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# Ice Breakers and Team Building Activities



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## **Foreword**

This has been designed to assist any youth worker with many different ideas for activities which will assist in developing the young people's developments.

## **Disclaimer**

The activities within this document have been provided for your use with individual and groups of young people. The document writers shall not be liable for any miss-use or injury which may arise from participating in these activities.



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## Icebreakers

Icebreakers are a great way of raising energy and letting people get to know one another. Icebreakers have lively, snappy activities with lots of physical movement, which are a good way of breaking down barriers.

Ensure that you consider each individuals abilities, and therefore alter them with each group, to ensure that everyone can be fully involved.

### Name & Sport

#### Objective

Gather a group, and sit or stand in a semi-circle. The leader says their name and either a sport or interest that they like and includes a mime of the action associated with it. The person to the right, repeats the leaders name and sport, and performs the action, then says their own name and sport with an action. The person to the right then repeats the leaders and the second persons names and sports before their own. Do this for the whole group, helping each other as it becomes more difficult. Go all the way around the group, until it gets back to the leader.

#### Example

- Leader - My name is Jim and I like Snooker (Action hitting a snooker ball)
- Second person – His name is Jam and he likes snooker (With the action) and my name is Julie and I like Horse Riding (Riding Action)
- Third person – His name is Jim and he likes snooker (With the action) her name is Julie and she likes horse riding (With the action) and my name is David, and I like running (With running action)

### Partner Up

#### Equipment

- Pens and paper

#### Objective

The leader hands out pens and paper. The group is asked to partner up, and talk to each other for 5 minutes. Then they have to introduce their partner to the rest of their group, with 5 interesting facts.



Examples of possible questions:

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What are your interests?
- Where do you come from?
- What is your favourite colour?

Use this exercise on day one, to break the ice. Uses presentation skills and is an easier way of introducing themselves. Individuals can sometimes find it easier to talk about someone else.

### **Famous Names**

Equipment

- Pens and paper

Objective

Leader places the names of famous people on each team members back. Individuals have to find out who they are by asking questions for which they can only receive a yes or no answer from other team members. They can only ask one team member, one question at a time.

### **True or False**

Equipment

- Pens and paper

Objective

The leader hands out pens and paper. Individuals have to write down 3 true and 1 false statement about themselves, that they don't mind sharing with others. They then show everyone, and the others have to try and guess which one is the false statement.

### **Interesting Fact**

Objective

Upon arrival, the leader asks each individual to put an interesting fact about themselves, that they don't mind sharing, onto a piece of paper without showing others. The leader then collects the piece of paper, and places them onto flipchart and shows them to the whole group. Ask each individual to question each other to find out which fact is who's.



### Ball & Name

#### Equipment

- Ball

#### Objective

Get the group to stand in a circle. The leader has a ball.

The leader says their name before throwing the ball to a group member. The group member catches the ball and says their name before throwing the ball on, and so on. After all the names have been said a few times, change the rules to saying to name of the person you are going to throw the ball to instead.

### Autograph Party

#### Equipment

- Pens and paper

#### Objective

The leader hands out the below autograph sheet and pens. Individuals have to get as many 'autographs' as possible within the time limit set by leader – Example Sheet

YOU HAVE **XXXX** MINUTES TO GET AS MANY 'AUTOGRAPHS' AS YOU CAN FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Someone who plays an instrument	
Someone who has blue eyes	
Someone who has brown hair	
Someone who wears glasses	
Someone who likes sports	
Someone who has an ear ring	
Someone who has been on holiday	
Someone who likes the colour red	

You can use any questions that will not become personal.



## Team Building Exercises

### Trust

**Exercises that develop trust, build up team spirit. These exercises will enable the team members to feel more comfortable with one another.**

**Trust exercises introduce an element of physical touching that individuals may not appreciate until they have become more familiar with their group – therefore, ensure that you conduct them at an appropriate time.**

### Trust Falls

#### Objective

To develop trust by supporting a falling team member.

Start by asking a volunteer to stand up right with arms crossed across their chest. Take up a stance close behind them with one foot in front of the other, and hands behind the faller's back to support them. When the catcher is ready, that catcher confirms this, and then the faller starts falling and the catcher supports the faller, and then returns them to the upright position, making sure that the faller does not fall to the ground at any time.

*Safety is paramount in this activity as individuals may get carried away with enjoyment.*

### Shrinking Island

#### Equipment

- Large paper/Old carpet piece

#### Objective

To see how small an 'island' the team can stand on.

Leader sets up an island (This can be done with paper, old carpet etc.)

The leader tells the team that their island is shrinking. Everyone must have at least one foot on the island – Nobody is allowed to have a foot in the surrounding water – Nobody may be carried on anyone's backs or lifted off the ground. Once the team are all on the island, the sea comes in and washes half away (Leader makes island smaller) and the team must attempt to stand on it again. This is repeated 2/3 times. Set a time limit for the attempt and 5-10 seconds for keeping on the island.



## Minefield

### Equipment

- Obstacles – Books/Chairs/Tables etc.

### Objective

To get a blindfolded team member through a minefield without touching an obstacle.

Use an open space, and set up obstacles in the path of the team – Use books, chairs, tables or anything that they will have to avoid.

Split the group into two separate groups and start two people off at the same time, one from each end. The rest of the group tell the blindfolded person how to walk through.

Trust in their own groups develops as they can not see if they are about to touch an obstacle. This activity will involve a lot of communication. With two groups trying to instruct two people, lines of communication will become difficult. Everyone should take a turn at crossing the minefield.

## Personal Space

### Objective

To realise individuals personal space barriers.

The team are split into two groups by the leader, and stand facing each other about ten yards apart. Each person must have a partner who they face.

One line of the team will walk towards the other and the person standing will tell their partner when to stop. This being their personal space distance. The closer their partner is, the less personal space that team member needs, the further away then that person needs more space when being approached. Try it a few times, changing partners over.

## Egg/Balloon Toss

### Equipment

- Egg/Balloon

### Objective

To throw an egg/balloon to a partner without breaking it.



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Separate the group into two teams, and stand them opposite each other ensuring that they each have a partner. One of the partners has an egg/balloon filled with water. Start by standing close together and take a step back with each throw. See how far they can step apart before breaking the egg/balloon.

### **Blind Man's Lead**

#### Equipment

- Blindfold

#### Objective

To lead a blindfolded partner and build trust.

In pairs, one person is blindfolded. The sighted partner guides the blindfolded one without physical contact. There could be obstacles.

Pairs then swap over and take turns at leading one another. This will develop trust and team bonding. An alternative would be to use open space and run with blindfolds on.



## Energisers

**Energisers are a great way of rejuvenating a tiring group and will also develop individual skills. Use energisers when group members are familiar with one another as there is a great deal of physical contact involved.**

**You can set time limits on some of the exercises, which will therefore implement an element of time management.**

### Orange and Lemons

#### Objective

To lift the energy levels or tired teams.

Sit the team in a circle around you. Tell each person that they are either an orange or a lemon. Start by asking the lemons to move places. Nobody can move to a place right next to them, they must cross over. You take one place and one person will be left in the middle. They say either orange or lemon and find a place when people move.

Play the game this way for some time, then develop it to what people are wearing – EG – anyone wearing jeans move.

### Noughts and Crosses

#### Equipment

- 9 Chairs

#### Objective

To form lines of three by listening and working together.

This energisers is in the format of the game noughts and crosses, only with humans as either noughts or crosses.

Set nine chairs out in a square format so that three people can form a line of either noughts or crosses. Split the team into two, one noughts and one crosses and have them number themselves. Start by shouting out a number. Team members must listen for the numbers being called out, then run and sit on a vacant chair and try to form a line of three, to win the game. Repeat until the team are re-energised.



### **Tied in Knots**

#### Objective

To un-tie themselves and form a circle by team work and communication.

Get an even number of people to stand in a circle and face inwards. Put their left hand into the middle and take hold of someone else's hand. Then do the same with the right hand, but hold someone else's hand. Set a time limit related to the teams ability and set them to untangle themselves. This may be done by ducking and diving until they can open themselves out into a full circle without letting go of any hands.

### **Turn the Carpet**

#### Equipment

- Rectangular piece of carpet/rug/blanket

#### Objective

To turn a carpet over completely without stepping off it.

Using a rectangular piece of carpet, rug or a blanket – The team will have to stand on one side and turn the carpet over without stepping off it. The carpet must be fully reversed and the team must all be standing on the reverse side to finish.

### **Going through the Motions**

#### Objective

To energise the team.

The team stand in a circle. The Leader starts with a movement – EG: Bends a finger. The next person must then bend their finger and then bring in another action, such as winking one eye. As the turn goes around the team, each person adds another action, until everybody is involved.

### **Passing an Object**

#### Objective

To pass an imaginary object around the group.

The team stand in a circle. The Leader starts by doing an action – EG: Cleaning their teeth, but they say something else. What they say, must be the action that the next person does. EG: If the leader said combing their hair, they must do an action of combing their hair. This carries on until everyone has had a go.



## Issue Based

Issues are difficult to tackle at any time. These exercises may bring out issues that hadn't surfaced before or even highlight existing ones. Be prepared to deal with them and to possibly stop the exercise.

### Space Trip

#### Objective

To decide on an order of important items.

Tell the young people the following :

IMAGINE – That you are an astronaut on the moon. Unfortunately you have been separated from the mother ship as your transport vehicle has broken down. You are 200 miles from the mother ship, so it will take you several days to get back – Below is a list of 15 things that you have found in your transport vehicle. You will not be able to carry them all, so you need to put them in order of importance (1 – 15) so that you can take the most valuable things!

- Solar Powered FM Receiver/Transmitter
- Box of Matches
- Food Concentrates
- 50 Feet of Nylon Rope
- Parachute Silk
- Portable Heating Unit
- Two .45 Calibre Pistols
- One Case of Dehydrated Canned Milk
- Two 100lb Tanks Of Oxygen
- Stellar Map of Moon's Constellation
- Life Raft
- Magnetic Compass
- 5 Gallons of Water
- Signal Flares
- First Aid Kit With Injection Needles

#### Correct Order

1. Two 100lb tanks of oxygen
2. Gallons of water



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3. Stellar map of Moon's Constellation
4. Food concentrates
5. Solar powered FM receiver/transmitter
6. 50 feet of nylon rope
7. First aid kit with injection needles
8. Parachute Silk
9. Life Raft
10. Signal Flares
11. Two .45 Calibre Pistols
12. One Case of Dehydrated canned milk
13. Portable Heating Unit
14. Magnetic Compass
15. Box of Matches

### Fall Out

#### Objective

To decide an order of survivors in a role play.

Below is a briefing sheet – This may be re-produced to ensure the best outcome for your group of young people. The brief is read out, and then the roles that the people should play are handed out.

Timings (vary timings according to group)

- 10/15 mins - Briefing, allocation of roles and agree criteria for selection
- 30/45 mins - Debate and reach your decision
- 10/15 mins - Conduct review of the activity

#### BRIEFING SHEET

There has been warning of an imminent nuclear explosion. Your only chance of survival is in a specially designed shelter but it will not house all of you.

As we don't know how large the shelter is your job is to ensure your group agree a priority order for survival based on the arguments individuals put forward.

Remember you and your group are the only know survivors and the continuance of the human race may depend on your decision.



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ROLE PLAYS (cut out, each participants chooses a role)

1. Mrs Scott, Female, Age 37. Jewish. Degree in Psychology. Works in Psychiatric wing of hospital. Married to Professor Scott. Good health. Parents died in concentration camp.
2. David Scott, Male, Age 13. Attends a special school for children with learning difficulties. Likes animals and watching television. An only child. Very artistic and expressive through his art. The only child of Professor Scott and Mrs Scott.
3. Professor Scott, Male, Age 39. No religion. University teacher in History at London University. In good health. Married with one child. Would like to enter politics. Strong left wing politics.
4. Jean Riley, Female, Age 33. Irish. Roman Catholic. Works as a waitress in a pub since been abandoned by her husband. One child. Good health.
5. Karen Riley, Female, Age 11. Irish. Brought up Roman Catholic. Very protective of her mother. Good health and works hard at school. Determined to succeed and provide for her mother later on.
6. John Ryder, Male, Age 14. English. Father a Methodist Minister. Exceptional footballer. Usually finishes at top of his class at school. Independent character.
7. Jim Cotton, Male, Age 41. Spent 15 out of the last 24 years in prison for violence and robbery. Been going straight for the last 5 years. Wife disabled through an accident. 3 children. Provides a caring role at home and in the community helping young people. Trained carpenter and builder.
8. Jung Chang, Female, Age 19. Chinese. Sociology student in England. Parents live in Peking. Very attractive. Has received offers to go on TV. High moral values. Respects parent's wishes for arranged marriage.
9. Jobe Naidoo, Male, Age 38. Born in South Africa. Actively involved with ANC politics. Christian minister. Married with 4 children. Enjoys jazz music. Experience of guerrilla activities during South Africa's struggles. A resourceful character.
10. Jayne Annis, Female, Age 34. Housewife. English. 3 children. Known to have had extra marital affairs. Open relationship with current partner. Expert at household management and decorating.



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11. Mrs Hussian, Female, Age 29. Pakistani. Devout Muslim, teaches at a sixth form college. Has a first class education, multi-lingual and ambitious.
12. Dr Imshad, Male, Age 62. Indian Sikh who has spent years working on Cancer research. Feels that he is close to a major break through. Had two heart attacks in last five years.
13. Sister Clare, Female, Age 40. Worked in Asia with starving people. Experienced agriculturist in developing food programmes from poor land. She is now chief fund raiser for her order. In good health.
14. Susan Carter, Female, Age 23. Trainee nurse. English, engaged to Frantz. Only child, gives up a lot of her spare time doing voluntary work.
15. Frantz Holtein, Male, Age 31. German pianist and composer. Lives in England, engaged to Susan. Has won world acclaim for his music. Atheist. Has a drink problem.
16. Randolph Winston, Male, Age 31. West Indian in final years at Medical school. Plans are to earn as much as possible as a GP doctor then retire to travel the world. He is bisexual.



## Communications

Every team building exercise requires communication in some form or another. These exercises are specific to communication where attending and listening skills can be developed.

### Communications Drawing

#### Equipment

- Pencils & Paper

#### Objective

To copy a drawing from spoken directions only.

This activity can be used in a number of ways. The Leader draws a pattern with different shapes on piece of paper: Circles, boxes, triangles etc. Split the group in to pairs, 1 of the pair is shown the drawing and then must try to direct their partner to copy this pattern through only speech (They can not see the pattern). This can also be done in groups of three or four.

Whoever gives the instructions will soon realise that it is not easy.

### Questions

#### Equipment

- Pens & Paper

#### Objective

To test listening skills by answering questions

These questions are not aimed to trick anyone. Tell them that you will only ask the questions once and that they are not allowed to speak.

#### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. How many animals of each species did Moses take into the ark?
2. Some months have 31 days, some have 30, but how many have 28?
3. Which Country has a 4th July – The UK, US or France?
4. If you are alone in a deserted house at night and there is a lamp, firewood and a candle and you only had one match, which would you light first?
5. Why can't a man living in York be buried west of the Trent?



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6. If you have two coins totalling 11pence, and one of them is not a 10 pence piece, what are the two coins?
7. Is it legal for a man to marry his widow's sister?
8. If you drove a bus leaving Waterloo with 40 passengers and dropped off 7, and picked up 2 at Aldwych, stopped at Holburn and picked up 10, and went on to St.Pauls, dropped 8 off there, and picked up 5 then drove on to arrive at Liverpool Street 6 minutes later, what was the station name from where you left?

You can use other questions along similar lines, where the answers are irrelevant.

## Newspapers

### Equipment

- Newspapers
- Blindfold's

### Objective

To re-arrange a newspaper under directions.

Split the group up into smaller teams. One member of the team is chosen to be the 'Speaker', and the rest of the team wear blindfolds. Blindfolded team members have to re-arrange a newspaper into the correct page order, under instructions spoken from the 'speaker'.



## Team

The team building exercises listed below involve a great deal of physical activity. They build on icebreakers, trust and communication exercises in forming the group into a single working unit.

### Squares

#### Equipment

- Chalk
- Paper & Pens

#### Objective

To form the correct order of numbers in a square.

Chalk mark the numbers from one to eight in a large square, leaving one blank at the end – EG:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

Pin the numbers one to eight on team members and place them in the square on different numbers. They have to re-arrange themselves into the correct order marked on the ground, but they can only move one step at a time. Just like a 'Rubik's Cube'. They cannot step out of the square.

### Egg Rocket

#### Equipment

- Eggs
- A4 Card
- Paper
- Toilet Roll
- Cello tape
- Pritt Stick

#### Objective

To land an egg safely without it breaking.

Using only the equipment provided, teams must design and build something which if an egg is dropped onto it, it will not break.



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## Highest Tower

### Equipment

- Newspaper's
- Cello Tape

### Objective

To build the highest newspaper tower.

Split the group up into teams. Give each team the same amount of Cello Tape and Newspaper. The team has 30 minutes to build the highest possible tower using only the Newspaper and Cello Tape.



## Reviewing Techniques

Reviewing activities are essential to draw out the development and learning for individuals. This section lists examples of creative reviewing techniques designed to stimulate discussion during reviews.

### The Good, The Bad & the Funny

Participants reflect upon the good, bad and funny aspects of the activity. This can be done by using individual's different questions about what they thought about the activity. The Leader should take up relevant points that may require further discussion.

### Creativity

Gather the group together and cut out pictures or quotes from magazines that they feel reflect upon the activity, and make these into a collage on a large board. This type of review can be seen as an activity itself.

### Unfinished Sentences

Each team member completes an unfinished sentence about the activity – Example:

- a) The reason I'm taking part in the programme is ...
- b) The thing I've enjoyed the most about today is ...
- c) Something I'll remember about today is ...