



Factsheets for Mentors

Ice Breaker Games

This fact sheet contains information on games a mentor can play with their new mentee to make the mentee feel more comfortable with the mentor.



Introduction to Ice Breaker Games

Meeting your mentee and gradually building a strong friendship can be a very challenging experience; developing a positive rapport from the beginning can help.

Using ice breaker activities in these early days may assist you to establish a genuine bond based on trust and fun.

Ice breakers aim to ease the pressure of meeting your mentee and provide a relaxed and secure environment.

Before you have a go at an ice breaker with your mentee, try it out at home. This will help with your confidence and the success of the activity.

**You can find some great examples of games at:
youthmentoring.org.au/training.html**

youthmentoring.org.au

Factsheet compiled by Danielle Bayes on behalf of the Youth Mentoring Network 2010.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document the Australian Youth Mentoring Network accepts no liability of any loss or damage associated with its use. Mentors should always refer back to their program's policies and procedures for further clarification.

Selecting the Right Ice Breakers

When thinking about the right activity to use, take the following tips into consideration:

- Appropriate to age group
- Suitable to time limit available
- Activity content is light and unobtrusive
- Touch and physical contact is kept to a minimum
- Activity is considerate of group and special needs
- Does not discriminate
- Participation is voluntary
- Finishes on a positive note

Name Games

To get off to a great start find out a few **facts** about each other, including each others name, interests, year / subjects at school, information about work, etc.

Introduce your partner adds another dimension to this activity, pairs spend a few minutes gathering 3 to 5 pieces of information about each other, then each

person must introduce their partner to the whole group.

Have individuals in the group introduce themselves and select an **adjective** of the same letter as their first name to describe themselves, such as Dynamic Danni, Resourceful Rosie, Sporty Sam. A great activity to help people remember names.



Ice Breakers

Most of the ice breakers are appropriate for a range of age groups. Just ensure that you alter it to suit your group or mentee. Some will work better in pairs and others in groups for certain age brackets.

Activity key according to school age years: P: primary aged, JS: junior secondary, SS: senior secondary.

Play dough pairs (P)

Equipment: Play dough per person. Both the mentee and mentor bring along a photo, ideally a category is selected to guide the participants, such as animals. The pair is given play dough and instructed to make a play dough mould of their picture. If you have the resources the mentees could make the play dough as a group activity in advance.

Rock, Paper, Scissors (P/JS/SS)

Played in pairs or small groups, involves three hand movements / gesture: rock - clenched fist, paper - open hand, palm down with fingers together, scissors - index and middle finger open V. The pair or small group call out "rock, paper, scissors", with each word a clenched fist is moved up and down from the elbow (as if using a hammer). After the word scissors, each person throws down one of the three hand gestures. The aim is to throw the winning gesture: rock: beats scissors, but loses to paper; paper: beats rock, but loses to scissors; scissors: beats paper, but loses to rock. A fun variation of the game has the hand gestures changed to body gestures.



Hacky Sack (P/JS/SS)

Equipment: hacky sack or small ball. Game can be played by as little as one person or in a group. Form a circle, best to keep it as tight as possible. Using any other body part except your hands, keep the hacky sack off the ground. The group counts aloud the number of hits and aims to increase their hits every round of play.

Categories (P/JS/SS)

A caller prompts the group to move into categories, such as: mentees, mentors, right / left hand people, eye colour. As an extension to the game, suggest that after each group is formed a brief discussion is had in each group concerning the category or provide a talking point.

Balloon Contest (P/JS/SS)

Equipment: Balloons. Pairs share a balloon and work together to keep their balloon in the air, while attempting to knock other pair's balloon to the ground. The last pair with their balloon aloft is the winner.



Tower Building (P/JS/SS)

Equipment: Could include paper, sticky tape, paper clips, newspaper, straws. Each pair is given equipment. Give the group a time limit for planning and construction to build the tallest and most stable tower. No other resources are allowed.

Gotcha (P/JS/SS)

The group form a circle with their hands out to either side, palms up. Each person places their right index finger in the palm of the person next to them. On the signal 'Go' everyone must try to catch the finger of the person next to them. Do this a few times and then change hands to have left index finger in right hand.

Balloon Pop (P/JS/SS)

Equipment: Balloon and string per participant. Everyone must blow up their balloon and tie it to their ankle using the string. A nominated playing area is set out. On the 'go' signal everyone aims to burst other people's balloon, only with their feet. The last person standing with their balloon aloft is the winner.

Quick Thinking (P/JS/SS)

Each pair is given the same prop, such as a cardboard box. They must come up with as many ideas for the use of the box as possible, within a set time limit. Be sure each pair writes down a list of their ideas, the most uses wins. At the end of the game, share ideas with a demonstration.

Silent line up (JS/SS)

The group must form a line in order of the criteria, such as: birth date (day and month), age, house number. The group must not talk; other forms of communication can be used, such as hand signals, clapping and writing on backs. Once the group are happy that they are in sequence, go along the line and check to see if they are in order.

Duplicate Image (P/JS/SS)

Equipment: Paper and pens
Pairs select roles, A and B. Person A is given a piece of paper with a drawing (the team leader must prepare this in advance). Person B is given a blank piece of paper and a pen. With their backs facing each other, person A must describe the image to person B, while they attempt to draw the image. Swap roles to do the activity again. No questions are allowed.



References & Further Information

- Australian Youth Mentoring Network – <http://www.youthmentoring.org.au/info-for-mentors.html>
- [Life. Be in it. Games Booklets](http://www.gamesbooks.com.au/) <http://www.gamesbooks.com.au/>
- Inspire Your Group: Sure-Fire Ice Breakers & Group Games' ebook - <http://www.inspireyourgroup.com/free.htm>
- Youth Group Games – <http://www.youthgroupgames.com.au/games/youth-group-icebreaker-games.cfm>

