 - 10 mins.

Materials: None. Best suited for groups of 12 or more. Need open space where people can move around as a large group.

Instructions: Participants are informed they’ll be asked to form groupings quickly based on a number called out.

Facilitator calls out different numbers and participants need to quickly form groups of that number. It doesn’t matter if the group divides evenly into the number – as this is part of the ‘game’ – some may not fit in a group. The trainer should end on a number that does evenly divide (or close to). The activity can end there or can be used to then be discussion groups.

Activity: “Paper or Plastic”

Purpose: Movement, humour. This can also be used to generate joining of different people.

Time: 10 – 20 mins. Really up to trainer.

Materials: Trainer develop list ahead of time of pairs of words that are linked but contrasting. Egs: Paper/ plastic; Stairs/ elevator; Tea/ coffee; Chocolate/ potato chips; Swing or slide; Beach or mountains; Bath or shower; Flip flops or sneakers; Skates or snowshoes.... Etc.

Instructions: Participants told that facilitator will be reading out a word pairing and indicate a side of the room for each. Participants move to the side that correlates with the word they most resonate with. (key is not to overthink!) There is no deep meaning here. Instruct say the word, and point to one side of the room at a time as saying each word.

Do several word pairings in a row to get the group moving. Can pause at anytime to give them a chance to pick someone standing next to them and share why they chose that word.

Activity: Supermodel Exercise

Purpose - Ice breaker or energizer - Great for laughs and relaxation. Shedding of status and roles.

Time required -5-10 minutes.

Materials: Space big enough for participants to form a circle.

Instructions:

1. Arrange participants in a circle.
2. Instruct participants that they have to act out your instructions. When pointed to and given the following commands:

"Super Model" - Participant should immediately pose as a fashion model. The two participants alongside the participant acting as a super model (the one on the left and the right) take the role of photographers and mimic gestures of taking a photo.

"Elephant" - Participant poses as an elephant by immediately thrusting two hands held together in front to represent the elephant's trunk. The two participants alongside form a circle with their hands and place them on the side of the participant pointed to serve as "ears" of the elephant.

"Jello" - Participant shakes his or her body like jello continuously. The two participants alongside hold each other's hands and form a circle around the target participant. The idea is to form a "glass" around the jello.

"Queen Bee" - Participant turns around and puts his or her hands together behind the back (just above the buttocks) and flutters them back and forth to mimic a bee's tail. The two participants alongside thrust their arms away from the bee and flutter them like wings.

"Donkey" - participant and those alongside him or her should freeze and not move at all

Expect that people will be confused and make mistakes. Such mistakes generate laughter and fun. To make the exercise competitive, participants who make a mistake (both the one pointed to and the two participants alongside him or her) can be eliminated from the game.

Activity: Musical Interlude

Purpose – Energizing, movement, meeting other people.

Time required -5-10 minutes.

Materials: Space big enough for participants to move around.

Instructions: Facilitator put some music on, ask participants to mill around, walking with purpose, and making brief acknowledgement by nodding at each other as pass by. Trainer randomly stops the music (like musical chairs), and ask participants to stop and chat for 2 minutes with the last person they nodded to. Trainer can give a focus like : favourite self-care strategies, one item from bucket list, etc...

Do several rounds.

Activity: Imaginary Ball

Purpose – Energizing, movement, humour

Time required -5-10 minutes. Can be useful to do before asking participants to go into a roleplay.

Materials: Space big enough for participants to form a circle.

Instructions: Facilitator can start with an actual tennis ball, bounding it up and down a few times, then throw and bounce it to participants. OR facilitator can just use imaginary ball for whole exercise. Form hands in a shape to symbolize holding an imaginary ball. For example “I’m holding a basket ball in my hands” and then pretend to dribble it a couple of times. Then look across the circle to a participant and say “I’m going to throw this basket ball to *[name]*” and then they will make a perfect catch (since it’s imaginary ball). Then *[name]* will choose a different kind of ball to hold, choose someone in the circle, say their name and throw that ball to them. Etc... continue until everyone has thrown and caught a ‘ball’.

If people do not know each others names at the point you play the game, you can use it to help people learn each others names. I tell them to point to a person and ask their name and to repeat it in the process of throwing the ball. You can emphasize several times during the game that people can add sound effects and vary the body movement. For example when throwing a bowling ball to roll it on the floor.

Your facilitative task is to keep it going and to keep track of who has and has not had the ball. Most groups will do an excellent job of this and see that everyone in the groups gets the ball. But sometimes they lose track and that is when you step in and tell them a certain person has not had the ball yet.

Activity: Baloney or True

Purpose – Energizing, movement, humour

Time required -5-10 minutes. Can be useful to do after lunch or mid-afternoon.

Materials: None.

Instructions: Trainer randomly choose five people from the group (or ask for volunteers) to be the speakers. One at a time, the speaker has to stand up and tell the group ***either*** an interesting truth about themselves ***or*** a complete and total **lie**. Each speaker should only have a few minutes to tell his or her tale. After each speech, ask the group "Who says true?" and ask for a show of hands. Do a quick count and record on a flip chart or whiteboard. Then ask, "Who says BALONEY?" and tally the count. Once the votes are in, determine the majority; then, ask the speaker to reveal the answer. Win or lose, the participants should give each speaker a round of applause.

One great thing about this activity is that it is able to be repeated several times with the same group over a multi-day session; simply have different speakers each day. This icebreaker or energizer is a great way to warm up a new group or wake them up from lunch.
