

## Diversity and Inclusion Exercises – Ice Breakers

### Purpose:

The purpose of these ice breaker exercises is to provide a means for Red Crossers to get to know one another better. As we learn more about one another we grow in understanding of one another's diversity. What makes us diverse is the compilation of all those aspects of ourselves and our experiences that give us differing perspectives.

### 1. Find 10 Things in Common with the Other Team Members in Your Group

**Materials:** Paper, pens or pencils

**Time Required:** 10-15 minutes

**Instructions:** This icebreaker is fast, easy, and fun. Try out this always successful, laughter-generating, team building icebreaker. It's a good icebreaker for a meeting because it takes so little time.

Not even the shyest participant is wary about finding what he or she has in common with the other people in the group. Conversations tend to concentrate on items external to the person.

Examples that groups have come up with in the past are: we all drive a car, we all live more than ten miles away from work, or we're all wearing red today.

#### Team Building Icebreaker Steps

- Divide the meeting participants into groups of four or five people by having them number off. (You do this because people generally begin a meeting by sitting with the people they already know best, especially their closest coworkers and people from their departments. It's a natural comfort zone thing.)
- Tell the newly formed groups that their assignment is to find ten things that they have in common, with **every** other person in the group, that have nothing to do with work. (I tell people no body parts (we all have legs; we all have arms) and no clothing (we all wear shoes, we all wear pants).)
- Tell the group to find the ten things that they have in common. One person should be taking notes and be ready to read their list to the whole room upon completion of the assignment.
- Ask for a volunteer to read their list to the room, first. Then, ask each group to share their whole list with the room. Because people are your best source for laughter and fun, the reading of the lists always generates a lot of laughter and discussion.
- Attendees also enjoy finding one of their ten things in common on another group's list. You can also catch the drift of the conversations that took place in the small groups based on the transitions made from item to item.
- Participants love to compare their list of items with the lists generated in the other small groups. You will want to allow a free flow of conversation, laughter, and sharing. Your audience really is your best resource for making this icebreaker a fun part of your training, meeting, or team building event.

## 2. Sweet Greet Meeting Icebreaker

**Materials:** Candy Bar for each attendee (see below for additional guidance.)

**Time Required:** About 30 minutes

**Instructions:** Buy the number of varieties necessary for dividing attendees across the desired number of groups or tables. As an example, if you want five employees in each small group, purchase five Snickers bars, five Baby Ruth candy bars, and so forth. Place all candy bars in a bag and ask employees to draw a candy bar as they enter the meeting.

You have also either labeled the tables with the candy bar name or placed an additional candy bar on the table in advance so employees know where to sit. Instruct attendees that they are to sit with the people who drew the same candy bar as they did.

This tactic is simply a fun way to assign seats so that the team gets to mix things up.

Use these discussion questions as a starting point and customize them and the questions you invent to your work setting and participants. Have the groups answer these questions at their tables and share with those sitting with them.

Sample questions or discussion points to use might include:

### Work-related

- Describe how and when you came to work at this company.
- Tell your coworkers what you appreciate about your team.
- Share what you like about your current job.
- Share the funniest or most fun situation you have experienced at work.

### Personal-related

- Share two things about yourself that you think no one at your table knows about you.
- Are you a cat person, dog person, bird person, or gerbil person? What is your favorite pet and why?
- What was your favorite vacation you've taken and what made it stand out in your memory?
- If you could pick your birthday dinner, what would you choose to eat?
- Tell your tablemates three things about you that you believe makes you different from them..
- If you could choose one location for your next travel adventure and money is no object, where would you go and why?

To wrap up this exercise, you can ask for volunteers to share some new things they learned about their team mates.

## 3. Thumb Ball Exercise

**Materials:**

- Ball – small soccer ball with multiple panels, or other ball
- Sharpie
- Questions
- Safe area to throw a ball

**Time required:** 20 minutes

**Instructions:**

1. Formulate a list of appropriate questions to place on your ball (see examples)
2. Stand or sit in a circle and toss the ball. When caught, each person must answer the question that is under their thumb.
3. Each person should read the question and answer the question. If the team is not familiar with each other, they should also say their name and their role.
4. If you have a large number of participants, you could have several smaller groups vs one larger group.



**Possible Thumb Ball Questions**

Magazine I read	Season I enjoy most	Favorite Vacation
Car I would drive	Morning or Night person	Last book I read
Person I admire	Worst job ever	Best food I cook
Favorite fruits	Farthest place I have traveled	Summer or Winter Olympics?
Pet Peeves	Favorite TV Channel	Dream Job
Favorite Restaurant	Hidden talent I have	My hobby
Where I was born	Favorite Holiday	Share a family tradition
Dogs or Cats	Favorite sport	Favorite rainy day activity

**4. Virtual Team Meeting: Starter Activity**

**Materials:** Email, as this is a virtual activity

**Time Required:** About 10 minutes, depending on the size of the team.

**Instructions:**

Steps	Details / Examples
<p><b>Step 1:</b> Send an email to the team before your team meeting</p> <p>(Feel free to change the questions)</p>	<p>Hello team,</p> <p>I am planning the meeting starter activity for our virtual team meeting next week. ☺ Please send me the items listed below by [date].</p> <p><b>Please reply directly to me (don't copy anyone else) with the following:</b></p>

- 1. Send a photo of your **shoes** or **lunch** while working from home one day this week.
- 2. Answer these three questions:
  - a. Which store would you like to max-out your credit card?
  - b. Choose a movie title for the story of your life.
  - c. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

**Step 2:** Make slides  
**Have one member of the team (whoever sent the email) put the pictures and responses on slides. If you are savvy with PowerPoint, add fun animation and names that pop up once everyone has made their guesses.**

**Step 3:** Share the slides at the start of the meeting  
**Present the slides and let the team guess and laugh at the responses and photos! 😊**



### Guess Who Said It!?

Which store would you like to max-out your credit card?  
 "I'd buy an RV at an RV store – I've never been to an RV store...so I don't know what they're called."

Choose a movie title for the story of your life.  
 "Into The Wild"

Which store would you like to max-out your credit card?  
 "Impossible to pick just one! Frye, Fresh, Madewell, and Restoration Hardware"

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?  
 "Italy"

Choose a movie title for the story of your life.  
 "Better Than I Deserve"

## 5. Seven Word Biographies

**Materials:** Paper, pens or pencils

**Time Required:** Depends on the number of people. Give about 5 minutes to complete the task and then allow for about 2 minutes per person to share.

**Instructions:** A challenging and fun icebreaker game, the goal is for players to write their life story in seven words exactly. And the words should be listed chronologically.

Tell players to think carefully and use words that will sum up their life experiences. The stories will end up cryptic and very interesting. The listeners are bound to ask for elaboration and each player has two minutes to answer questions or tell more about their life. You may have such “biographies” as the following:

- Jail time, reformed, married, millionaire, happy!
- Jobless, college graduation, success, married, divorced, France