

Energizers: Humour

Activity: Body Alphabet

Purpose: Movement, energizing, laughter

Time: Quick

Materials: None

Instructions:

Stand up, draw out a big 'O' in the air with your left hand. Good. Now draw out a giant X in the air with your right hand, excellent! Now make an O with the left and an X with the right, then balance on the left foot, make an O with the left foot, and an X with the right hand, etc.

Or, Spell/'write' your name out with different parts of your body, but you can't use your hands (elbows, heads, etc.)

Activity: Laughter Yoga

Purpose: Energizing, laughter

Time: Quick

Materials: None

Instructions:

Context : This is a practice involving prolonged voluntary laughter. Laughter yoga is based on the belief that voluntary laughter provides the same physiological and psychological benefits as spontaneous laughter. Laughter yoga is done in groups, with eye contact, jokes and playfulness between participants. Forced laughter soon turns into real and contagious laughter.

In the mid-1990s, laughter yoga was practiced in the early mornings in open parks, primarily by groups of older people. Laughter yoga was made popular as an exercise routine developed by Indian physician Madan Kataria, who writes about the practice in his 2002 book *Laugh For No Reason*.

The yoga is performed without any humorous reason to laugh, with one practitioner observing that "The mind does not know that we're faking it."

Instructor can start by guiding participants to do some belly breaths, then breathe out quickly with sound, gradually speeding this up so it is laughing. Typically people naturally start laughing for real. Or you can overtly invite everyone to laugh out loud at the count of 3 for a sustained amount of time.

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Activity: Bowl Game

Purpose: Team work, Brainshift, Laughter

Time: Few minutes to longer (can adjust)

Materials: Bowl or similar container for each table, small pieces of paper (several per participant)

Instructions:

At each table have participants write a “person, place, or thing” (something everyone would know – ie. cup, tongue, North Pole...) on a scrap of paper. Each table put all their scraps of paper in the bowl.

Each person at the table takes a turn choosing a piece of paper out of their table’s bowl, and attempts to get your other table members to correctly guess what is written on your paper. The person who submitted the item needs to not give it away. Once everyone has had a turn, return the papers to the bowl.

Go through all the scraps of paper three times using the following methods

First round: Using words only (as many as needed to describe the word on the sheet)

Second round: Using only ONE word

Third round: Using ONLY actions/gestures (no words/sounds)

Variations:

- Have each participant put several papers in the bowl, and use new papers for each round.
- Have each table submit papers, then switch the bowls on the tables, so they are using suggestions from a different group.

Activity: Don’t Laugh Game

Purpose: Dyad work, Laughter, Communication (power of nonverbal communication)

Time: 10 – 15 minutes.

Materials: None. Works in pairs or 3s.

Instructions:

Everyone find a partner – stand or sit across from each other. Select one person to be person A (put hands up) The other is person B.

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Person A's job is to communicate a message to person B without words or physical contact and try to make them laugh. Instructor can give a specific message, such as illustrate one of your most embarrassing moments. (alternatively you could instruct them to try to communicate something they want the other person to do, such as scratch their own nose – you'd have to whisper it to them or let them choose).

Person B's job is to not laugh. (Or alternatively – to try to decipher and follow the other person's instructions – without talking).

Then switch partners....

Activity: Bag of Tricks

Purpose: Props to allow free activity for humour, energy, playfulness

Time: Up to the trainer.

Materials: Almost anything you can think of – Dollar stores have lots of ideas:
Examples: bubbles, silly putty, pipe cleaners and periodically a whoopy cushion to break the ice; mini playdo, wedding bubbles (the party ones are too messy), small size pad of colour pages, pencil crayons for colouring, seashells, rocks

Instructions: Invite participants to take a play - break, or doodle as needed during the day.

Activity: Stretch into Hokey Pokey

Purpose: Energizer, movement, laughing

Time: Couple of minutes to as long as trainer wants.

Materials: None. Don't tell them the name of the activity ahead of time.

Instructions:

Trainer start by leading a group stretch. Give following instructions:

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Reach arms up as high as you can. Then reach your right arm forward as far as you can... reach your right arm out as far as you can... put your right arm back in. Then reach your left arm forward as far as you can... reach your left arm out as far as you can... put your left arm back in, [then trainer shifts to 'sing' instructions] then you-shake-it-all-about. You-do-the-hokey-pokey (help me out sing it with me) and you turn yourself around, that's what it's all about. Then you put your right foot in, and your right foot out... your right foot in, and you-shake-it-all-about. You-do-the-hokey-pokey and you turn yourself around, that's what it's all about.

[Continue with as many body parts as you like. I find it crucial to do the 'hips' as that gets a good laugh going].