

Grouping Icebreakers

Apartments

(also duplicated in the Getting to Know Each Other icebreakers)

This activity offers an opportunity for people to familiarize themselves with each other, as well as a good way for the facilitator to mix up groups. Tell participants that they have moved into apartments, and the apartments only fit a certain number of people. Call out a number (4, 6, 3, etc.) to tell participants how many people need to be in their apartment building. Once in groups, participants tell their small group their name and one unique thing about themselves. Once it appears that everyone has spoken in each group, call out another number. Encourage participants to mix up and join another apartment, then introduce themselves in the same way. Continue calling out numbers and allowing time for participants to introduce themselves, eventually ending by having participants grouped with the number you need for the next small group activity.

You may also choose to have participants group themselves by particular characteristics (such as hair color, style of shoes, or something else immediately identifiable), and/or complete the exercise in a certain type of formulation (everyone from the same agency or country, no one from the same agency or country, etc.).

Shake, Rattle & Roll

Put regular office supplies (pens, paper clips, rubber bands, squares of paper, or other supplies or materials which are simple to find such as small rocks,) in a box, cup, or hat. Have enough objects to accommodate for the number of participants you will have in your class/lesson/training, with an even distribution of objects. For instance, if you are expecting 40 participants and you would like 5 people in each group, have 5 of each object: 5 pens, 5 paper clips, 5 rubber bands, etc.

As participants come into the room, they each take an object from the box. Once all participants have their object, instruct participants to find their group based on who else has the same object. The group must then decide why this object is a good representation for them. For instance, the group is represented by a paper clip because they hold each other together.