

▶ Section 1

Forming

The Forming section offers activities for mixing and grouping participants and involving them in introductions and interactions with others. These activities prepare participants for involvement in the training that follows.

The Forming stage of group development refers to that time when people first come together to attend a training session, develop a team, or begin a group. There are patterns of behavior at this stage that are typical, whether the participants are present for training, forming a group, or working with a team.

People come into new situations as individuals, with unique ideas of what to expect from the experience. Some may be fearful, others impatient, and still others resistant or intrigued. Some may have been required by a supervisor to attend and others may have enrolled voluntarily. The reasons people are in attendance often affect their initial attitudes.

For example, one training held by a small corporation required attendance by all corporate staff. It seems the CEO of the company had discovered a new way of improving linkage between departments and wanted to implement the method companywide. Response from the staff ranged from strong resistance to the idea to acceptance of the inevitable. Many staff members held a “show me” attitude. The trainer in this case had to help the participants move beyond these expectations. He did so by mixing people up into small groups to separate and defuse the negative attitudes. He then used a get-acquainted activity to get the group members talking and eventually to move them toward personal sharing. His careful approach produced a more cooperative

and positive response from participants to the actual “meat” of the training.

For the most part, however, participants are polite and cooperative at the forming stage. Trainers, facilitators, and team leaders can take advantage of this attitude of cooperation by gently encouraging the participants to get to know each other, to talk, and to share. As people begin to communicate with others, they begin to move toward involvement with the work of the group. Until participants have an opportunity to speak, they will not join the work of the training or team.

Selecting Activities

Activities used at the beginning of training sessions or meetings should be low risk. People aren't in a place where they are comfortable calling attention to themselves, standing and speaking alone, or revealing personal information. To maintain this low level of risk, the activities in this section invite participants to share in groups or with partners and to offer only as much information about themselves, their thoughts, or feelings as they feel comfortable sharing.

Choose activities according to the personality characteristics of the group or team with whom you will be working. People who are logical, rational thinkers, for example, will be more task oriented (focused on the work and outcomes) than people who are more relationship oriented and will be concerned with process (looking at how the group does the work). Providing a variety of activities for diverse groups helps ensure the involvement of all participants.

Also, the length of the training or length of time a team or group will be together is very important in choosing introductory activities. For shorter training sessions, use short activities that may only require sharing names and a little personal history. The longer the group is going to be together, the more time should be devoted to getting acquainted.

When you, as facilitator or trainer, find yourself feeling awkward or uncomfortable leading an activity, do something different. You are a model for how participants will respond to any activity, so choose something that you enjoy doing.

Why Group Participants?

Breaking up a large group of people into small working groups allows all participants to be involved in the activities and sharing that are part of interactive training. Participants feel safer, less exposed, and are more likely to share information and ideas with small groups of people. In addition, grouping reduces the time required for any activity. For example, if fifty people take turns introducing themselves, it could take an hour or more to hear from everyone. Giving participants the opportunity to introduce themselves in small groups will take just a few minutes.

We recommend that all groups of more than eight or ten participants always be grouped. Grouping helps move the training along and provides opportunities for greater participation. The trainer can have small groups cover material in ways that allow everyone to interact with the material and information in the training. Participants working in small groups have more opportunities to speak than those in one large group do. Small groups usually develop a level of trust as the work proceeds that allows for open sharing of thoughts and ideas.

It is important to mix people up before forming groups or teams to improve participants' opportunities to connect with new and different people. Most people will, if given the choice, sit with people they know. There are also the occasional hostile pockets of participants who were coerced into attendance and who are influenced by each other's negative feelings. Separating these people defuses the hostility and encourages their buy-in as the training progresses. Using a game to mix people up and to form teams is an efficient approach and reduces resistance from participants who don't want to leave their chosen space.

Once groups are formed, participants will need to begin connecting with other group members. Again, get-acquainted activities accomplish this task in nonthreatening ways. While the activities suggest that participating in sharing is required, participants have the freedom to choose how much or how little they say.

Common Issues in Training and Group Work

What if . . .

- *The participants already know one another?* It is still important for participants to have an opportunity to meet and greet one another. No one is part of a group until he or she speaks in the group. It is equally important that participants be mixed up before grouping, as they will still be sitting with their closest acquaintances.
- *A participant absolutely refuses to move?* At the end of the grouping activity, simply ask a group to join that person. Under no circumstances should you try to force that person to participate. There are people who have severe phobias about new situations.
- *People come in after the introductory activity has begun?* Lead those people to a group and ask that all group members reintroduce themselves. Explain the rest of the activity to the newcomer.
- *The training or meeting room is not set up for group work?* Improvise. If you are stuck with theater style, put groups in two rows, half the group sitting in front of the other half. They can then turn around for discussions and activities.
- *Your training or meeting room is a large conference room?* Move the chairs and tables needed for the number of participants you are expecting to one side of the room and turn over the chairs that you do not want participants to use. Also, large conference rooms are infamous for being too hot or too cold. Encourage people to let you know if they are uncomfortable, and assure them you will do what you can to fix the problem.
- *Your training or meeting room is really too small for your group?* Prior to starting the training, identify additional space where groups can work. Hallways, offices, and other meeting rooms can serve as workspace for small groups. Do a minimal amount of lecture with the whole group, and then give assignments and move from group to group to teach other concepts.

- *The numbers of participants exceeds fifty?* When you have over fifty participants in a training, time is a major issue. Moving large numbers of people around is time-consuming. To help control time, plan assigned seating, prior to the training, that will mix participants up and put them in teams. Put colors or numbers that match with tables on nametags to indicate where participants will sit for the training. Also, with large groups, ask for volunteers to share results rather than having every team report out every time. Another concern with large groups is breaks. Getting people out of the room and back in takes time. We recommend that you have fewer and longer breaks and use the energizer activities found in Section 3 to allow people to take breaks from the work without leaving their seats.
- *There are fewer than ten participants?* When you have fewer than ten people show up for a training, the time problem is reversed. Everything, from introductions to activities, takes much less time. There is also less energy and enthusiasm to build on with a small group. Try to avoid this situation by requiring that a minimum number of participants be signed up in order to hold the training. If you end up working with a small number—anywhere from three to nine participants—give them roles in presenting parts of the material. They can use your planned activities or invent their own. This approach gives participants responsibility for their own learning and the learning of the others in the group. It engages participants and promotes involvement.



Planning Ahead

Dear Diary: Getting Started

Letter Writing

Shared Agreements

Tuck Away

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► Dear Diary: Getting Started

Purpose Trainers should use this activity for training lasting longer than a day. This activity is designed to give participants regular opportunities to reflect on new learning and experiences they have during the training.

Risk Level Low

Time 10 minutes at the middle and end of each training day

Number of Participants Twenty-five maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Small notebooks provided to participants are nice but not necessary.

Directions

1. Explain to participants that they will be keeping a diary of their training experiences.
2. They will be expected to reflect in writing on any new learning or experiences they have during the training.
3. Allow no more than 10 minutes before lunch and at the end of the day for participants to write in their diaries.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants if they came up with questions during their reflection about the material covered to this point.
- Take time to address any questions. Let participants know that they will be sharing some of their thoughts and insights on the last day of the training. (*Note:* The closure for this activity is Dear Diary: Closure in the Adjourning section.)

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▶ Letter Writing

Purpose This activity gives trainers a formal way of welcoming participants and describing their expectations for the training.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- A copy of the letter (see sample) for each participant. The letter can be sent to participants in advance of the training.

Directions

1. Write a letter to participants based on the sample provided, and make a copy for each participant. You may want to address specifics of the topic of the training or group work in the letter.
2. Distribute the letters as participants arrive at the training or mail in advance of the training.
3. Review the letter with participants prior to starting the training and ask if there are any questions.

Processing the Activity

- See Letter Writing Continued in the Adjourning section.

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Letter Writing: Letter to Participants

Dear participants in the _____ training (group):

I want to welcome you as a participant in the _____. Our work begins at _____ o'clock and ends at _____ o'clock each day [today]. I will start and end the training on time. Please make every effort to be here on time and to stay for the entire training. Also, please keep to the allotted times for lunch and breaks.

We will be working hard during our time together, and I look forward to your full participation. It is my hope that you will be challenged and have fun during this training session and that it will be a rewarding learning experience for all of us.

Sincerely,
[NAME]
[CREDENTIALS]

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▶ Shared Agreements

Purpose This activity establishes the expectations of the trainer and the participants at the start of the training.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- Flip chart
- Markers

Directions

1. Explain to participants that at the beginning of the training it is a good idea for the trainer and the trainees (or group) to come to some shared agreements about expectations for the training.
2. Give an example: "One of my expectations is that everyone here will participate. One of your expectations may be that we end on time."
3. With the group, brainstorm expectations (yours and theirs) and write them on flip chart paper. Allow 10 minutes for this part of the activity.
4. Keep the shared agreements visible throughout the training.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants why it is important for the trainer and participant to have shared agreements (reduces misunderstandings during the training).

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Tuck Away

Purpose This activity encourages participants to make the transition from their work and personal life to the training.

Risk Level Low

Time 10 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- Plain paper and an envelope for each participant

Directions

1. Instruct participants to write their names on the backs of their envelopes.
2. Tell them to write down all the cares, worries, and responsibilities they left behind when they came to the training on a piece of paper and place it in the envelope. Allow 5 minutes for this part of the activity.
3. Collect the envelopes and tell them that their cares, worries, and responsibilities are now tucked away and their minds are free to focus on new learning.

Processing the Activity

- Tell participants they will revisit what they wrote at the end of the training. (See Tuck Away II in the Adjourning section.)

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Forming Groups

The Continents

It's a Puzzle

Quotables

Snapshots

Synonyms

True Colors

<http://www.pbookshop.com>

▶ The Continents

Purpose This activity mixes participants up and puts them in groups.

Risk Level Low

Time 25 minutes

Number of Participants Forty-eight maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Masking tape
- Six pieces of flip chart paper, with a continent written on each one
- Index cards, each with a different country, city, province, or state written on it, one per participant

Note: Use the Continents, Countries, Provinces, States, and Cities list that follows the activity to assist in preparing the flip chart sheets and index cards. For smaller groups, just remove index cards evenly from different continents.

Directions

1. Using masking tape, post the flip chart papers in various areas of the room.
2. Distribute index cards, one per participant.
3. Tell participants that they have the name of a country, city, province, or state found on one of the six continents.
4. Instruct them to go and stand under the continent where they believe their country, city, province, or state is located. Tell them they can help each other. Allow 10 minutes for this part of the activity, although most groups finish before time is up.

5. Once they are in their continent groups, ask them to introduce themselves and share a travel experience. Allow 10 minutes for this part of the activity.
6. Instruct the groups to move their things and sit together.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants what the activity accomplished. (It mixed them up and put them in groups.)
- Ask if anyone got a country, city, province, or state he or she would like to visit and why.

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The Continents, Countries, States, Provinces, and Cities

Africa

Egypt
Kenya
Algeria
Morocco
Mozambique
Tanzania
Mali
Ethiopia

South America

Brazil
Argentina
Bolivia
Uruguay
Paraguay
Chile
Venezuela
Ecuador

Asia

China
India
Pakistan
Russia
South Korea
Turkey
Saudi Arabia
Thailand

North America

Mexico
Alberta
Ontario
Quebec
California
New York
Alaska
Florida

Europe

Norway
France
Spain
Portugal
England
Switzerland
Germany
Romania

Australia

New South Wales
Melbourne
Sydney
Brisbane
Perth
Canberra
Queensland
Adelaide

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▶ It's a Puzzle

Purpose This activity is designed to form small, mixed groups.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Forty maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Poster paper, one piece for each question. Poster paper should all be the same color.
- Write the questions from the Questions for the Puzzles sheet (or use your own) in large print on individual pieces of poster paper or cardboard. Prepare as many pieces of poster paper as you want groups for the training.
- *Cut the posters in the same number of pieces as you want people in your groups.* For example, if you want six people per group, cut each puzzle into six pieces. The pieces should be cut jigsaw style. Once you have all the posters cut into pieces, mix the pieces up.

Directions

1. Give each participant a puzzle piece as he/she arrives at the training session.
2. Tell people that they must find the other people with pieces to their puzzle before the training starts.
3. They should sit with this group of people and discuss their question.

Processing the Activity

- Welcome participants.
- Be sure each group has had an opportunity to answer the question on their puzzle.
- Ask for volunteers to share something they learned about a group member.

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It's a Puzzle: Questions for the Puzzles

What is your favorite vacation spot?

What do you do when you are not working?

Who are the most significant people in your life and why?

Where would you live if you could live anywhere?

What is your favorite book or movie and why?

What is your prized possession?

What historical figure would you invite to dinner?

Note: Instead of using the questions above, you could write questions or statements related to the training on the puzzles.

▶ Quotables

Purpose This activity helps participants to mix with others and find a partner.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Twenty-six (more can be accommodated if trainer increases the number of quotes)

Materials/Preparation

- Thirteen index cards with quotes written on them (see the Quotables: Quotes and Speakers list)
- Thirteen index cards with the quoted person's name on them

Directions

1. Shuffle the cards and give one to each participant.
2. Tell participants to find their partners by matching the quote and the person who said it. Because some people may not recognize certain quotes, it is important that participants help each other make the matches (10 minutes).
3. Once they have made their matches, tell them to move their things and sit with their partners.
4. Ask them to interview one another in preparation for introducing their partners to the larger group.
5. Have each pair stand and introduce each other.

Processing the Activity

- Ask what this activity accomplished. (It mixed people up and moved them around.)
- Ask participants what they learned.

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Quotables: Quotes and Speakers List

That's one small step for man, one giant leap forward for mankind.

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.

When in doubt, tell the truth.

The physician can bury his mistakes, but the architect can only advise his clients to plant vines.

Why don't you come up and see me sometime?

Father, I cannot tell a lie, I did it with my little hatchet.

In the future, everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes.

Love conquers all things.

A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.

I have a dream . . .

Sir, I have not yet begun to fight.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Neil Armstrong

Muhammad Ali

Mark Twain

Frank Lloyd Wright

Mae West

George Washington

Andy Warhol

Virgil

Sir Winston Churchill

John F. Kennedy

Martin Luther King

John Paul Jones

William Hickson

Source: Jones, A., with Pickering, S., & Thomson, M. (Eds.). (1996). *Chambers Dictionary of Quotations*. Edinburgh: Chambers, an imprint of Larousse ple.

▶ Snapshots

Purpose This activity helps participants find partners and get acquainted.

Risk Level Low

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Twenty maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Polaroid™ camera
- Extra film
- Flip chart paper
- Tape or glue
- Markers

Note: A participant who arrives early can be asked to help you with this preparation.

Directions

1. Take a Polaroid picture of each participant as he or she arrives.
2. Spread the pictures on a table at the front of the room and pair them up.
3. Invite participants up to the table to find their own picture and meet their partner (5 minutes).
4. Give each set of partners a piece of flip chart paper, tape or glue, and markers.
5. Ask them to glue their pictures to the paper.
6. Ask participants to talk with each other, and as they learn something about their partners, to write the information on the flip chart paper under the partner's picture (5 minutes).

7. At the completion of the activity, invite the partners to post their pictures on the wall.
8. Give everyone a chance to walk around and “meet” the other participants by reading their flip chart papers (10 minutes).

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants what they found intriguing about each other.
- Encourage participants to seek each other out during breaks in the training.

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▶ Synonyms

Purpose This activity is intended to form small, mixed groups.

Risk Level Low

Time 30 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty maximum

Materials/Preparation Thirty slips of paper, each with a different word written on it, one word per piece of paper. (For a list of the words, see the Synonyms List at the end of this activity.)

Note: For groups with fewer than thirty people, remove slips from different groupings of words.

Directions

1. Mix the slips of paper together and distribute them, one to each participant.
2. Tell participants they are to find others who have synonyms (words that have the same, or nearly the same, meaning) for their words. Allow 5 minutes for this part of the activity.
3. Once they have found their synonym group, they should get their materials and sit with their group (5 minutes).
4. Tell participants to introduce themselves and share one thing they hope to gain from this workshop that is related to the synonyms in their group. For example, a participant in the skill/proficiency group might share the desire to gain proficiency in [subject of training] (15 minutes).

Processing the Activity

- Ask for a volunteer from each group to share what members of the group hoped to gain from the training related to their synonyms.
- Explain that this training will supply the information and the tools for participants to gain knowledge and skills in the area of [training subject].

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Synonyms List

Information	Data	Facts	Statistics	Records	Figures
Tools	Gear	Equipment	Utensils	Apparatus	Paraphernalia
Plan	Strategy	Diagram	Map	Sketch	Graph
Knowledge	Wisdom	Insight	Perception	Astuteness	Acumen
Skill	Proficiency	Ability	Talent	Know-how	Competence

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▶ True Colors

Purpose This activity creates mixed groups and provides participants an opportunity to share.

Risk Level Low

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited (in small groups of six to eight)

Materials/Preparation

- Name tags
- A variety of colored dots. Stick dots on name tags using the different colors to create groups. For example, if you want to create groups of eight, put green dots on eight of the name tags.
- Table signs with the different colors on them

Note: For a large number of participants, you may want to use crayons to make the dots, as this will provide access to a greater number of colors.

Directions

1. Distribute name tags. As participants arrive, tell them to sit at the tables that display the same colors as the dots on their name tags.
2. Once participants are seated, ask them to introduce themselves to their groups and share a role that the table color plays in their lives. For example, someone seated at the red table may have a red car. Someone seated at the yellow table may enjoy being outside in the sunshine. Each person in the group should be allowed 3 minutes to share.

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to share something interesting they learned from other group members.
- Ask how colors affect our work environment and our lives.

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Getting Acquainted

Collectible Items

For Sale

Forced Choices

Get Acquainted Quietly

Give a Sign

Head to Toe

In the News

It's in the Cards

Keep It Up

The Kid in All of Us

Pals

<http://www.pbookshop.com>

▶ Collectible Items

Purpose This activity is ideal for a one-day training session. It encourages participants to meet as many people as possible.

Risk Level Low

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty maximum (in small groups of six to eight)

Materials/Preparation

- Small paper bags, one for each participant

Directions

1. Explain that participants will be trying to collect nonreturnable items from the other participants in the room. Distribute paper bags.

Note: Collectible items may include business cards, gum, candy, paper clips, receipts—anything people are willing to give and not get back.

2. Tell them that they must first introduce themselves in their small groups and share one piece of personal information about themselves.
3. Once the groups have completed introductions, explain that they will have 5 minutes to move around the room introducing themselves to others. Participants introduce themselves to each person they meet and ask for a collectible item. Participants should respond to the askers by saying their names and either giving the askers items or saying they have nothing left to give away.
4. Explain that no one can take more than one item from any one person.

5. Once the participants have moved around the room attempting to collect from others for 5 minutes, ask them to return to their groups.
6. Tell participants to continue collecting items at breaks and lunch, never asking for an item from someone they have already met.

Processing the Activity

- See Collectible Items II in the Adjourning section.

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▶ For Sale

Purpose This activity is an energizing way for a small group of participants to learn each other's names.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 25 minutes

Number of Participants Twenty maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Newspaper "For Sale" columns, each listing ten items, one column per participant

Note: Choose a variety of For Sale columns, such as Furniture, Computers, Antiques, Boats, Livestock, Exercise Equipment, and Automobiles.

- A piece of plain paper for each participant
- Scissors for each participant
- A small envelope for each participant
- Glue sticks or tape for each participant

Directions

1. Distribute the columns, paper, scissors, small envelopes, and glue.
2. Tell participants to cut their For Sale columns into individual ads and place them in the envelopes.
3. Explain that they will be exchanging their items for items they want. They can only have one of a kind. If they have a column of cars for sale, for example, they can keep one, but must trade the rest for other things.
4. Tell them to introduce themselves and shake hands with participants before they try to trade. Allow 10 minutes for this part of the activity.

5. Once they have traded all their items, they should return to their seats and glue their new items to a plain piece of paper (5 minutes).
6. Instruct participants to find partners and explain to their partners why they chose the items they did. Allow 2 minutes for each partner to share.
7. Invite participants to write their names on their papers and post them around the room.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants what they found interesting about other participants as a result of this activity.
- Ask participants if they learned anything about themselves from the items they chose to collect.

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▶ Forced Choices

Purpose This activity helps participants to identify things they have in common.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 to 20 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- Three pieces of paper numbered 1, 2, and 3 posted in different areas of the room
- A copy of the Forced Choice Statements sheet for the facilitator
- Masking tape

Directions

1. Tell participants that you will be reading statements and will offer three choices for completing the statements.
2. Point to three different parts of the room to which participants will move depending on their choices.
3. Read the first statement and the three choices from the Forced Choice Statements sheet. As you mention each choice, point to the different parts of the room.
4. Once everyone has made a choice, ask participants to introduce themselves in that group and tell why they made the choice they did. Allow the groups 3 minutes to share each time.
5. Repeat the above instructions with two more forced choice statements.

Processing the Activity

- Ask whether anyone met some of the same people each time.
- Note that people often have more in common than they realize.

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Forced Choices: Forced Choice Statements

My favorite form of technology is . . . a cell phone, laptop, or PDA.

My favorite ethnic restaurant is . . . Mexican, Greek, or Italian.

My favorite form of transportation is . . . train, car, or plane.

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▶ Get Acquainted Quietly

Purpose This activity offers participants an entertaining way to get to know one another.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation None

Directions

1. Tell participants that they are about to get to know someone else in this training session without speaking.
2. Instruct participants to silently look around the room and choose a partner through eye contact.
3. Tell them to go and stand next to their partners without speaking.
4. Explain that each partner will have 3 minutes to communicate information about himself or herself without speaking. Give an example: "Point to your wedding ring to indicate that you are married."
5. Tell participants you will call time at the end of 3 minutes and then the other partner will have 3 minutes to share silently.
6. At the end of the silent sharing, ask partners to tell each other what they learned from their silent conversation.

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to share how accurate or inaccurate they were in interpreting their partners' sharing.

- Ask the group whether they shared more or less than they would have verbally and why this was true.

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Give a Sign

Purpose This activity allows partners a unique way of introducing each other.

Risk Level Low

Time 30 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Poster board cut in half (12×18), one half per participant
- Markers
- Masking tape

Directions

1. Ask participants to move around the room and partner up with someone they do not know.
2. Tell partners to introduce themselves and tell each other a few things about themselves. Explain that the information will be posted later and shared with the whole group. Each partner should have about 4 minutes to share.
3. Hand out the materials and instruct participants to design catchy billboards that advertise their partners, based on what their partners have shared (10 minutes).
4. Instruct each participant to introduce his or her partner to the group using the billboards they have designed.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants to put their partners' names on the billboards and post them around the room.
- Invite participants to visit the billboards and learn about fellow participants during breaks from the training.

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Head to Toe

Purpose This activity uses the appearance of participants to “break the ice.”

Risk Level Moderate

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- A piece of flip chart paper with the following words listed on it: Head, Face, Shoulders, Arms, Hands, Torso, Legs, Feet
- Masking tape

Directions

1. Post the flip chart paper and instruct participants to stand and find partners.
2. Tell them to start with their heads and share something about themselves related to their heads. For example, a participant may have red hair she inherited from her Irish father.
3. Partners should then move to their faces, sharing something about their faces.
4. Instruct the participants to move through the posted list, sharing something about each listed part of their anatomy or about the clothing or accessories they are wearing. They can share their favorite use of their hands, what they enjoy putting in their stomachs, where they like their feet to take them, and so on.
5. After participants have been through the list for each of them, ask for volunteers to share something they learned about a partner.

Processing the Activity

- Ask how this activity helped participants get to know their partners.
- Ask why personal sharing is sometimes easier in a structured activity.

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In the News

Purpose This activity is designed as a low-risk way to start participants talking with one another.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- Name tags numbered to indicate table assignments
- A numbered tent card for each table
- Headlines or articles cut from current newspapers or magazines for each table (Avoid controversial features.)

Directions

1. As participants arrive, instruct them to go to the tables that display the numbers on their name tags.
2. Welcome them as a whole group and ask them to introduce themselves to the other people at their tables.
3. Instruct table groups to spend about 8 minutes discussing the headlines or articles on their tables.

Processing the Activity

- Explain that most people have opinions or feelings about the events going on in the world.
- Ask for volunteers to share what their groups discussed.
- Ask participants what this activity accomplished.

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► It's in the Cards

Purpose This activity allows participants to make connections through playing cards.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Forty maximum (in small groups of six to eight)

Materials/Preparation

- One deck of playing cards per small group

Directions

1. Divide participants into small groups and give one person in each group a deck of playing cards. Instruct the participants with the card decks to deal three cards to each group member.
2. Explain that each participant is to make personal connections based on the numbers or symbols on his or her card. Give an example: "A Jack could represent the one you carry in the trunk of your new car. The Five of Hearts may represent members of your family. The Ace could represent some special skill you have."

Note: Participants can be as silly or as serious as they wish in making personal connections to the cards.

3. Tell them to share those personal connections with their small groups. Each group member will just have 2 minutes to share.
4. Ask each small group to share with the entire group some of the most farfetched and the most informative connections group members made to their cards.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants the purpose of using cards to instigate sharing. (The cards serve as triggers to help people share more and different things about themselves.)
- Ask how the shared information gives them a greater understanding of the group members.

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► Keep It Up

Purpose This activity gives a small number of participants an energetic way to learn each other's names.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Fifteen maximum

Materials/Preparation

- One large, inflated balloon and two additional inflated balloons for backup

Space Requirements Open area that can accommodate a circle of participants

Directions

1. Instruct participants to stand in a large circle.
2. Tell them that they are going to start the balloon moving around the circle and they must keep it in the air and moving at all times.
3. Each time a participant has contact with the balloon, he or she must say his or her name.
4. Everyone should have contact with the balloon at least once. The balloon should move around the circle at least three times. If the balloon hits the floor, it must be returned to the person who first touched the balloon to begin again.
5. Start by throwing the balloon to someone in the circle.

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to tell the group whose names they remember.
- Ask how physical activity like the balloon game serves as an icebreaker.

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▶ The Kid in All of Us

Purpose This activity allows participants to have a little fun introducing themselves to others.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty (in small groups of five or six)

Materials/Preparation

- One balloon tied to the chair of each participant
- Toys placed in the middle of each group's table (blocks, small cars, puzzles, dolls, clay, crayons, and coloring books)

Note: Many participants will play with the toys prior to the start of the workshop. If this occurs, note when you welcome them that there seems to be a lot of kid in us.

Directions

1. Ask participants to think about the kids they once were.
2. Ask them to share a little about their childhood with the rest of their group as a way of introducing themselves.
3. Tell them to share a little about what has changed in them as adults and what has not. Each group member will have 2 minutes to share.
4. Ask for volunteers to share what their group talked about.

Processing the Activity

- Note that the toy box is the child's workplace. Ask participants how it differs from the tools they use at work now.
- Invite participants to play with the toys during breaks in the training.

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Pals

Purpose This activity allows participants to move around while becoming acquainted.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- A CD player
- Music

Space Requirements Open area, free of tables and chairs

Directions

1. Tell participants that when you play the music, they should move around the room smiling and nodding at one another.
2. When the music stops they are to find partners, shake hands, and introduce themselves. They should then find out where their partners were born. These people will always be their handshake partners.

Note: Play the music for no more than 1 minute each time. Each time you stop the music, allow participants 3 minutes to talk with their new partners.

3. Next, tell participants that this time, when the music stops, they will partner up with new people, introduce themselves, and give their partners a high-five (two people face each other and touch palms and fingers high in the air). They should then tell their partners what they do for fun. These people will always be their high-five partners.

4. Then tell participants to quickly find their handshake partners and tell these partners about the high-five partners they just met (no music).
5. Now tell partners you will play the music again while they move around to find new partners. When the music stops, they will partner up, introduce themselves, and give these partners pats on the back. Partners should then share something they are proud of. These people will always be their pats-on-the-back partners.
6. Then tell participants to find their high-five partners and tell them about the pats-on-the-back partners they just met (no music).
7. Instruct participants that this time when they hear the music they should wave goodbye to their partners and return to their seats.

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to introduce their “pats-on-the-back” partners to the whole group.
- Ask for participants to share something interesting they learned about one of their partners.

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Sharing Information

About Me

Common Denominator

Family Tree

Four Things I Want to Share

My Story

Patchwork Quilt

Pot of Gold

Self-Portrait

State Your Business

The Story of My Life

Who Am I?

<http://www.pbookshop.com>

▶ About Me

Purpose This activity offers participants a way of getting acquainted that incorporates movement.

Risk Level Low

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty maximum

Materials/Preparation

- Index cards, five per participant
- A pen or pencil for each participant
- Five sheets of flip chart paper; write one of the following categories at the top of each piece of flip chart paper, and post on walls of training room: SPORT, MODE OF TRAVEL, ARTICLE OF CLOTHING, FOOD, TYPE OF BUILDING
- Masking tape placed near the chart paper

Directions

1. Distribute five index cards and a pen or pencil to each participant.
2. Tell participants to visit each category posted around the room and decide what thing best describes them within that category.

Note: Participants should take no more than 3 minutes to visit each category.

3. Instruct them to write their name and the thing that describes them on one of the index cards and the reason for their choice at the bottom of the card. Give an example: "I am a race car because I move fast."

4. Tell them to tape the card to the chart paper. They should place one index card on each category.
5. Ask for volunteers to share the reasons why they are like a particular sport, mode of travel, and so on.

Processing the Activity

- Point out that some people with the same choices had different explanations for them.
- Ask if it is easier or more difficult to share personal information this way and why this may be true.

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▶ Common Denominator

Purpose This activity directs participants to find something in common with others in their groups.

Risk Level Low

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty-six maximum (in small groups of six)

Materials/Preparation

- Index cards with one of the following categories written on each card: Home, Family, Recreation, Education, Food, and Celebrations. Hobbies, Travel, and Pets can be used as additional categories. (Add more categories for larger numbers of participants.)

Directions

1. Break participants into small groups. Distribute index cards, one per small group.
2. Instruct participants to find two or more things in common with other group members pertaining to their category.
3. Ask groups to report to the larger group what the group members found they had in common.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants how difficult or easy it was to find common denominators in their groups.
- Ask how finding commonalities among people helps in relating to one another.
- Ask how differences build a more diverse team.

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▶ Family Tree

Purpose This activity requires participants to introduce themselves by sharing their heritage.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 25 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited (in small groups of five to seven)

Materials/Preparation

- None

Directions

1. Ask participants to form small groups of five to seven members.
2. Tell participants that they will be introducing themselves to others in their small groups by sharing their heritages—their ancestors, homelands, languages, occupations, and historical tidbits about their families.
3. Give an example by sharing something of your own heritage.
4. Explain that each group member will have just 3 minutes to share.

Processing the Activity

- Ask why knowing someone's heritage can be helpful.
- Ask for volunteers to share something they learned about another group member.

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▶ Four Things I Want to Share

Purpose This activity offers a low-risk way for participants to share information about themselves.

Risk Level Low

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- Plain paper (four pieces per participant)
- A marker or pen for each participant
- Masking tape available for participants

Directions

1. Give everyone four pieces of paper and a marker or pen. Instruct participants to write four different things they would like others to know about them, on each of the four separate pieces of paper (5 minutes).
2. Have them tape the papers to themselves, one each on their chest, shoulders, and back.
3. Tell participants to walk around the room mingling with other participants.
4. Instruct them to ask at least one question about each piece of paper they read (12 minutes).

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to share what they learned about others in the group.
- Ask whether there were commonalities in the things people shared about themselves.

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▶ My Story

Purpose This activity allows participants to create a story that helps describe who they are.

Risk Level Low

Time 25 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited (in small groups of six to ten)

Materials/Preparation

- Copies of the My Story: Descriptive Word Sheet, with words cut into individual pieces
- Envelopes containing one set each of the cut-up words, one for each small group
- Large index cards (6 × 10), one per participant
- Tape and glue for each group

Directions

1. After participants are in groups, distribute envelopes containing the descriptive words, one to each small group. Also hand out index cards to each participant and tape and glue to each group.
2. Explain that the envelopes contain words that participants will use to describe themselves.
3. Tell them to write their names at the top of the cards and then choose words that can tell a story about who they are (10 minutes). Give an example: "I like eating soup and reading in winter. I often walk on the beach at dawn."
4. Tell them to stick the words to their index cards in story form.
5. When they have completed their cards, ask them to share their stories with their small groups (10 minutes).

Processing the Activity

- Ask the small groups whether anyone had a particularly creative story.
- Ask for volunteers to share something they learned about another person.
- Instruct participants to use tape to put their index cards in place of their name tags or ask them to post the cards on the walls of the training room to be read later.
- If time permits, ask participants to circulate and share their stories with people in other groups.

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My Story: Descriptive Words Sheet

Indoors	Ball games	Water	Play	Ability	Reaching
Outside	Dancing	Colorful	Thrifty	Bright	Achievement
Reading	Smart	Proud	Worker	Lively	Fly
Run	Movies	Devout	Advocating	Soup	Chocolate
Sky	Losing	Greatest	Plane	Hoping	Eating
Curious	Restaurants	Shop	Peace	Dazzle	Careful
Happy	Free Spirit	Survivor	Sharing	Picture	Like
Jokester	Intense	Emotional	Ice cream	Coffee	Race
Serious	Playful	Excitable	Inventive	Favorite	Try
Studious	Cooking	Fun	Leap	Promise	Home
Athlete	Artist	Glad	Singing	Car	Sense
Handy	Gardener	Creative	Driving	Taste	Honest
Clever	Simplicity	Passionate	Cat	Feel	Experience
Mother	Sibling	Children	Writing	Pizza	Dramatic
Father	Journal	Games	Leading	Drink	Computer
Friend	Hearing	Gorgeous	Pleasure	Life	Companion
Bike	Wine	Wise	Sunshine	Studying	Teach
Poetry	Boat	Witty	Moonlight	Softness	Iced tea
Snow	Dog	Rowdy	Spouse	Flowers	French fries
Warm	Walking	Talk	Sleeping	Live	Fan
TV	Beach	Listen	Caressing	Books	Learn
Music	Mountains	Fit	Conscientious	Light	Sun
Stars	Darkness	Dawn	Dusk	Peanuts	Butter

▶ Patchwork Quilt

Purpose This activity gives participants the opportunity to share their differences.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 35 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited (in small groups of six to eight)

Materials/Preparation

- Felt-tipped markers, one set per group
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- A good supply of colored paper, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$, per group
- Flip chart paper, one sheet per group
- Masking tape

Directions

1. Tell participants that each group will make a diversity quilt with the supplies provided.
2. Explain that each group member should make one piece for the quilt that describes or symbolizes his/her uniqueness (10 minutes).
3. Once group members have completed their pieces of the quilt, ask them to share their quilt pieces within their groups (10 minutes).
4. Tell groups to make the quilt using the chart paper for backing and stick their pieces in crazy-quilt design on the paper. They should then use masking tape to "hang" the quilts around the room (5 minutes).
5. Instruct participants to take a few minutes to walk around the room viewing each group's quilts (5 minutes).

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to share their observations about the quilts they viewed.
- Tell participants that they can take advantage of breaks to seek people out who have quilt pieces that interest them.

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Pot of Gold

Purpose This activity allows participants to consider what they bring to the group or training that will help with today's topic.

Risk Level Moderate

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Thirty

Materials/Preparation

- Small pieces of yellow paper, one per participant
- A pen or pencil for each participant
- A large pot or bowl

Directions

1. Tell participants that each of them brings experiences and talents to the group or training. Give examples that relate to the work of the group as follows: "Our topic is conflict resolution, and someone here may have served as a mediator or been involved in the conflict resolution process. Another may have the ability to summarize group discussion. Still another may be a good listener."
2. Distribute the paper and pens or pencils to participants.
3. Instruct each participant to write something he or she brings to the session on a piece of the yellow paper and bring it to the pot at the front of the room.
4. After everyone has contributed, move around the room and ask each participant, in turn, to draw a piece of paper from the pot and read it aloud.

Processing the Activity

- Ask whether anyone was surprised at the diversity of responses and why.
- Ask in what ways people with diverse talents and interests can make a strong team.

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▶ Self-Portrait

Purpose This activity allows participants to share some things about themselves and receive positive feedback from others.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 20 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited (in small groups of six to eight)

Materials/Preparation

- Legal-size plain white paper
- Markers and crayons
- Masking tape

Directions

1. Distribute a piece of paper to each participant. Give each small group drawing materials.
2. Instruct participants to make self-portraits and include three things about themselves in the portrait. Tell them they can use stick figures if they wish. Their names should be on the portraits (10 minutes).
3. Ask participants to share their portraits within their small groups.
4. Once groups have completed sharing, have all participants post their portraits on the walls of the training room with masking tape.
5. Tell participants that they will be getting to know each other better as the training progresses.
6. Explain that at various times during the training session, participants can write their observations about other group members on the portraits belonging to those people. Observations should be positive. Give an example: "If you

notice that one group member is especially friendly, you can write the word 'friendly' on his or her portrait."

7. Remind participants prior to breaks about adding their observations to the portraits.

Processing the Activity

- See the Self-Portrait Continued activity in the Adjourning section.

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▶ State Your Business

Purpose This activity allows participants to share some of their personal history with others.

Risk Level Low

Time 25 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation

- Legal-size paper, one piece per participant
- Markers, one per participant
- Masking tape

Directions

1. Distribute paper and markers.
2. Ask participants to draw an outline of the state in which they were born. Ask them to draw a star in the place within the state where they were born.
3. Tell them to list three things related to their place of birth that are part of their personal history (10 minutes). Give an example: "I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and grew up just outside of Boston. One of my ancestors rode with Paul Revere. The train was my favorite mode of transportation when I was growing up."
4. Instruct participants to use masking tape to post their papers on the wall and then to walk around reading others' information (5 minutes).

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants what they found in common with other people.
- Tell participants to seek out people during breaks in the training who are from places they might like to visit or learn more about.

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▶ The Story of My Life

Purpose This activity allows participants to share by creating a book jacket.

Risk Level Low to Moderate

Time 30 minutes

Number of Participants Forty maximum (in small groups of five or six)

Materials/Preparation

- Heavy sheets of paper, one per participant (11 × 17, if possible)
- Markers in a variety of colors for each small group

Directions

1. Distribute the sheets of paper and markers within the small groups.
2. Ask participants how they would title books about their lives thus far.
3. Instruct them to design a book jacket that includes that title (15 minutes).
4. Once the book jackets are complete, ask participants to share the reasons for what they put on their book jackets within their small groups.

Processing the Activity

- Ask participants in each group to share a particularly interesting “life story” they heard.
- Ask if it was difficult to write a few words to summarize a whole life, and why.

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▶ Who Am I?

Purpose This activity is designed to help participants to become better acquainted.

Risk Level Low

Time 15 minutes

Number of Participants Unlimited

Materials/Preparation None

Directions

1. Instruct participants to find partners.
2. Explain that they will be identifying three items currently in their possession that are symbols of who they are.
3. Tell them they can use items they are wearing, such as jewelry, and items they have in their purses or wallets; for example, a participant might choose a pencil, a watch, and a phone card. The pencil symbolizes the participant's efforts to write a book, the watch symbolizes the participant's tendency to be late for appointments, and the phone card represents family who live in another state.
4. Instruct participants to place the three items they choose on the table in front of them.
5. Partners will take turns guessing what the items tell about the person.
6. Tell participants they will have 2 minutes to guess what their partners' items symbolize. At the end of 2 minutes their partners should explain what the items actually symbolize.
7. Tell the pairs that one partner should begin guessing what his or her partner's items symbolize.

8. Notify participants when 2 minutes are up, and give the first partner a few seconds to explain what his or her items symbolize.
9. Next, tell the first partners that they now have 2 minutes to guess what their partner's items symbolize.
10. Notify participants when 2 minutes are up, and tell the second partner to explain what his or her items symbolize.

Processing the Activity

- Ask for volunteers to share their experience with the activity.
- Ask participants what they learned about their partners that surprised them.

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